

**THE PHENOMENON OF WITCHCRAFT “OBUROGO” IN BUNYORO AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE SOCIETY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Richard Atuhairwe declare that this work has never been submitted to any University or higher institution of learning in Uganda or somewhere else in the world for an award of any academic qualification

Signature.....

Date.....

SUPERVISORS

We hereby certify that Richard Atuhairwe’s dissertation titled “The phenomenon of witchcraft in Bunyoro and its impact on the society” has been under our supervision and that it meets the standards for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies of Kyambogo University.

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Date.....

DEDICATION

To my beloved family members who have supported me morally, financially and through constant prayers as well as encouragement which has enabled me to succeed. But above all to my late mother Harriet Kabahumuza for the words of hope you instilled in me before she went to be with the lord. May your soul rest in eternal peace.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the conceptualization and understanding of witchcraft practice “Oburogo” in Bunyoro society, analyzing the motivations and its subsequent impact upon the people. The study aimed at clearing a widely misconceived practice of witchcraft to denote all Banyoro traditional healing practices. In order to realize this, the researcher used the phenomenological and ethnographic approaches aimed at reaching the in-depth of witchcraft as well as the peoples lived experiences on witchcraft practice in the society. The study population included the witchdoctors, cultural leaders, as well as ordinary and elderly Banyoro; stratified according to sex, education level and economic activity. A sample size of 60 respondents was used for the study. Individual in-depth interviews and observation method were mostly used in field data collection. In this, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide and observation guide as data collection tools. The study findings indicate that Bunyoro society holds a unique understanding of witchcraft practice, with the use of metaphorical language to describe it. Witches are characterized and categorized according to the methods they use and the variant but specific duties they perform in the witchcraft practice. The motivations for witchcraft involvement varied between witches themselves and their clients. Whereas professional witches were found to be motivated by the ‘evil eye’ and fringe benefits, the clients were found to be motivated by the desire to protect themselves from enemies and attend to their daily socio-religious, economic and political crises in the society. The Banyoro perceive witchcraft to have both positive and negative adverse effects upon the witches themselves, individual users and the wider community. Though widely practiced, witchcraft and witches are considered harbingers of misery and death in the Bunyoro society, they are believed to thrive from miseries of the masses. As a result, witches are highly reviled in the Bunyoro society and this stigmatization of the perceived witches endangers the would be harmonious relationship in the local communities of Bunyoro, leading to mistrust and development of conspiracy theories in the society. The researcher concluded that the Banyoro were aware of the phenomenon of witchcraft in the society, understanding it metaphorically and descriptively in their local communities.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept and practice of witchcraft is shrouded with mystery. Its understanding differs from society to society, and from person to person. The reality of witchcraft remains contentious with some people objecting to its existence (Parinder, 1963) while to others the practice is lived and experienced (Amadou, 2010). Witchcraft remains significant in several indigenous societies where some use it as means of defence against their enemy forces while others use it to show supernatural power against competitors. Unfortunately in African societies where the practice is lived and experienced, its understanding is limited and taken to include traditional healing practices and African indigenous religious beliefs (Isiko, 2018:135). To many people witchcraft remains mystical and its understanding varies from society to society (Turner, 1970). Yet again, the motivations for a practice considered evil and unwanted in the societies remain subjective and contentious (Ashforth, 1998a). Those suspected to practise witchcraft have been victims of mob justice, losing life and property; while in some cases faced with excommunication from society (Awolalu, 1978). Amidst such pluralistic, mystical and subjective understanding of witchcraft, the author uses Bunyoro, one of the indigenous societies of Uganda to analyze witchcraft beliefs, its conceptualization and parameters in which people practice it.

1.2 Historical development and evolution of witchcraft

1.2.1 Etymology of Witchcraft

Etymologically, the word witchcraft is from the Anglo- Saxon "wicce" and "craeft" to mean the practitioner of evil and the skill respectively (Llega, 2003). This is also related to the word “witch” that is derived from related nouns wicce, signifying a female worker of that “craft” (plural wiccen) and wicca meaning a male one (plural wiccan) according to (Hurton, 2018). In the course of the middle ages, wiccecraft mutated into “witchcraft” and wicce and wicca into the un gendered “witch”. This means that the process was made easier by the fact that the Anglo Saxon “cc” was pronounced as “ch”.

However, to Illega (2000), witchcraft is from the Anglo Saxon “witan” meaning to know and “craft” meaning skill. When Illega uses the reference "witan" he means that one has to be knowledgeable and where he uses "craft" to mean skill he denotes that witchcraft can be learnt and it becomes a technique that can be used in the practice of witchcraft. In the Early Medieval period, the word “wicca” was used by the Anglo Saxons or the speakers of Old English. It was pronounced as “witch-a” it meant the practitioners of sorcery and the practice which was known as “wiccecraft” or “witchery”.

Historically in Europe before the use of the term “witchcraft”, it is believed that the first term to be used to mean witchcraft was “Creatures of Satan” (Angela, 2010). This term was used by the Christians who understood them to mean the females who had made pacts with the devil to live a life of sorcery and were believed to have dedicated all their life to the service of the devil. The life of sorcery was that of causing all sorts of harm and misfortunes to humanity. Those who practised witchcraft were believed to have been created by Satan for evil purposes (Angella, 2010). These were also to spread evil to the whole world and cause pain of all sorts to humanity.

The subject of witchcraft is as old as mankind and believed to have been influenced by the concepts of evil, devil and demonology right away from Europe, (Bailey, 2004). This means that witchcraft practice was taken to be part of evil, devil and demonology (Buckland,1986). All in all witchcraft was taken to be evil in the society and was bound to be eliminated at whatever cost.

1.2.2 Witchcraft in Europe

Witchcraft in Europe seems to have started way back before the thirteenth century and became clear in the fourteenth century as witchcraft evolved as a new line of interpretation by the church that regarded witchcraft as the explicit adversary to it, that is, the devil (Mesak, 1995). Before the church looked at witchcraft as an evil practice, in the fourteenth century, witchcraft was looked at as being both good and bad. For instance, in Greece and Rome, magical processes were employed in both societies to produce rain, prevent hailstorms, drive away clouds, increase wealth and the like, but were also used for evil purposes (Huggins, 1965). This potrays witchcraft as being good and bad among the Greeks and the Romans and this relates to magic because magic was also used for both good and bad purposes.

In the European context, magic was one of the words with different connotations for different people. There were two kinds of magic that is; White Magic done for good purposes and Black magic done for evil purposes with the practioner being called a magician (Buckland, 1986:161). Witchcraft and magic were different but mistakenly taken to be the same especially when one used the general word magic without pointing to either the white or the black magic as seen above.

The relationship later came as a result of some people failing to differentiate between the black magic and witchcraft as both were works of the devil involving harm unlike white magic that was used for the good of the society. This meant that, good magic was esteemed and used for the

benefit of the whole community like causing rain unlike black magic that was used to cause misery and suffering especially diseases in the community (Nkonge, 2014). Therefore, in the European mythology witchcraft and black magic were the same but these two were different from good magic as analyzed above.

Such an approach relates to the work of Weber (1948), for which witchcraft is a kind of technology beyond human understanding and the magicians' main function is to cope with relatively adhoc interests and tensions. In this case, witchcraft is seen as a form of technology and this still relates to Magic in the European context especially the black magic as both are evil oriented (Buckland, 1986). This is because magic involved forceful manipulation of nature in order to realize the magicians intentions which could be both good and evil as the case was with witchcraft.

In Mesopotamia, witchcraft developed from a belief that the life of the people and the world at large was full of hostile supernatural forces and demons that were bent on destruction of human civilization that was done with the aid of demons (Bailey, 2003). Following such a belief, authorities had to put in more effort to punish and expose any one who would be found to relate with such people as they were believed to be aided by the demons (Bailey, 2003). This means that witchcraft had turned out to be completely evil making it mistaken to be sorcery unlike in Greece and Rome where it had been used for both purposes (Huggins, 1965).

Witchcraft hunts were brought about by the Christian theology because what seemed to contradict with the Christian theological interpretation or performance brought about European witch- hunts (BenYehuda, 1980). This explains the reason why in the European witch-hunts of the 14th to 17th Centuries, however, witchcraft was transformed into a completely evil entity which created problems instead of solving them. This was worsened by the publication of the

Malleus maleficarum (The witch's hammer) in 1480, where the demonological theories reached a peak in which witchcraft constituted an independent "anti- religion" (Huggins, 1965). The witch lost her powerful position vis-a-vis the deities especially her abilities to force the deities to comply with her work, she was replaced by a total subordination to the devil. In short, the witch became Satan's puppet. These changes in the conceptualization of witchcraft are crucial because witchcraft was regarded as a routine, day-to-day almost personal technology until the 14th century, where the witches were classified as good or bad, depending on the objective of their magic.

After the 14th century, a whole systematic theory was devoted to witchcraft and many books were written on the subject, and experts specialized in its theory ("demonologists") and practice ("inquisitors," "witch-hunters," and the like). These books included; "The complete book of witchcraft" (Buckland, 1986), "The Roman Inquisition and Witchcraft" (Tedeschi, 1983), A Witches Bible: The Complete Witches Handbook, (Farrar, 1996), The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witches' Guide to History, Traditions and Modern-Day Spells (Brown, 2019) among others. This analytical shift to the "new" eclectic demonological theories was precisely what was needed to enable the inquisitors, and other individuals, to persecute legitimately hundreds of thousands of witches.

This was followed by the inquisition especially in the next three centuries later to those that conspired with the devil as it was treated as a way of rejection of God and the church. The inquisition was a tribunal charged with the duty of maintaining, controlling and ensuring that all those who did what was evil in relation to the church were punished (Tedeschi, 1983). This was from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. This denotes that those who practised witchcraft were rebels against the Church and God at large. For this reason, all those who subscribed to this

practice were taken to be evil and followers of the devil who had evil motives as opposed to good motives (Mesak, 1995). Because of such belief, attempts to suppress and eradicate witches increased in Europe in order to eradicate devilish people who had subscribed to the practice and this was through stoning, burning and excommunication among others.

However later witchcraft practice never lasted for long as it came to an end by the middle of the eighteenth century because of the ill treatment that was accorded to the witches (Anglo, 1977). Despite the end of witchcraft in the middle of the eighteenth century, another wave of witchcraft in the western world evolved and this one was different from the former since this had few connections to sorcery as this was not opposed so much because Christianity had already gained root and was regarded by its practitioners as an alternative form of religion to Christianity or Judaism (Mesak, 1995). In Europe therefore, the understanding and definitions of witchcraft were based on the Christian theology. What seemed to contradict with the Christian theological interpretation of supernatural or performance of extra-ordinary things came to be referred to as witchcraft.

1.2.3 Witchcraft in Africa: Trends and development

Before colonialism and Christianity, Africans practiced witchcraft (Kohnert 1996, Waller 2003, Ashforth et al., 1998a). Witchcraft was their daily practice and they lived with the practice and it was part of the society structure. But when colonialism came and its activities like capitalism and neo-liberalism, it brought misfortune to Africa because it changed the constructs of Africa from Afrocentric to Eurocentric view of things. The belief that persons are able to master occult forces is a socio-cultural phenomenon of great importance in Africa and south of the Sahara. Particularly in Western Africa, witchcraft has been deep-rooted for generations, regardless of

social strata and urban or rural settings (Ashforth, 1998a). Wyk (2004) agrees with Magesa (1997) that witchcraft is inherited, and that witches often harbour desires that are contrary to African social values like helpfulness and solidarity. Black magic or witchcraft have been applied for good or bad ends.

In South Africa, for example, witchcraft was looked at as the cause of harm and a way of accumulating a lot of wealth and power by supernatural means (Ashforth, 1998b; Shelag, 2004). In the local South African communities, witchcraft was used to cause harm to the innocent citizens (Kohnert, 1983), a threat to the community as a whole and causes problems such as unemployment with which the state must grapple (Ashforth, 1998b). Relatedly, witchcraft is also looked at as a collusion between occult belief systems and different trans-national social networks, embedded in specific transformations of local and global modes of production, results in unique but reinforcing modifications of witchcraft belief, its underlying structures and its impact. Most Africans are convinced that witchcraft truly exists and constitutes a real threat to society in Africa (Geschiere, 1995). Africans are much aware of a mystical power in the universe. It is inherent in or comes from or through physical objects or spiritual beings. Magesa (1997) says that witchcraft is known in Swahili as “uchawih”, and is a generic term applied to a malevolent witch, sorcerer or anyone considered to have more power than that of the average person.

The sorcerer unlike the witch does not kill at random but rather harms for a specific reason. As an individual working alone, the sorcerer can, if he wills get out of sorcery. Magesa (1997) observes that this issue is a moral issue where sorcery is more predictable than witchcraft and is thus more hard to protect against. Magesa (1997) agrees with Mbiti (1969) that witchcraft is a mysterious power that resides in human beings that permeates all areas of life and is an ever-

present reality in peoples' political, social, and economic organizations affecting both communal and personal life. Witchcraft, Magesa (1997) adds, is intimately bound and influences law and the understanding of morality and ethics. As stated before, the African worldview holds that anything wrong or bad both in society and in the world originates from witchcraft. This is the case whether it is illness, hardship, or any other misfortune because witches are regarded as opponents to the natural order of harmonious community life, any inexplicable mishap or tragedy which defies natural or religious explanation (Nkonge, 2014).

However, all human beings have the ability to tap this power, meaning that each human is a potential witch (Kohnert, 2004). It is one to decide to either be a witch or not because the power is always latent in the majority but can become active more especially when one decides to be a witch. Witchcraft can be passive and active but there are no rites, ceremonies, incantations or invocations accompanying the practice through simply projecting from the mind of the witch on to the target (Magesa, 1997). The power of the witchcraft is thought to reside in various organs of the body especially the blood, hair and liver (Magesa, 1997). This is in line with Pritchard (1937) who notes that witchcraft among the Azande also resides in the xiphoid cartilage. Magesa (1997) adds that witches are not conscious of their power and such categories of individuals considered to be witches are usually old, beautiful, or ugly, red-eyed, sometimes physically deformed, excessively successful or extremely poor. These are people who exhibit extremes of character traits - the very rich, the very poor and those who are very popular (Magesa, 1997).

Witchcraft is usually inherited but can also be bought or acquired (Pritchard, 1937). It is shrouded in secrecy and associated with loathsome behaviour and revolting actions that break all accepted norms of behaviour in society. Some of these loathsome acts include handling

excrement, urine, or vomit, moving around naked or even engaging in sexual intercourse with spirits or animals. (Pritchard, 1937). These are acts that are beyond human explanation and thus attributed to witchcraft. In this respect, witches are taken to be committing incest and cause other people to do the same and to have incestuous dreams (Mbiti, 1970). They always reject kinship ties and may kill and eat flesh of close relatives, distant relatives and other members of the community.

Witches are also said to have the capacity to turn into animals of all kinds. Magesa (1997) concurs with Mbiti that witches are able to turn themselves into animals like hyenas, owls, or other nocturnal creatures or into spirit bodies to attend spirit assemblies or to accomplish their evil ends. The spirit assemblies are called covens which act as the meeting places for the witches. Similarly Wyk (2004) notes that witches have power to free their spirits from their bodies at night and then turn themselves into nocturnal animals like baboons, owls, lightning bird, and cats in order to harm their victims. The witches also crave for human flesh making them frequent graveyards and sometimes they are thought to eat or suck the life force or soul /spirit of their victims. This certainly is dangerous because it can lead to death of many people who are bewitched often having their bodies wasting away as a result of this activity.

To Wyk (2004), witchcraft is also associated with necrophagy and cannibalism and like Magesa (1997), he adds that witches may be unaware of their actions. This means that a witch can practice witchcraft when he/she is unaware of the actions and the understanding of morality and ethics. As stated before, the African world view holds that anything wrong or bad both in society and in the world originates from witchcraft. This is the case whether it is illness, hardship, or any other misfortune because witches are regarded as opponents to the natural order of harmonious

community life, any inexplicable mishap or tragedy which defies natural or religious explanation (Nkonge, 2014).

The development and evolution of witchcraft in Africa is compounded with insufficient records that precludes its periodization (Mesak, 1995). However, three theories concern themselves about the evolution of witchcraft in Africa and these include;

- Witchcraft in Africa evolved from the Bantu of the early iron age.
- Witchcraft in Africa evolved from the intra-group pressures and competitions for leadership and resources.
- Witchcraft in Africa began as individuals in a social system started to define conflicts in terms of jealousy or envy.

According to the first theory, witchcraft in Africa is said to have evolved from the Bantu of the early Iron age who had a set of beliefs that attributed evil mostly to human malice and envy (Elifasi, 1981). Since the Bantu were skillful in iron work, some of those who never had this skill were envious to those who had it and this made them look at themselves as enemies. Witchcraft was sought as the solution to guard themselves against such malice and envy in their societies. Witchcraft spread to other parts of Africa along the constant migrations and movements of the Bantu, who later settled near water bodies after their migration from Cameroon highlands.

The second theory was put forward by Feirman (1978) who suggests that witchcraft in Africa evolved from the intra-group pressures and competitions for leadership and resources. Those in leadership thought of witchcraft to protect and keep themselves in power for long through the use of the power of witchcraft. Similarly as a result of meagre resources, witchcraft evolved in

order to threaten those who would want to grab and use peoples resources freely like land as a result of populaton increase in Africa.

The third theory was put foward by Handloff (1982), who argues that witchcraft in Africa begun as individuals in a social system started to define conflicts in terms of jelousy or envy. In such situations conflicts were translated into malevolence and not institutional contradictions. Because of the interpretation of witchcraft as malevolence, witchcraft was thought of as a means of vengeance by those who had jealousy and envy against others in the society.

Africans developed and accepted witchcraft as a mode of explanation, perception and interpretation of their problems, events, nature and reality even when reason and common sense may suggest otherwise (Mazrui, 1993). All these three authors (Feirman, 1978; Handloff 1982 & Elfasi,1981) agree that witchcraft in Africa emanates from conflicts over resources and opportunities. They trace the practice from longtime contradictions between those who have and have nots. They all agree that witchcraft was practiced by those who were evil against those who were successful.

Therefore, this relates to the four factors that lead to witchcraft that is; greed, envy, jelousy and hatrade (Pritchard, 1937). This is because all the three theories point to contradictions between different groups as seen above yet this is what exactly Pritchard in his book titled “Witchcraft Among the Azande of Colonial Sudan” points out. This means that envy, greed, jelousy and hatred will always occur to those who are successful because of being seen as enemies by those that are not very successful in the society. Africans take motivations of witchcraft to be both positive and negative. For example, in conuntries like Cameroon and Ghana, witchcraft is used by high ranking political officers to stay in power for long (Kohnert, 1993).

Witchcraft is also viewed as means of amassing wealth (Offiong, 1983) and a means used by the poor to struggle against opposition as it serves predominantly as an ideology that legitimates opposition and exploitation (Kohnert, 1983). To some, witchcraft is used to cure diseases, contain accidents, prevent business failures, famine, earthquake, infertility and child birth difficulties (Nkonge, 2014). Similarly (Isiko, 2019 & Kohnert, 1993) also view witchcraft as a source of order in the society as it is a powerful deterrent evil intentions like stealing, incest and murder. However witchcraft is also taken to be harmful and something not to tolerate in the society as it is perceived to be harmful and the cause of all misfortunes like accidents, snake bites, poverty and failure to give birth (Wyk, 2004:1211, Offiong, 1991 & Kohnert, 1993).

In Africa, the treatment of witchcraft takes usually negative dimensions. Witchcraft is not tolerated in any African society. Infact the accused witches are usually subjected to ridicule, ostracism, assault and torture, exile and murder especially in Ghana and Cameroon (Shelag, 2014). Sometimes persons convicted of witchcraft are speared to death, others shot with poisonous arrows, beating, stoning, strangling and burning them alive (Mbiti, 1969:201, Magesa, 1997:172, Kenyatta, 1965:288-289). Although it is unclear whether witchcraft is harmful or useful, what remains clear is that witchcraft is real, is everywhere and can be known through personal experience. This means that, whether the practice is good or bad, it exists, known and it is everywhere.

Therefore, following a comparative analysis between Europe and Africa in terms of evolution of witchcraft, they are quite different as European witchcraft evolved as a church's initiative and theology to refer to witchcraft as evil whereas in Africa, witchcraft evolved from the three theories explained above. However what remains clear is that it seems witchcraft both in Africa and Europe were motivated by jealousy. This is because, in Europe, the Christians were jealous

over those who never subscribed to christianity and in Africa, the three theories show that witchcraft was motivated by jealousy, greed, envy and hatred. This makes this comparative analysis have a bearing on this study because, it will project whether this is the case with where the study was carried out from, that is; Bunyoro society.

1.2.3. Witchcraft in sub saharan Africa

Kenyatta, in his work, *Facing Mt. Kenya* (1965) shows that magic is extremely pervasive among the Agikuyu. Some magic was for defensive purposes, some for enhancing economic activities like hunting, business and agriculture, and others for healing and health; some is used to increase their wealth (Kenyatta, 1965). This relates to positivity of witchcraft because he refers to white magic (Buckland, 1986) which is used for the good of the community. This means that despite witchcraft being understood as evil by many, it is as well positively motivated (Kenyatta 1965, Isiko 2019, Leighton, 1962 & Nkonge, 2014). In several sub-saharan countries witchcraft seems to be deep-rooted in the lives of many Africans, and attempts have been made to make the practice lawful so that if it is evil it is punishable and if it is something to reckon with, it is promoted (Waller, 2003). This attempt however has not yielded fruits because the attempt to make witchcraft lawful has been described as ‘the outstanding problem of the lawgiver in Africa’. In Kenya for example, the Witchcraft Ordinance of 1925 still defines the legal attitude towards witchcraft, but here, as in other African states from Tanzania to South Africa, government is facing resurgent popular demands for action - including lynch law and vigilantism - which it is not able, or perhaps willing, to contain (Waller, 2003).

In the last few decades, Waller notes that witchcraft has penetrated both politics and popular consciousness, yet the law has remained unclear to people hence causing more hurdles in the

lives of the people. The reason as to why witchcraft has penetrated the political life of many Africans though not very clear is that witchcraft keeps the people in equilibrium (Turner, 2004). This is so because there have been static descriptions about witchcraft, using a traditional structural-functional approach, that have failed to explain the practice of witchcraft. This failure has been due to an excessive concern with social variables and with little or no mention of psychological variables hence rendering witchcraft a societal need (Turner, 2004). The interrogation still remains whether witchcraft is a societal need or not as we see some look at the practice as a societal need where they look at the practice as an instrument for social order and relevant in the communal sports competitions (Isiko, 2019) some look at the practice as an institution for leisure (Lilly, 2000), whereas some cherish the practice as an instrument for nature protection (Nkonge, 2014).

On the contrary, to some people witchcraft is evil and deadly. This is because, the practice is responsible for all forms of misfortune like diseases and accidents (Awolalu, 1978). However, even if it is contended that witchcraft is a threat to people in the society, it could be wrong to contend such a generalized view that witchcraft is something that needs to be feared (Pels, 1998). More engagements need to be done in order to reconcile the generalized understanding of witchcraft in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore to Pels (1998) witchcraft is presented by the Europeans as something that needs to be feared because witchcraft could have either threatened Europeans or frightened them. In West African countries particularly Ghana, witchcraft was viewed as a means of acquiring wealth as well as a way of staying in power for long (Shelag, 2014). This is the same with central African countries like Cameroon, Angola, Burundi, Chad among others where the practice is perceived to be common among the top leaders with ranks especially in the army who used it for promotions and staying in power (Shelag, 2014).

In the African Philosophical and cultural contexts, witchcraft is deeply intertwined with various beliefs and practices. In some societies, the practice is intergrated into the the cosmological frame work. Witchcraft is seen as a manifestation of spiritual forces with individuals believed to posses or be influenced by supernatural abilities that can affect others' lives (Mugambi, 2012).

In the African thought, the practice is frequently linked to social order as well as morality of the people in the society. This denotes that the practice is a means to address social greviances, enforces community norms and resolves conflicts (Isiko, 2019 & Kohnert, 1993). To most African cultures, witchcraft is a motive of healing and protective purposes. Traditional healers and diviners oftenly labelled as witches are believed to have special knowledge and abilities to heal ailments, protect individuals from any form of harm and communicate with the departed ones in the spiritual world. This is a positive aspect of witchacraft which shows the role of the practice in maintaining balance and health within most African communities (Kenyatta 1965, Isiko 2019, Leighton, 1962 & Nkonge, 2014). Additionally, the practice is sometimes interpreted as a way in which ancestors or spiritual entities interact with the living. This interface can be perceived as either beneficial or malevolent depending on the intentions and actions of those involved. This is because while other cultures continue to uphold the traditional beliefs, others may re-interpret or challenge these views in light of modernity, scientific understanding, or different religious frameworks.

All in all, Witchcraft in the African philosophical mindset is a multifaceted concept that reflects deep rooted spiritual, social and cultural diamensions. The practice encompasses both positive and negative elements often serving as a means of understanding and navigating the complexities of human existanceand the community dynamics.

1.2.4 Witchcraft in Uganda: Trends and Development

In Uganda the concept of witchcraft is deep rooted, with each society having its local word. For example in Busoga society of Eastern Uganda, the local word for witchcraft is “*Bulogo*” (Isiko, 2019); for the Banyoro society of Western Uganda “*Oburogo*” (Beattie, 1965). For the Madi and Acholi societies of the north, witchcraft is “*O’le*” (Magesa, 1977), and for Buganda witchcraft is “*Eddogo*” (Ssekamwa, 1967), among others. The belief in and the practice of witchcraft has been in existence in Uganda since pre-colonial times (Isiko, 2018).

In Uganda one way of understanding the reality of witchcraft and dealing with it is linked to the parable of the mole among the Basoga of Eastern Uganda as given below.

“Mama planted a garden of cassava roots. She cut up cassava seedlings from the previous crops bountiful harvest. She cut stems as per traditional standards to ensure maximum yield. She had helping digging holes, ferrying, placing and covering the cuttings in the holes. Mama prayed for rain. The Lord God of heaven and earth sent sufficient rain to water the crops invigorating the nutrients in the soil to nurture the crop to a healthy situation. Also the sun came in its right time, draining the earth of extra moisture that would choke the crops. The plants took root and grew strong, when she walked her gardens, Mama smiled at the green luxuriant leaves and was sure to have a great bounty-she would be rich in food this harvest, she would share some of it with her neighbours and with it nurture some relationships. Harvest arrived with great anticipation. She dug and behold! Unbeknownst to her, for a month a mole had corrupted her roots only a few had survived. What Mama found beneath the surface demoralized her. What can she do? How will she deal with the underground moles effect on her crop? How can

she prevent wasting her labour and thwarting her hope the next time?” (Magoola, 2013: 101).

Witchcraft in Uganda is a difficult practise to deal with as it is equated to the mole that destroyed Mama’s cassava before the time for harvest. This is equated to witchcraft because the mole affects the cassava and yet Mama cannot see it. Witchcraft in Uganda is like the mole, it is rarely seen, difficult to articulate or its ways are new or unknown (Magoola, 2013: 101).

Unlike Magoola (2013: 101) who demonstrates witchcraft as a difficult concept using the example of the mole, Isiko (2018) clearly uses the same society of Busoga of Eastern Uganda to conceptualise the concept of Witchcraft. To Isiko (2018) witchcraft is conceptualized as the use of mystical power for wicked purposes and usually applied in secrecy. He goes ahead to say that the practice takes two forms that is Night dancer or Basezi and socerers or Balogo. Night dancers are driven by a mystical power called “Ekitambo” unlike the socerers or Balogo who are not driven by any mystical power.

Following the same concept of witchcraft, in Uganda, witchcraft in some societies like that of Busoga, it is looked at an institution having positive and negative ramifications on the society. Positively, it helps to check on excesses of some people for example, politicians consult them claiming that they give advice that lead to good governance (Isiko, 2019). Similarly witchcraft belief leads to stunted economic development as individuals look at the practice as the only way of amassing wealth making them fail to work (Isiko, 2019).

Unlike the Busoga society that looks at witchcraft as being both positive and negative (Isiko, 2019), to the Lango society, witchcraft is typically seen as evil oriented (Abrahams, 1985). A witch among the lango is expected to confess that he/she is a witch and incase one conceals, one

is beaten until one confesses, made to sit with the buttocks on a barbed wire or even walk on it bare foot . Witches in Lango are of many types including, poisoning (wallow), those who spoil child birth (ading), those who destroy peoples crops, night dancers, those who drop medicine on peoples feet, causing elephantiasis, those who attack someones testacles and the evil eye (Abrahams, 1985) unlike those of Busoga who take two forms that is, Night dancers or the Basezi and the Balogo or Socerers (Isiko, 2018).

In the Gishu society of Eastern Uganda, there is a strong belief held on witchcraft particularly to men and others to women. Like the Basoga of Eastern Uganda with several forms of witchcraft Isiko (2019), the Bagishu as well have several of them, for example the Bagishu have '*Buyaza*' which is done by putting the backbone of a snake into ones belongings and calling upon the snake to attack him/her. Another form is '*Gamalogo*' which was particular to women and '*Gamasala*' which was with men and required the use of pieces of food leftovers, put in a cocoon of poisonous caterpillar and placed in the thatch of the victims hut (Suzette,1986). The men applied a method known as '*Nabulungu*' to bewitch cattle. Another method also used by men involved burying a small flat woven basket in the ground outside the intended victims hut and this method is known as '*Mutabula*'.

In the lugbara society however, witches are clearly distinguished from sorcerers. Witches are men especially elders and sorcerers are women and young men (Middleton, 1963). Both witches and sorcerers are feared but can be dealt with by diviners who can easily identify them. Unlike in other societies where witchcraft is a mere practice Suzette (1986), in the Lugbara society witchcraft is linked to the lineage system and practised to safeguard their lineage from being wiped away by their enemies (Middleton, 1963).

Generally nearly all societies in Uganda practise witchcraft, the motivations for the practice seems to be the same as most point to defence against their enemies for example in Busoga (Isiko, 2019; Suzette, 1986; Beattie,1967 etal). The diversionary point in most of the societies is the treatment of those suspected to be witches for example in the Lugbara society, they are dealt with by the diviners (Middleton, 1963), made to confess among the Gishu (Suzette, 1986) and in Buganda they are supposed to be burnt alive (Roscoe, 1915) among others. Therefore witchcraft remains a common and contentious subject in most of the Ugandan societies and in the lives of many people.

1.2.5 Contextual setting of Bunyoro society

In the context of Bunyoro, a region in Uganda, witchcraft has deep roots intertwined with local beliefs and practices. In this society, the practice is is part of a broader spiritual and cosmological system. It is often intergrated into the traditional belief system where spiritual spiritual forces and ancestral spirits play important roles in the daily life of the Banyoro. The practice is closely linked with the Banyoro local customs, rituals and the societal norms. However like in other societies, the practice is perceived with fear suspicion particularly when there are serious accusations of malevolent intentions.

Beattie (1965) while discussing witchcraft or sorcery in Bunyoro, indicates that sorcery existed in Precolonial times. On the same note, Dunbar (1965) shows that when the beloved cow (Bihogo) in Bunyoro Kitara Empire died, it is the witch doctors who were called upon to dissect the cow to find out the cause of its death and what was found out is that the cow did not have intestines and this was attributed to misfortune. The presence of the concept of witchdoctors

(Abafumu) and misfortune or '*Ekisiraani*' before the advent of the Colonialists in Bunyoro indicates that witchcraft has lived for generations in the society.

Although colonialism and the introduction of Christianity have affected the societies' traditional practices, including witchcraft itself, some aspects have been suppressed or re-interpreted, but what remains significant is that the practice remains and continues to be an important part of the cultural and spiritual phenomenon in Bunyoro. Witchcraft in Bunyoro is not considered as a form of religion but rather a component of the broader spiritual and cultural practice of the Banyoro people. This is because, the practice involves the worship of ancestors, spiritual entities and deities. This is embedded into spiritual beliefs that are not usually separated into a distinct religious system. This shows that the practice is a significant traditional spiritual practice but not a religion in the society. It is a form of complex spiritual and cultural system of the Banyoro that includes ancestral worship and other traditional beliefs.

All in all, the origins and practices of witchcraft in Bunyoro continues to reflect a complex interplay of traditional beliefs, ancestral worship and social functions within the society.

1.2.5.1 Geography and demography of Bunyoro

Bunyoro is an area or region where the Banyoro (the people of Bunyoro) live, Munyoro is anyone who is a native of Bunyoro. The prefix (bu) is used for the region hence Bunyoro, prefix (ba) for plural, hence Banyoro are the people who live in Bunyoro (Byaruhanga, 1982). The current Bunyoro comprises of eight districts that is; Hoima, Masindi, Kibaale, Buliisa, Kakumiro, Kiryandongo, Kagadi and Kikube districts. Infact today Bunyoro is known as the "oil region" following the discovery of oil in the region. The Banyoro speak the language known as Runyoro (Twesigye, 1995). The language has many dialects spread between different districts.

The dialect Rusindi is spoken in Masindi, while the dialect of Ruchope is common in Kiryandongo district. The third dialect is Rugahya, commonly spoken in the districts of Hoima and Kikuube. The fourth dialect, Rugungu is spoken in the districts of Buliisa, and Rugangaizi in Kibaale, Kakumiro, and Kagadi. None the less, all dialects used in the different districts are understood by most the Banyoro with minimal difficulties.

Bunyoro is not a monolithic sub-region but a multifaceted and heterogenous society with a number of other languages like the Alurs, Basoga, Bachope, Gishu, Lugbara among others (Dorbress & Hoffman, 1999). These variations in dialects and the presence of other peoples have an impact on the terminologies that will be used in analyzing witchcraft hence significant in the study. Bunyoro is one of the sub regions that make up the western part of Uganda. Bunyoro is bordered by Gulu and Apach in the North, Mubende, Kyenjojo Kabarole and Bundibugyo in the South, Nakasongola and Kiboga in the East and Lake Albert in the West (Byaruhanga, 1982 & Twesigye, 1995).

These geographical boundaries are significant to the study because the practioners of witchcraft some times may cross borders in order to get aid from the practitioners of witchcraft in Bunyoro. There existed no written history about Bunyoro society before the arrival of the first Europeans in 1862 (Dunbar, 1965). However, Bunyoro's history was based on oral tradition but later the Banyoro recorded their traditions that was linked to three dynasties of the Batembuzi, the Bachwezi and the Babito.

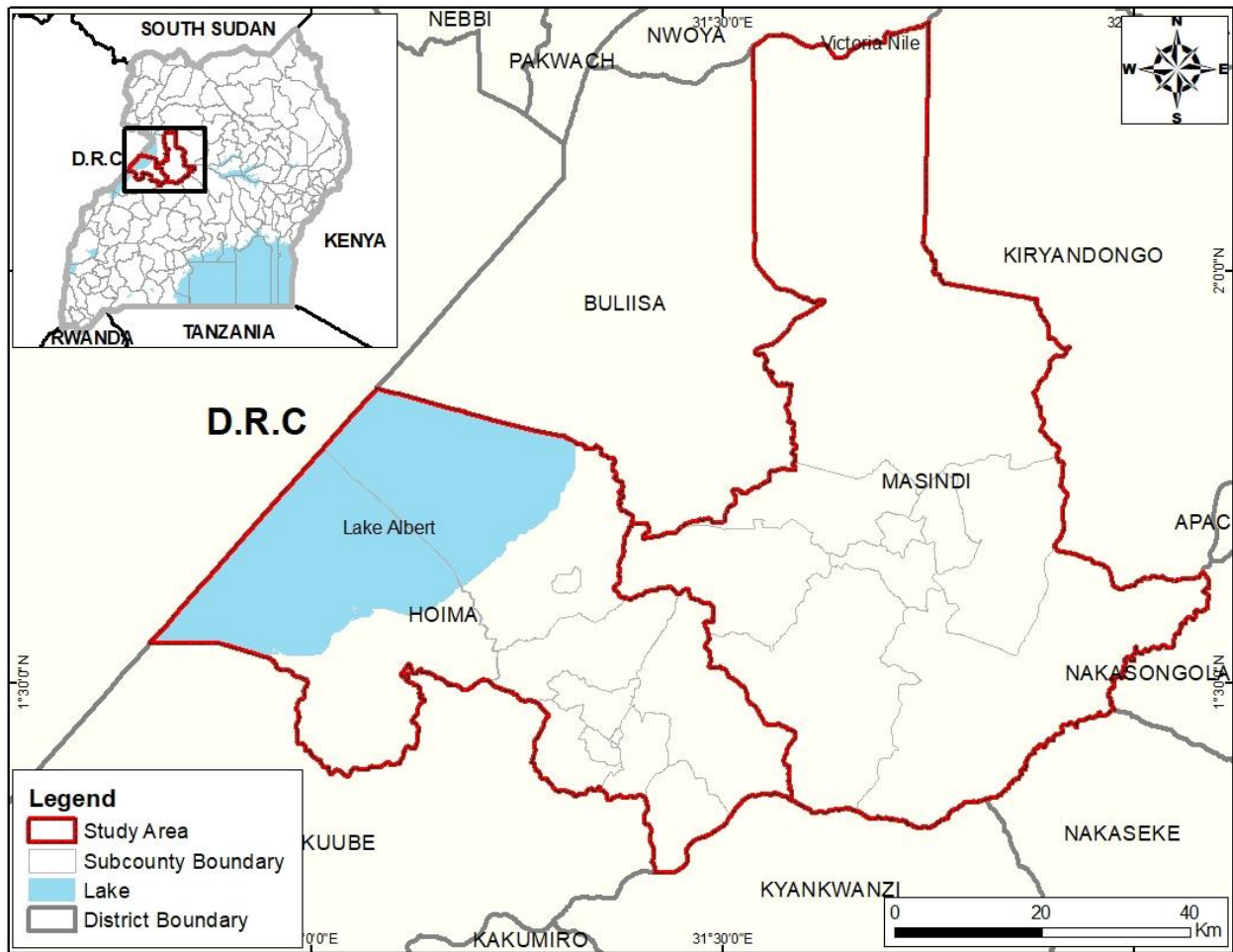


Figure 1: The sketch map showing the study areas

1.2.5.2 The political setting of Bunyoro society

The Bunyoro sub-region comprise a cultural society- kingdom under the leadership of a Monarch, with the tilte of ‘Omukama’ (Byaruhanga, 1982). In pre-colonial times, Bunyoro kingdom stretched as far as Karagwe in Tanzania, Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Wanga in present day Kenya. Through British colonial rule, the Kingdom was greatly decimated, and what remains and refered to as Bunyoro Kingdom in the present is simply a remnant of that great pre-colonial Bunyoro- Kitara empire (Twesigye,1995).

Politically, the pre-colonial Kingdom had absolute authority over his subjects (Kasfir, 2019). He appointed the county chiefs or (abakuru abamasaza) to administer each county. Below them were the sub-county chiefs or abaamagombora who were the sub county administrators who received reports from the parish chiefs and the (abemiruuka) and the lower chiefs (Abatongole), (Dunbar, 1965). At the very grassroots were the village chiefs (abakuru b'emigongo) and with this there would be easy flow of information and later on the office of the prime minister (Omuhikiirwa) was created to head the civil services of the entire kingdom where all the county chiefs reported and he reported to the king (Twesigye, 1995).

However this later changed following the abolition of Kingdoms in Uganda by the new Republican constitution of 1967 because Dr Apollo Milton Obote feared that Sir Edward Mutesa II would topple his government and the Kingdom was later restored in 1993 by the 1995 constitution (Kasfir, 2019). In 1967 all the Kingdoms were abolished including that of Bunyoro and this forced the Monarch into exile but later the 1995 constitution re-instated the traditional Kingdoms and their Kings (Kasfir, 2019). This led to the protection of the Kings as the regional cultural entities. The protection of the kings as cultural entities however made the king loyal to the government unlike before the abolition of the Kingdoms where the Kings had more powers than even the Presidents (Twesigye, 1995). This is because the restoration of the Kings in 1993 brought nothing as far as the political and the direct influence that was enjoyed by the Omukamas' great predecessors but instead it seems that the leadership is partially based on the present British model that only allows the King to 'Preside' but not to rule directly in any meaningful fashion (Byaruhanga, 1982). Because of the British model system, that renders him powerless, it has made the people take up certain practices in the society witchcraft inclusive (Wills, 2006). Today the role of the Monarch is therefore to serve as symbol of Bunyoro-Kitara

Kingdom but sometimes his personal views especially on politics and the socio- religious matters are voiced out directly to the government of Uganda especially when he strongly believes that the matters are of National importance (Byaruhanga,1982).

1.2.5.3 The economic setting of Bunyoro society

Economically, Bunyoro had fertile soils that enabled people to grow plenty of food for home consumption and the surplus was sold to the neighbouring communities through the use of hand hoes (Roscoe, 1915). Due to the presence of lake Albert or lake (Mwitanzige), fishing was carried out in Bunyoro, hunting was also carried out using locally made tools for killing animals (Roscoe 1923), while the big animals were killed using dug deep pits ‘Obuhya’ (Maclean, 1995). For this reason there was exchange of dry meat locally known as (Omukaro) with food stuffs. All these are believed to have been done with some tightly controlled process of some sort in this case witchcraft (Austen & Headrick 1983). There was also salt mining and processing at Kibiro and this is still ongoing though on a small scale. Those near Kibiro or (Abanya-Kibiro) got their living through the exchange of this salt and fish (Dobress & Hoffman, 1999). The Banyoro also produced a number of wooden items, hides and skins, sisal, iron and stone items, pottery and many others on (Maclean, 1995). These were either sold or exchanged for other items that they needed. In the production process of all the above goods, witchcraft is sought to have been behind them (Austen & Headrick 1983).

Today the society practices agriculture growing various crops for example cassava, coffee, rice, cotton, millet, yarms, maize, sweet potatoes, sugarcane among others. Some of these crops are grown with the help of (ekirenga) to mean booster that helps them to attain high yield during harvest, plant leaves as well as wooden sticks (Beattie, 1967). The crops used in the practice of

witchcraft, wooden sticks among others dictates the crops the crops that are to be grown in Bunyoro thus the agricultural setting of Bunyoro is vital for this study. The society also practices cattle keeping and rear animals like cows, goats sheep, among others that are kept not only for meat, sale or other purposes but witchcraft inclusive as well (Dunbar, 1965). The colours of the animals reared are also restricted depending on the demands of witchcraft for example, animals that are purely black and purely white are reared (Beatie,1967) and not animals with spots because they are taken to be impure.

Therefore, the type of animals and there are essential in witchcraft practice in Bunyoro. Besides the animals, birds are essential as well in witchcraft practice and they are specific and unique, for example chicken reared are locally called (kisseissere), with raised feathers, pigeons are reared as well in some families and they carry charms to the enemies of the witch. This is also common among the Basoga of Eastern Uganda (Isiko, 2019). The witcdoctors prefer them in Bunyoro because of their uniqueness that is essential in their witchcraft practices. Notably, other birds like chicken without raised feathers are also kept on small and large scale for both home consumption, for sale as well as for the practise of witchcraft. Therefore keeping birds is central to the practice of witchcraft in African societies Bunyoro inclusive.

1.2.5.4 The social cultural and religious setting of Bunyoro

Every munyoro belongs to a clan (oruganda) for singular and (enganda) for plural. The clan was a collective group of people who descended from the same ancestor. Bunyoro has forty six clans with the areas of the land named after the clan which lived there (Dubar, 1965). For example, Buyaga was the area of the Bayaga clan, Buruli for the Baruli clan, Bugahya for the Bagahya

clan among others with Mulindwa being the goddess who protected the royal clan. Each clan had its own protective deity and their own totem-name also locally called (omuziro).

No one is allowed to marry a member of their own clan except the royal clan. Kings are and were allowed to marry their own cousins and it is known that several married their sisters. Some of the clan deities included; Isaza, the god of the moon and early ruler of the Banyoro; Muhigo, the god of war locally known as Ruhanga- wobulemu; Ndahura, the god of health and epidemics; Nyakakaikuru, the goddess of the sun; Mugizi, the god of rivers and lakes, and was therefore in charge of lake Mwitanzige, also known as lake Albert; Kiigara, god of cattle, responsible for the protection of cattle from diseases; and finally Kaikara was a goddess of the harvest (Dubar, 1965; Beattie, 1967).

However, following the introduction of Christianity in Bunyoro in the early 19th century, the status and the prestige of the religious function of the Omukama continued to reduce (Wills,2006), the deities that were worshiped ceased to be worshiped openly and now started to be worshiped in secrecy, some of the practices such as witchcraft also gained root in Bunyoro in order to counteract Christianity (Beattie, 1967). Although Christianity was introduced, the Banyoro remained with their traditional practices that they had deep rooted themselves into witchcraft (Wills, 2006). Therefore the persistence of witchcraft amidst the introduction of foreign religions like Christianity makes the study significant as the study will establish the reasons for the continued practice. The Banyoro name their children depending on many conditions. To some, sorrowful names are given, names relating to poverty as well as those related to the practice of witchcraft for example like ‘Baligenda’ meaning that they will go, ‘Tindyebwa’ meaning that I will never forget, ‘Byembandwa’ meaning spirit possession (Beattie, 1967) among others. People with such names will be of great value to the study as they may be

conversant with the subject in question. The Banyoro have a rich culture of greeting through the use of *Empaako* meaning the 'Praise name' (Byaruhanga, 1982).

The Banyoro fear death very much and attribute it to sorcerers ghosts and other malevolent non human agents (Twesigye, 1995 & Dunbar, 1967 etal). In some spheres death was also attributed to be a result of bad neighbours. Generally, the Banyoro provide a wide range of magical means of killing others for example, whenever a person had a grudge with some one, it was believed to be as a result of ill-wishers or those he had grudges with. This explains the reason as to why if a person died with grudges against anyone, in the family, his/her mouth and anus would be staffed with clay (Beattie, 1967). This was intended to prevent his/her ghost from coming out of the corpse to trouble those with whom the dead person had a grudges.

1.3 Problem Statement

The Banyoro people have continued to exhibit lack of a clear and consistent understanding of witchcraft despite the practice being wide spread in society (Beattie, 1963). This ambiguity has led to misconceptions, with some individuals viewing all forms of traditional practices as witchcraft while others still struggle to differentiate between the Banyoro culturally accepted practices from the malevolent practices in the society. This confusion has led to false accusations, social conflicts and subsequent declining respect for the indigenous knowledge systems (Beatteie 1960 & Mbiti 1969). As a result, social conflicts, stigmatization and erosion of authentic cultural and traditional practices are increasing showing that there is need for a comprehensive and accurate understanding of witchcraft practice within the Bunyoro community. In this respect, the study sought to conceptualize the understanding of witchcraft in Bunyoro

society, an earth the motivations for the practice as well as explore the subsequent impact of the practice on Bunyoro society.

1.3.1 Research objectives

- To explore the understanding, motivations and impact of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- (i) To explore the understanding of witchcraft according to Bunyoro society
- (ii) To investigate the motivations of the practice in Bunyoro society
- (iii) To examine the impact of witchcraft on Bunyoro society

1.3.3 Research questions

- (i) What is the understanding of witchcraft according to Bunyoro society?
- (ii) How is witchcraft practiced in Bunyoro society?
- (iii) What is the impact of witchcraft on Bunyoro society?

1.3.4 Significance of the study

Theoretically, the study will be significant as it will inform the readers of what the practise is, when they become aware, they will have less fear of it, spend less time and money. The study will also add on the body of knowledge on to the future researchers in the same or related field of witchcraft. This is because, the study will contribute to the understanding of what witchcraft is according to Bunyoro society, motivations of the practice and later the impact of the practice on the society. Practically, the study was projected to advance the various ways of how witchcraft is

practiced in the society. This will help to inform the policy implementers for example the Resident district commissioners, Members of Parliament, Police personnel among others on how to implement government programs for example the Parish Development Model in such places that are feared by informing them on how such societies could be approached without any harm.

1.3.5 Scope of the study

1.3.6 Geographical scope

The study was limited to Bunyoro society, in the districts of Hoima and Masindi. These districts were identified for the study because, Hoima is the Capital city of Bunyoro, it is where the Kingdom headquarters are located and it is where the Cultural ministers could easily be found who were one of the key respondents in the study. More so, the district is where original Runyoro is spoken, a language central to the understanding of such traditional practices of Bunyoro. On the other hand, Masindi district was selected because of the invasions of other tribes who have influenced the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society and yet relevant to the study. More so, this district was quite familiar to the researcher henceforth data collection would be easy.

1.3.7 Time Scope

The study attempted to uncover the conceptualisation and understanding of witchcraft in Bunyoro society across time. This is because witchcraft practice transcends the past, present and the future because it existed, still exists and will continue to exist. This is because just as divination, studies concerning traditional practices do not always have time frame as they have been there for generations and are still present in cultures to present day (Taylor, 2006:1)

1.3.8 Content scope

The study focused on exploring witchcraft practise in Bunyoro society. In this respect, the researcher explored what the society considered to be witchcraft, how one became a witch, the characteristics and categories of witches in Bunyoro society. Additionally, terminologies used in describing witches, methods involved in the practice and the tools used in the practice of witchcraft were also investigated. The content scope also focused on the healing and preventive measures motivations for witchcraft practice in Bunyoro as well exploring the subsequent impact of the practice on the society.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1 Theoretical and Conceptual understanding of witchcraft

The word ‘witchcraft’ remains a difficult word to define. This is because the practice itself remains unknown to many except those who practise it (Shelag, 2014 & Ashforth, 2005). The word has however been defined differently by different schools of thought from anthropology, political science, and the religious point of view among others. There exists no whole -

embracing definition of witchcraft, as some are compounded with ignorance and falsification while others with prejudice (Ashforth, 2005).

Anthropologists are said to be the first to define the term witchcraft (Mbiti, 1969). According to Anthropologists, witchcraft is a mystical and innate power, which is used by its possessors to harm other people (Pritchard, 1937). This definition followed his detailed, empathetic study of the Azande, of colonial Sudan. To him, witchcraft, is a substance found beneath the xiphoid cartilage which is a small extension of the bone below the sternum or the breastbone that it is made up of cartilage at birth but can develop into a bone in adulthood.

To the Anthropologists, witchcraft is innate power but can also be acquired through buying it from the possessors who may need to sell some power to others. Innate power is not sold but witchcraft that is acquired through other means is what can be sold. However this depends on the consent of the seller because the seller is supposed to be willing to sell or else the buyer may not be in position to acquire the power. Anthropologists understand witchcraft as inherited, for example, from father to son and from mother to daughter. Among the Azande, the sons and daughters of a male witch can become witches whereas the daughters of a female witch can become witches whereas the sons can not. To the Azande, therefore, witchcraft is not only a physical trait but also inherited. Therefore witchcraft to the Azande seems to be biological following the relationship it has with the body parts and its biological transmission as analyzed above among the Azande, (Pritchard, 1937).

Later on, other anthropologists represented by Mbiti (1978) defined witchcraft as a manifestation of mystical forces inherited, innate or acquired in many other ways. This means that witchcraft is a kind of mystical power possessed by certain individuals in an inherited or innate manner. Offiong (1991), as one of the late 19th century anthropologists, defines witchcraft as a natural

exercise of evil by persons who were possessed with malevolent powers which can be employable to hurt people. This seems to neglect the view put forward by other anthropologists because it centers only on natural power and yet Pritchard (1937) tries to elaborate that witchcraft could be bought from the possessor. The witch - to - be, according to Pritchard (1937), is initiated by the senior witch or head of all the witches after the training that may take weeks or even months and on the last day the witches or witch who has been on training are made to swear that they will not harm the senior witches and will use the power well.

To the political scientists represented by (Shelag, 2014), witchcraft is defined as the supernatural ability of an individual to cause harm to others. This definition put forward by the political scientists is related to that of anthropologists on grounds that in both, the intention of witchcraft is to cause harm. It deviates from the angles of mysticism and innate as the former points to witchcraft as being innate and mystical unlike the later that points to none.

On the contrary, the above definitions are quite different from those who define witchcraft from the religious point of view represented by Mugambi (2012). These define witchcraft as the “abuse” of “religion” for selfish and malevolent purpose whether on one’s own or on behalf other agents. Mugambi (2012), defines abuse of religion as the act of using religion to perform evil acts. Though this is slightly related to the anthropological definition because both point at harm as the main intention of witchcraft, this definition seems to be compounded with ignorance, because the definition does not show the religion that is being abused, how is the religion abused, does not point whether the harm is psychological or physical and also never show that some societies have no religion. Some could abuse religion because of lack of faith, and illness could be mental like running mad, swelling of the legs and stomach among others. This makes the

definition put forward by those from religious studies appear to be compounded with ignorance and falsification.

However some authors do not define the concept following any field as the cases has been as seen above but rather writes without leaning to any (Offiong 1991, Harwood 1970 & Doran 1992). For example, witchcraft is defined as a natural exercise of evil by persons who are possessed with malevolent innate powers which can be used to hurt people (Offiong, 1991). This means that there are some individuals who are possessed with harmful powers that are innate and use them to cause harm to those who may or may not possess similar power. This is always through the use a physical substance that is innate and neutral (Harwood, 1970). The term neutral in this case is taken to denote that the substance of witchcraft causes both fortunes and misfortune.

Witchcraft is also defined as a convulsing evil that make most people suffer from psychological defeat and because they cannot explain it they reduce it to witchcraft attacks (Doran, 1992). However, witchcraft is not a mere psychological matter but could also be physical. It is a psychological matter because it causes, madness and dullness whereas physical harm includes severe headache, body swelling especially the stomach and the foot, eyes itching depending on the intention of the witch.

Following the above definitions put forward by different authors from various fields, I will interest my self with the field of anthropology to put forward a definition of witchcraft although it is also liable to criticism. The anthropological theory will be used because the practice is embedded in the traditional beliefs, practices and norms of the Banyoro. Therefore, I will define witchcraft as a form of sorcery that is innate or inborn and mystical super human power acquired in various ways. Witchcraft being innate simply means that, it can be acquired at birth from the

parents and not necessarily being learnt or even being bought as the case is with the Azande of Colonial Sudan (Pritchard, 1937).

However, contrary to this, not all defeats are as a result of witchcraft as Doran (1992) puts. As some could be as a result of failure to explain unseen circumstances beyond human understanding. Witchcraft includes a set of actions, practices, and behaviour that certain people actually perform to supposedly lead to terrible effects like spell casting in order to cause harm or even death to the intended victim (Kohnert, 2007). Pritchard (1937) defines witchcraft as a mystical and innate power which is used by its possessor to hurt others. Notably, this is in line with Magesa (1997) who argues that witchcraft resides in various organs of the body especially the blood, hair and the liver from where it is sent to the victim by its possessor.

Consequently, the concept of witchcraft is compounded with related concepts including sorcery and magic. For example as already noted, Bailey (2003) defines witchcraft as a harmful form of sorcery by malevolent individuals who existed virtually throughout human history. Similarly Braid (1983) defines witchcraft as the use of magic to manipulate persons and things through the use of words and objects. Additionally, (Beattie, 1963) refers to witchcraft as sorcery and for this reason there is need to look at the relationship between witchcraft, magic and sorcery as it has been used by some authors as seen above while trying to define the concept of witchcraft.

1.4.2 Relationship between Witchcraft, Magic and Sorcery

Witchcraft, Magic and Sorcery are concepts of enduring interests for many reasons and the chief reason being their extraordinary inter-disciplinarity among the three (Geschiere, 1997). There is a strong relationship between the three concepts and one could use one concept interchangeably to refer to the other. Magic is the manipulation of forces of nature for one's benefit or group benefit

(Pritchard, 1937). Magic is always positive driven in most of the societies and rarely relates to evil as it is always done for the good of the society; for example in Rome and Greece, Magic was employed in all societies to produce rain, prevent hailstorms, drive away clouds among others and this is called good magic (Huggins, 1965).

Similarly in Tanzania when there was too much drought and rain makers were approached, they used magic to manipulate nature and caused rain to fall to the extent of causing flooding (Mbiti, 1969). This story of floods concludes with the arrest of these great rain makers for having caused too much rain that led to the destruction of peoples' crops and houses (Mbiti, 1969). The above discourse points to the positive nature of magic showing the goodness of magic. Good magic is accepted and esteemed in the society, it is used by specialists such as medicine men, diviners and rain makers (Nkonge, 2014). These specialists use their knowledge to tap into this power for the benefit of their community for example the treatment of diseases, counteracting misfortunes and destroying evil powers of witchcraft.

On the other hand, there is also evil magic and this is the power tapped and used to harm human beings and their property. The use of magic in an evil way to harm human beings and their property is what is termed as sorcery (Nkonge, 2014). Sorcery involves the use of poisonous ingredients in the food or drink of the intended victim (Mbiti, 1969). Sorcerers are those people who tap the power to harm human beings and their properties and for this reason they are greatly feared and hated in the societies where they exist. Sorcerers are known to cause all sorts of misfortunes for example accidents, still births and other forms of deaths. To Wyk (2004), sorcerers practice their evil during the day, are mostly men, cannot leave their bodies and do not kill or harm randomly but kill or harm for specific reasons. To Pritchard the sorcerers kill because of greed, envy and jealousy (Pritchard, 1976). When magic is used maliciously or with

evil motives like those above, such mystical power is termed as black magic, evil magic or sorcery (Nkonge, 2014).

In African societies, black colour is esteemed as evil and devilish and explains why Nkonge (2014) used the term black magic to denote the evil nature of magic, another argument could lean in favour of the Eurocentric view as opposed to the Afrocentric view. This argument esteems white colour as holiness as opposed to black colour that denotes evil. Magic and sorcery are related to witchcraft through the use of supernatural powers and because both involve causing harm. Therefore the above is a conceptual relationship between witchcraft, Magic and Sorcery that needs to be understood especially while trying to understand witchcraft in order to avoid using these concepts interchangeably to mean witchcraft.

Despite, the relationship between witchcraft, magic and sorcery, some authors disregard the existence of witchcraft and look at it as a tragic error and a failure to explain the ills in their lives (Parrinder, 1963). This is because there is no palpable apparatus connected to witchcraft, no rites, ceremonies, incantations or even invocations that the witch has to perform. Infact to Parrinder (1963) witchcraft does not exist. But this is totally different from Pritchard (1937) who discuss the rites, ceremonies and invocations the Azande perform. Parrinder (1963) goes on to say that the belief in witchcraft is a tragic error and a false explanation of the ills of the lives and one that has only led to cruel and baseless oppression in which countless people have suffered. In any case he could never have experienced witchcraft because to those who have lived and experienced it cannot refer to witchcraft as a tragic error and a false explanation of the ills of the peoples' lives as Parrinder (1963) puts it.

However to some degree, Parrinder could be right because there are people who are deep rooted in the belief that every illness and challenge in life is because of witchcraft even when reason

may suggest otherwise (Staub, 1999). This denotes that those who believe in witchcraft are wrong because they fail to explain the ills of their lives. Parrinder's view is however contrary to that of Pritchard while describing witchcraft among the Azande of colonial Sudan. During his description, the Azande have rites, ceremonies invocations among others. For example there is a ceremony for buying witchcraft which includes the cooking of oils and medicines that are to be swallowed by a person and given to a person by the senior witch when he or she wishes to become one. This comes with consent and good will of the one selling witchcraft (Pritchard, 1937). This denotes that when sold to another without good will and consent, witchcraft may not work.

Despite some authors disregarding the existence of witchcraft like Parrinder (1963), to some witchcraft is a reality, lived and experienced, not seen but evidenced in the outcomes (Amadou, 2010). To illustrate more on the reality of witchcraft, every community knows its witches and knowledge about them circulates in the communities in the form of rumors and gossip (Ashforth, 2005). The knowledge about witches is always in the form of rumours and gossip in the communities because no one comes out openly to confess that he or she is a witch. Among the Azande of colonial Sudan, Pritchard (1937) argues that both men and women can become witches.

However, for a woman who is a witch and has both sons and daughters, it is only the daughters who can inherit her witchcraft and the man with sons and daughters has all the powers of making all his children to inherit his witchcraft. This is because the Azande believe that a man has both souls that is; a male and female soul and that is why any of his children can inherit witchcraft unlike the woman who has only the female soul. This therefore means that witchcraft is gender based as far as inheritance is concerned among the Azande. As witchcraft is a complex belief

system of African societies, its understanding is compounded with daily experience (Kohnert,1996).

Within many African societies, knowledge about witchcraft is best known by those who have been initiated into the practice (Ashforth, 2005). Witchcraft is secret knowledge and this makes the causes of witchcraft hard to ascertain because they too may be best explained by the witches themselves. This is because Africans look at witchcraft as a science with secret knowledge and its secrecy is an essential core (Ashforth, 2005). It is secret because not everyone has the knowledge about witchcraft hence its knowledge is an essential core because that knowledge is used to venture into the circumstances that are beyond human understanding and explanation.

1.4.3 Motivations for witchcraft practice in Society

Most people naturally want to understand the reasons for the hardships and disasters they have to suffer in the society, what seen and unseen powers are responsible for their suffering, why are certain people favoured by good fortune, while others cannot escape their endless misery (Brain, 1982). This is because African culture readily applies cause-and-effect reasoning to ordinary daily matters and to familiar physical surroundings, but where common-sense explanations fail, invisible forces are seen to be at work (Staub, 1999). Apart from the ancestors, the influence of other unseen forces tends to be assumed, such as witchcraft, evil, demons and spirits. The ancestors sometimes punish their offspring for neglecting them, but basically they are benevolent. The most immediate existential threat is expected from living people who enlist evil forces by means of witchcraft (Brain, 1982).

In most African societies, the living conditions and the social status of ordinary people used to be more or less the same because when someone became rich, the neighbours could think of only

witchcraft. In the same respect, the same was thought of when someone suddenly achieved a social or political status well above his peers (Brain, 1982). Even if witchcraft is not truly suspected, the accusation will often arise out of envy or jealousy. The very concept of personal advancement and prosperity are a result of personal endeavour, hard work and knowledge is not an inherent part of African life rather a struggle venture. Such use of evil magic for selfish ends is viewed as seriously threatening the well being of the whole community, and is dealt with accordingly (Leistener, 2005)

Witchcraft is invariably suspected when accidents happen, when a person dies, except at an old age; when serious illness befalls man or animals; when there is drought or when hail destroys crops. Such misfortunes typically do not arise to the question of how they came about, but why they afflict a particular group or person and not others and the foremost question, however, is who is responsible for causing the affliction, why the affliction, and who is responsible for the affliction (Leistener, 2005). This is always the case when the understanding of the affliction is limited in the minds of the people. These are the two questions people anxiously want to be answered whenever they suspect witchcraft.

Where people live closely together and are inextricably dependent on one another, even if they hate each other, possibilities for tension are unlimited. Most frequently it is jealousy and envy that cause trouble (Kohnert 2007, Pritchard, 1937 & Staub 1999). This is often the case between co-women where one feels that the other has been unfairly favoured by their husband; jealousy may arise between mother and daughter-in-law if the latter's migrant husband sends her wife money rather than to the mother; a brother may be jealous of his more gifted brother; success in farming may incite the envy of less successful neighbours, excellence in business even though the other may lack skill can lead to jealousy hence witchcraft (Leistener, 2005). Such issues can

make the envious person consult a professional witch in order to outdo others or to harm someone. Therefore, as stated above, anyone could be a witch by harbouring strong feelings of hatred against a particular person for example a friend, relative or even a neighbour.

Anyone can potentially bear ill-will against a person close to him or her and be out to cause him/her harm. Peoples behaviours have roots, people have needs and will always be desperate to turn to anything that will help them to meet those needs especially during crisis and when the crisis is immediate (Staub, 1999). Different individuals will always acknowledge the existence of alternative solutions since they may have needs that have to be met. Kohnert (1983) inclines to the same idea by enlisting reasons for the practice of witchcraft though may not be very clear, rather are due to psycho-social reaction to the African crisis. He situates the causes of witchcraft from political, social, economic and religious. This is because, it is for the above reasons that the practice is done. Staub (1999) gives reasons like the need to live, the need to protect oneself from enemies as there are those who do not wish them well in the society. The witches have evil eyes and do not wish others well especially when they are prospering.

Witchcraft is also motivated by four factors that include; hatred, envy, jealousy and greed (Pritchard, 1937). The less prosperous you are, the less educated, the less you are loved among others, the lesser the envy, hatred and jealousy one is likely to face in the society and vice versa.

Therefore witchcraft is likely to be faced by anyone in areas where it is prevalent because all members in the society aim at being better in the Society but the more you are likely to progress in life the higher the chances of being victimized. To the poor, witchcraft is used as a means of struggle against oppression. The rationale behind this kind of reasoning is that, witchcraft vary according to individual circumstances where individuals sometimes are afraid of being killed by local witches or fear of being harassed or accused as witches themselves because the poor

villagers hold it that the rich might have acquired their wealth by occult powers at the expense of their fellows.

However, although witchcraft is known to be evil by many, it is a very powerful tool to reckon with (Isiko 2019, Lilly 2000 & Leighton 1962). Infact it is argued out by the above authors that witchcraft has some functions in the society. To them, and most importantly, (Lilly 2000 & Leighton 1962) strongly provides practical benefits for practicing withcraft. The benefits are categorically in a range of social economic and political spheres. This denotes that the practice has practical benefits that should be esteemed in the society for many reasons. Although the practice may sound evil in the ears of many, witchcraft is beneficial in the social, economic and political ways for example:-

Witchcraft is joyful and lively, more warm and happy much of it has to do with their empathy with nature hence there is nothing as joyful as witchcraft practice (Leighton, 1962). In the past times, people lived hand-in-hand with nature through necessity by being partof nature and not separate from it unlike today where things are changing. Besides witchcraft being a tool for nature protection, It is also a powerful deterrent against evil intentions like stealing, incest and murder (Nkonge 2014 & Isiko 2019). Relatedly, witchcraft '*amalogo*' among the Basoga is a way of protecting ones life and property especially where the practice is evident it is used to scare away some of the bad vices from the people in the society as members coform themselves to the rules of the society. Therefore, witchcraft is used to protect life and property against unauthorized agents like thieves and murderers locally called "*okukinga*" among the Basoga of Eastern Uganda (Isiko, 2019). Because of this, a society with no or limited cases of theft, incest and murderers is created hence hence the practice becoming a security measure in society. Therefore witchcraft should not entirely be looked at as evil but as well as mechanism for

instituting discipline in the society (Isiko, 2019). Witchcraft is also an essential core as far as leisure is concerned, this is because the practice does not only promote but also has resting or public holidays (Lilly, 2000).

The practice of witchcraft has many holy days that are essential in promotion of leisure for example, witches honor the summer, winter and new moon. During these days, the witches celebrate these days by preparing special feasts, rituals, nature honouring ancestors and meditation. These are the special days that are used for leisure. Relatedly, this practice can be practiced from anywhere. This is because though not all but most of the witches have designated places for the practice, witches have sacred places and altars for the practice but in reality it can be practised from anywhere (Lilly, 2000). In other words, during the practice of witchcraft, it is very simple because the only things needed is you, your intentions and the place you can do the practice from. Witchcraft also has an educational function in that it keeps the norms and values of society alive. This is because it teaches a powerful lesson that non-conformity is dangerous thus acts as a strong force for social cohesion (Nkonge, 2014). This means that one should not depart from accepted norms, for any departure could bring isolation and eventual destruction, not only of the individual non-conformist, but also of societal insecurity.

From the sociological perspective, Marwick in Aul (1975) asserts that, witchcraft is an index of social control and is a vice supporting competition which tends to occur between persons in a social relation if their native status are not ascribed by the social structure. To him, this competition develops into tension and conflict if the desire for the object or status competed for is intense and or if the social structure does not eliminate or regulate the competition this tension will project into belief in witchcraft. He further states that witchcraft tends to sustain the social systems of values and thereby making the social system cogent.

From the socio-economic point of view, Olusakins (2013) argues that witchcraft and sorcery would be very instructive. He explains that the economy of many African societies has experienced a serious retrogression due to the operation of witches. These anti-social agents are known to have caused business failure. But despite them causing business failure, they are the same specialists who cause business success. Even when the business is projected to fail, witchcraft can be sought for as the deterrent for business failure. Hence witchcraft is essential in the social- economic structure of any given society.

Witchcraft is also vital in communal sports as it is used to win sports by causing misfortune to the opponets and even death Isiko (2019) for example during a sports competition among the Basoga, each community may consult its witch in order to win the competition. To this effect, the opponents of another community can be made to feel dizzy, blind and in some instances even may die at the eve of the sporting competition and the witch of the community that enables this happen to the opponets is hailed for enabling them to win the competition (Isiko, 2019). Therefore though witchcraft may be looked at as evil, in some societies like that of the Basoga witchcraft is sought for as the only way one or a group of people can win a sporting activity.

Besides Africa, during the European Witch Craze of the 14th to 27th Centuries, the motivations of witchcraft has Christian roots. This is because those who were taken as witches were taken to be “Christians in name” and had forsaken the truth by allying themselves to the most shameful with death by which they sacrificed to and adored devils, commanded demons asking for their aid and yet this was the most shameful subjection (Ben-Yehudah, 1980). In short witchcraft in Europe was motivated by Christians who viewed those who were anti-christian as Satans’ Puppets. Therefore because of witchcraft, there was the witchcraft craze in Europe inorder to answer the need for re-defined boundaries as a result of profound changes in the medieval social order.

In Latin America however, witchcraft also known as 'Brujeria' (Samuel, 2010), was the kind of power that is used to summon ancient demons. This power was manifested especially during trance and magical works especially revealed through the emotions, through the senses and healing (Raquel, 2003). 'Brujeria' or witchcraft in Latin America was motivated by interpersonal client- power specifically regarding to health, labour, family relations as well as career management (Samuel, 2010). Additionally, an individual was likely to be attracted to 'Brujeria' or witchcraft due to poor health conditions, when the family relationship is poor, need for labor as well as need to improve on career (Raquel, 2003 & Samuel, 2010). Witchcraft practice or 'Tantra Sadhna' as known to the Indians is also deep rooted in India especially in the parts of East India (McCoy, 2004). The practice is viewed as a barbaric and illogical practice through which people do illegal and inhumane acts in pretext of removal of evil from society. 'Tantra Sadhna' as known to Indians is motivated by the caste system, superstitions, patriarchy, illiteracy and poverty (Gordon, 1999).

The motivations of witchcraft in Europe are different from those of Asia and Latin America as they have Christian roots yet those of Latin America have roots in the belief of demons without Christian roots (BenYudah, 1980). The motivations of witchcraft in Europe are also different from those of Asia as those of Asia are motivated by the caste system, superstitions, patriarchy, illiteracy and poverty (Gordon, 1999). Although the motivations of witchcraft in Europe have Christian doctrines, they are slightly related to those of Africa. This is because although witchcraft in Europe was a Christian initiative, it was as a result of Jealousy, envy and hatred the Christians had towards the non Christians slightly that relates to the motivations of witchcraft in Africa that are put forward by Pritchard (1937) as greed, jealousy, envy and hatred. Therefore it seems that the motivations of witchcraft have been related across ages and societies and this

makes it relevant to find out whether the above are the same motivations of the practice in Bunyoro.

1.4.4 Impact of witchcraft on Society

Contending with the view elucidated by Awolalu (1978) that witches are said to be responsible for all sorts of misfortunes. In most cases, the effects of witchcraft belief work to the disadvantage of the poor and the deprived as it serves as predominantly an ideology that legitimates oppression and exploitation (Kohnert, 1996). Witches have been treated maliciously in the society leading to grave consequences for instance, in some societies, the witches are killed by stoning, beating them up to death or even strangling them, burying them alive or banishment (Mbiti, 1969 & Magesa, 1997). This leaves them homeless due to the destruction of their homes, with famine as a result of destruction of their crops among others.

Women who are not witches are at the risk group because they do not have a voice or representation in deciding matters affecting their lives. This is because they are not allowed to attend village meetings or prefer not to because of discrimination and also have little or no access to justice, they are prone to being branded the term witches in society (Daniel, 2008). This is followed by banishment from her village by a mob which may include her relatives and even her own children and it becomes worse as some of these allegations happen quite quickly. To add on the issue of women, the elderly women are also at the risk of suffering the accusations that are the most documented worldwide. For example in Tanzania, the non-profit organization reported statistics of various elderly who killed over this matter. In 2003, the government reported more than 3,072 deaths from 1970 although in the 1980 government commission had counted 3693 deaths between just 1970 and 1984 (Oliver, 2005). The same issue was put on the government of

Tanzania's agenda on the women day of 1999 and the National policy of ageing in 2003 acknowledged the need to challenge the outdated customs that are harmful in order to reduce violence against women.

Another risky group that is likely to suffer the consequence of witchcraft is that of the Albinos (Daniel, 2008). These are not killed for performing witchcraft but are killed for the use of aiding witchcraft. This is because their skin is believed to bring good fortune and make people rich (Jeffrey, 2008). In fact even the graves of the albinos were at times robbed due to such belief. In Burundi, six albinos were killed due to such a belief in 2008, similarly in Tanzania a 13 year old albino girl was killed in Tanzania in the same year (Jeffrey, 2008). This was also the case with Nigeria in 2005 where three people were convicted of ritual killing of three albinos. All this put the albinos at a risk of falling victims of witchcraft in different societies. Children throughout the world, have been at the risk of succumbing to witchcraft. Take an example in the neighbourhood of Uganda in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the risk has shifted from the elderly women to children especially the disabled, the badly behaved in the society are more vulnerable to witchcraft accusations. This is because there is a social cleansing of some children that are thought to be undesirable (Oliver, 2005). In fact advocates projected over 25000 street children in Kinshasha to have been kicked out of their homes as a result of witchcraft making it number one cause of homelessness among the youth in Kinshasha (Irish times, 2006).

Additionally in Angola, this has been the same as that of DRC though the treatment is different. In Angola for example a mother using chlorine bleach to blind her daughter and a father injecting his sons stomach with acid are reported (Angola annual protection report, 2006). This is the same as Nigeria where children are burnt, poisoned, slashed, chained to trees, buried alive or even simply beaten and chased off into the bush (Tracy, 2007). Therefore this has been quite

unfortunate for children. With all the above, whether a witch is rightly or falsely accused, his or her life is always at stake (Nkonge, 2014). This is because of the negative attitude towards the witches in the society. Besides his or her life being at stake, all the friends, family and in fact all the associates of the witch are always at stake following the cruel treatment accorded to the witches because once caught or suspected, or are put under the same umbrella term 'witches' whether they are truly witches or not and all suffer same grave consequences.

In Africa, witchcraft practice is categorized in political, social and economic spheres. The practice is thought to permeate all areas of lives and is an ever present reality (Magesa, 1997:167). Witchcraft also influences communal and personal life (Isiko, 2019). It is used in business and politics (Shelag, 2014) for fortune and in communal sports to win sports competitions (Isiko, 2019) as well as a societal instrument for societal order (Nkonge, 2014). Besides witchcraft being considered evil and having no place in the society, the practice is instead glorified by some authors. For example, Magesa (2014) holds that the practice is essential to cooperation and sharing, propriety and equitableness, honesty as well as transparency.

To Nkonge, (2014) witchcraft keeps the values and the norms of the society alive, the practice teaches that non-conformity is dangerous and it acts as a strong force for social cohesion. Witchcraft practice is also believed to be important in personal improvements, social advancements, gaining of wealth, protection from sickness and dangers, and giving people the secrets and see into the future (Bauer, 2017). Witchcraft also serves as a means of personal empowerment and self-discovery as the practitioners are able to discover the secret power in them which they may use to cause healing in form of herbal remedies, natural healing techniques and practices aimed at promoting physical and emotional well-being. Practitioners often use their knowledge of plants and energy to assist with healing. Additionally, the practice creates a sense

of community among the practitioners. This also leads to spiritual growth and exploration. This is because, the practice offers a framework for exploring spirituality, divination and personal beliefs. The practice does this by allowing individuals to engage with variety of spiritual practices and find a path that resonates with them personally.

These positive aspects of witchcraft reflects how the practice can contribute to personal empowerment, community support and a deeper connection to the natural world depending on the context and the practice. Given the above literature review, there are variations in the understanding of witchcraft in the society. This is because, its understanding varies from one field to another that is; either anthropology, political science and religious studies among others. For this reason, it becomes incumbent upon the researcher to explore its understanding according to Bunyoro society.

The literature also points to the motivations of witchcraft in the society basing only on the clients but leaves out the aspect of the motivations on the witches or witchdoctors themselves, presents the motivations based on need for nature protection, protection against un authorized agents, greed, jealousy, envy and hatred among others. This still left out the motivations of the practice in Bunyoro society. Infact, it mainly presents the motivations of the practice among the Azande of colonial sudan, motivations of the practice in Ghana, Cameroon and Busoga among others leaving out Bunyoro society. On the side of the impact of the practice, the literature review leaves out still the effects of the practice on the society of Bunyoro but rather presents other societies for example in Democratic Republic of Congo. For this reason therefore, it became incumbent upon the researcher to explore the motivations of the practice in Bunyoro society by investigating the motivations of all the participants in the practice as well as to examine the impact of the practice on to the society of Bunyoro.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research design

The researcher employed both phenomenological and ethnographic approaches during the study. The phenomenological approach helped in understanding and describing the specific phenomenon of witchcraft in-depth. The phenomenological approach was critical as it aided in understanding the essence of lived experience of the Banyoro about witchcraft. The study provided room for the respondents to speak out their experiences of witchcraft which were vital in the process of data analysis. This was important because the phenomenon of witchcraft is a lived one and for this reason the phenomenological approach became useful (Van Manen, 1997).

Through ethnography, the people were studied in their own environment including homes and shrines where they felt convenient to respond to the questions under investigation. This was done through the use of participant observation and face-to-face interviewing. Under participant observation, the researcher went ahead and became part and parcel by participating when the witchdoctor was attending to some of the clients. The researcher also observed some people physically who were said to have been bewitched and attended one healing ceremony involved healing the client where the researcher observed the client being cautioned to laydown, fold the legs and the hands, close the eyes and the rest of the work left in the hands of the witchdoctor. The emotions especially of those who experienced witchcraft were also observed for example crying among some of the respondents especially after remembering how witchcraft affected them, a feeling of disappointment especially after losing their property and failure to get healed among others.

The body languages of the respondents were also observed in order to come up with meaning out of them. For example, some respondents were seen using signs to point at the suspects of witchcraft practice, some looked frightened among others. The researcher would interview the witches face to face before attending to the clients and its when he or she would be told how the clients are attended to. This is because the witch would demonstrate to the researcher what he was going to use, when to use it and why to use it among others. Because ethnographic research involves the researcher immersing him or herself into the phenomenon, Pink S, (2013), the researcher had to be empathetic over the respondents in order to demonstrate the fact that he felt touched by their lived experiences. The researcher did this by touching some of the tools that were being used in witchcraft practice for example the “Amahembe” or the horns, the “enyungu” or smoke pipe among others.

1.5.2 Study population

The study population included elderly male and female Banyoro, who were defined in this study as those who were mainly sixty years and above. This was because, elders are always considered as the custodians of knowledge especially on matters relating to traditional practices (Isiko, 2019). These were in addition to cultural leaders including clan heads (abakuru benganda) and Ministers of the cultural institution of the Kingdom of Bunyoro. These were believed to hold significant knowledge about the cultural affairs of Bunyoro society, including the cultural practice under study. Since witchcraft is a lived practice in every day affairs of the people, effort were made to include local Banyoro of all walks of life including the educated and uneducated. This was intended to conceptualize the understanding of the phenomenon among such categories in order to find out whether they had similar or divergent views about the phenomenon.

Those in the formal and informal sectors were also included in order to analyze whether the understanding of the phenomenon between these categories of the people was the same and to also find out whether this category understands the phenomenon in the same way. Additionally, the cultural leaders were also included because they are believed to hold relevant knowledge about traditional practices witchcraft inclusive. Efforts were made to include those persons suspected to practice witchcraft and the professional witchdoctors in the society. This was intended to analyze what drives this category into the practice. In the same way, those in deep villages were resourceful in this study as witchcraft was common in deep villages.

Focus was also mainly on the subscribers to the practice especially the witchdoctors and no attention was given to the religious leaders like reverands, pastors and priests left out. This was because the subscribers understood the phenomenon in better way and thus would provide a clear understanding of what the practice is compared to the non- subscribers like the religious leaders who would provide biased views following their hatred to the practice. Infact some religious leaders would not give the relevant data because they would not want to speak evil.

1.5.3 Sample size

The sample size of this study was 60 respondents. Sixty respondents were interviewed because toa sensitive traditional phenomenon like witchcraft, a large sample size was necessary in order to get a clear understanding of what the practice is according to Bunyoro society. In order to effect this, the sample size was distributed as follows.

No	Category of interviewees		No of Interviewees
1	Elders	Males	6
		Females	6
2	Ordinary Banyoro	Educated	6
		Un educated	6
		Formal sector	6
		Informal sector	6
3	Cultural Leaders	Clan heads	6
		Cultural ministers	6
4	Witchdoctors		12
Total			60

1.5.4 Sampling method and procedure

The researcher used the purposive and convenience sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used especially for the witchdoctors and the cultural ministers. This is because these were already known to hold significant information about witchcraft practice. Convenience sampling method was also used through meeting the respondents at their their best time for the interview. Because the respondents were willingly interviewed, they would refer to the researcher other individuals in the society who were believed to be knowledgeable on the subject under investigation. This is what yielded snowball method during the process of data collection. Snow ball was used through looking for the respondents that would be referred to the researcher by the earlier respondents. These were also interviewed because they were believed to hold knowledge about witchcraft by the earlier interviewed respondents.

However, some respondents were difficult to approach for example some witchdoctors. This is because they had taboos that governed their craft work which the researcher was un aware of but were later understood by the researcher while interviewing the rest of the witchdoctors. The researcher also clearly introduced himself with an introductory letter from Kyambogo University under the department of Religious studies and philosophy as well as an introductory letter from one of the Local council one chairman. This helped the very hard respondents to really believe in the researcher and by doing so, the researcher was able to obtain the data that was required.

1.5.5 Data Collection Methods and tools

In order to collect the data, the researcher used two methods that is; Observation method and Face to face individual interviews. Observation method was used because it helped in reading and interpreting the non verbal communication from the respondents. This was because some

information could not necessarily be given by the respondents but observed by the researcher himself during the study and this made observation method relevant for this study. The researcher used this method by keenly observing the gestures of the respondents and interpreting the emotions that he later used in data analysis. Beyond the body language, the researcher observed some tools like the “*Enyungu*” (smoke pipe), “*Amahembe*” (the horns), “*Ekiibo*” (offering bowl), “*Ensimbi*” (cowrie shells) among other with his own eyes. The face to face interviews were also used because it was easier for the respondents to respond privately and there would be clarity in case the respondent needed it.

In order to use face to face interviews successfully, a list of questions and issues to be discussed were prepared prior to the interviews. These semi structured interviews gave room for probing for clarity and further discussion that would arise during the interviews. In fact where necessary, the questions were elaborated to suit a particular participant. The researcher used note books where he wrote down the information using the pseudo names of the respondents. The pseudo names were used by the researcher in order to identify the respondents because they felt insecure for their names to be used in the study and yet witchcraft was depicted to be a bad practice by the society hence not a good practice to identify themselves with.

Although voice recordings were also objected by some of the respondents as they never wanted to be identified as having knowledge on the practice because of how it is treated negatively in the society, for those who allowed, their voices were recorded in order to supplement on the written information. For those who allowed voice recording, the researcher would start recording the respondents' voices whenever the interview would start in order to have a comprehensive supplement to the written information. In addition, a total of 12 witch doctors were interviewed from their shrines across Masindi and Hoima districts. In Masindi, the interviews were

conducted in three subcounties: Pakanyi (3 interviews), Bwinjanga (2 interviews), and Mirya (2 interviews). In Hoima, the interviews took place in Buseruka (2 interviews), Kigoroby (2 interviews), and Buhanka (1 interview). This was done from the shrines as distributed in figure 4 below.



Figure 2: A sketch map of the area of study showing the distribution of shrines that were visited

1.5.6 Data Analysis & Presentation

The data was analysed using the deductive approach where it involved using a structure predetermined framework to analyze data. The researcher examined each interview in order to determine how many respondents had similar views on the subject under investigation, and the extent to which similar views occurred. In order to ensure this, once the interviews would be done, the researcher would read each transcript, and makes short phrases to sum up what was being said in the texts as well note down what was being said in the interviews. This was aimed at offering a summary statement for each element that is discussed in the interviews for open coding. The predetermined framework for the study was derived from the specific objectives which in turn form the thesis chapters.

The data in this thesis was presented under four broad themes derived from the study's specific objectives. Findings for each study objective are presented separate chapters making three chapters for findings. An additional chapter for summary, conclusions and recommendations proceeds after the chapter of findings. There is heavy reliance on the respondents direct word, presented in direct quotations, which are thereafter interpreted within the text in order to get meaning out of them.

1.5.7 Validity & Reliability of the Study

To ensure that the information collected from the field was valid and reliable, the researcher first went for the pilot study in Bunyoro. The researcher piloted some areas in Hoima district where the study would be conducted from for example Kyarwabayamba, Kyesiga, Katasiha, Bugambe and Buraru. On the other hand, for the case of Masindi district, the researcher also piloted the areas of Kibojjogoro, Kiyuya, Kyambogo, Kisambu, Kizibu, Rwemigali, Nyakarongo,

Kyamudikya, Giili, Biseenyi, Nyakatogo, Kisanja, Bigando, and Kijambura. During the pilot study, the researcher interacted with twenty five would be respondents like the cultural leaders, elders, witchdoctors among others. The pilot study helped the researcher to know the time the would be respondents would be free, helped the researcher to know the geography of the area and look for the finances that helped the researcher during data collection especially for transport and accommodation. This took the research one week. The researcher ensured regular contact with the participants through out the period of data collection and analysis which helped the researcher to seek for clarity.

The researcher interviewed the respondents privately from their convenient areas in order to get original information because there would be no interruption from the external forces. This is because the researcher realized that whenever the respondents would be in public, they would not express themselves well. To solve this problem, the researcher would reschedule the interviews with the same respondents in private places so as to get reliable data in the field. More so, the researcher would reschedule all interviews whenever he would realize that the respondent had limited time for responding to the issues under investigation at that time. This was intended to have enough time for the issues under investigation so that reliable data was obtained from the respondents. After collecting the data, the researcher also kept all the research related work like notebooks and voice recordings in a safe place with the intention of minimizing the threats to the reliability and validity in study.

1.5.8 Limitations and delimitations to the study

There were financial challenges during the study that the researcher conducted. This is because approaching witchdoctors required some amount of money ranging from 30,000-50,000

thousand shillings depending on the witchdoctor the researcher interviewed or visited. It was compulsory to pay this money because it was for consultation as every client is supposed to do so when he or she visits the witchdoctor as this money is believed to be for thanking the 'bosses' of the witchdoctors. Moreso, moving from one place to another during the interviews necessitated a lot of money because the researcher was to move to deep villages where witchdoctors were common and other elderly respondents. Therefore moving to deep villages meant using a lot of money for transport and interviewing the witchdoctors needed money for consultation and thanking the "bosses" of the witchdoctors locally known as "*Abakama babafumu*".

Most of the interviews especially with the witchdoctors were conducted at night moreover from the shrine. This was life risking although it was the time when the witchdoctors would be very active. This is because: WDR, (Kisambu village; 13/12/2022) believes that their "bosses" rest during the day but in the late hours of the day especially at night they are always active than any other time. Since there were some taboos that governed the practice of witchcraft in the society, they also posed to be a challenge in the study. This was because the researcher lost some important information especially after being exempted from taking some photographs of the tools that are used during witchcraft practice in the society. This was because of the negative consequences that would affect the researcher if he did so for instance through the roasting of the skin, having a bad odour in the public and having mental illness for life. This led to the loss of some relevant information and yet it was significant for the study.

1.5.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher sought for a letter of introduction from the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy office which he used to introduce himself to the informants for easy identification. This helped the respondents to believe that the study he was conducting was relevant and that he was authorized to do so. The study was based on voluntary participation of the participants by first explaining to them what the study was all about and its aims. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was preserved in this thesis by not revealing their actual names instead pseudo descriptions are used as follows: for elderly Banyoro respondents are coded as EBR, Ordinary Banyoro respondents as OBR, Cultural leader respondents as CLR and witchdoctor respondents as WDR. Each interview was conducted privately and in a quiet free from the outsiders who would interfere with the flow of information. The data collected was stored in the researcher's personal note book, laptop and phone with a password so that no any other person could access it for matters of confidentiality. The hard copies or any other written material were also kept in a safe place and audio recordings were to be disposed off once no longer needed.

CHAPTER TWO

BUNYORO SOCIETY CONCEPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF WITCHCRAFT

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Bunyoro society's concept of witchcraft. Under this, the terminologies used to describe witchcraft and witches are explored, initiation into witchcraft and the categorization of witchcraft and witches in Bunyoro society. The chapter further takes interest in the characteristics of witches, the methods and tools of witchcraft practice as well as the taboos associated with witchcraft practice in the society.

2.1 Bunyoro Society Concept of Witchcraft

The concept of witchcraft in Bunyoro is quite interesting as every individual has his or her own understanding of the concept. To some people in the society, the concept is perceived in negative terms while others accord the concept a positive connotation. To those who perceive the concept negatively, witchcraft involves the use of supernatural power by an individual for evil purposes especially to harm the enemy. In this case, witchcraft is practiced in order to cause harm to the enemy as well as all their property. This harm is physical as well as psychological aligning on the enemy as a person but could also stretch upon his or her property for example cattle and crops. Whereas to those who perceive the phenomenon positively, understand the concept being the use of supernatural powers for defensive purposes. In other words, defensive purpose also stretches as far as to the properties of an individual for example cattle, crops and land among

others. Therefore the concept of witchcraft in Bunyoro is not clear as every individual understands it in a different way.

However in simple terms, a witch is any person who is perceived to possess super natural powers that he or she uses to inflict pain or harm on to others in the society. This practice is believed to have its etymology from the Bachwezi who were believed to be demi gods under the Chwezi dynasty. Because they had mystical powers that could enable them appear and disappear, they are believed to have left behind these mystical powers which were later misused for evil purposes by those who had acquired some when the Bacwezi later disappeared forever. The societies' word for witchcraft is "*Oburogo*". A person who practices witchcraft in this society is called "*Omurogo*" and the people who practice it are called "*Abarogo*". The process of causing harm using witchcraft is locally known as "*Okuroga*" in the society. Consequently, "*Omurogo*" is used for singular and "*Abarogo*" for plural whereas "*Okuroga*" is used to mean the process of causing harm using witchcraft.

The society of Bunyoro has terminologies which describe those who engage in the practice of witchcraft. The reason behind the development of these terminologies is a result of the fear the people have towards witches in the society. The terms are also used in order to avoid direct confrontation with the witches since many of them dislike being identified publicly as such. For this reason, the society uses metaphorical and descriptive terminologies – although contextual to witchcraft enable Banyoro to avoid being noticed and identified by witches that they recognise them, which could lead to endless misery or even loss of their life.

Additionally, different terminologies used for witchcraft practise depend on the category of the witches. In the instant case, the generic Runyoro terminology of “*Barogo*” is used synonymously with the terminologies of “*Basezi*” (cannibals) or Night dancers and “*Abafumu*” (Witchdoctors) because the two words are less offensive to the witches than “*Abarogo*” or “*Omurogo*” in the society. Another reason for the use of the terminologies synonymously is because the “*Basezi*” (Cannibal witches) or Night dancers and “*Abafumu*” or witchdoctors are less feared compared to the “*Barogo*” (Witches). In Bunyoro society, the witches operate from any where whereas the witchdoctors have designated places for their practice especially the shrines.

One of the terminologies used to describe witches in Bunyoro society is that of “*Mukurungo*”. *Mukurungo* is one of the clans of Bunyoro and its totem or “*omuziro*” is a leopard. Long time ago, there was a man who practiced witchcraft and his clan was of the “*Bakurungo*” in Masindi district. Because he was from the “*Bakurungo clan*”, the society coined the term *Mukurungo* not to mean his clan but to describe his action of witchcraft in relation to the clan that he belonged.

The implication of the terminology is that some suspected witches are called “*Bakurungo*” not because all the “*Bakurungo*” practice witchcraft but because the one who practiced witchcraft by that time was a “*Mukurungo*” and for that reason the terminology has lived up to today in the society. Additionally in relation to the same clan, a person who has been bewitched has come to be known as “*owubakurungire*” literally translated as “*the one bewitched by the mukurungo*”. This terminology means that the practice could be specific to certain clans in the society because the above metaphorical description emanated from the clan of the “*Bakurungo*”. It is therefore safer and less offensive to use “*mukurungo*” terminology rather than “*omurogo*” in reference to a witch in Bunyoro society.

“*Kairagura mutima*” is another descriptive terminology for witchcraft in this society. The word “*Kairagura*” relates to any thing that is dark or black in the society whereas “*Mutima*” literally means the heart. When these words that is “*Kairagura*” and “*Mutima*” are combined, they mean a person with “*a dark heart*”. The concept of “*kairagura*” is therefore used by the Banyoro to mean mainly two things, that is; the evil nature of the witchcraft practice and the time it is usually practiced that is at night. Witches are called “*kairagura mutima*” (people with darkened hearts) because they are merciless people who spare none including their biological children (OBR, Bigando village; 29/11/2022)

The above words from the OBR implies that every one in the society can be a victim of witchcraft. Additionally to that, the biological children can be bewitched by the witch him or herself. In this society still, since the Banyoro use ‘*kwiragura*’ to mean (to darken) and “*omwirima*” to mean darknes, “*Kairagura*” is also used as a real name in Bunyoro society without necessarily relating to witchcraft but naming people original names (EBR, Katasiha village; 26/11/2022). Therefore, not everyone called ‘*kairagura*’ in Bunyoro, practice witchcraft. The context in which the name “*kairagura*” is used determine whether it is in reference to one’s given name or a witch. Public rerefence to someone as *kairagura* would constitute ones real name, private reference especially inform of rumours would mean that one is a witch.

The merciless nature of witches in Bunyoro society qualified them another terminology of “*Rupatika*”. This term is from a Runyoro verb “*kupatika*” which literaly relates to “*throwing at*”. The Banyoro use the terminology of ‘*Rupatika*’ to describe witches known to cast spells on to the intended victim and that process is coined to mean ‘casting spell’. Although the best terminology for ‘casting spells’ is “*okusindika amarogo*”, this it is too expository than ‘*rupatika*’

that has a hidden meaning as well as less offensive, making it difficult for the witches to realize that this term could be pointing to them.

Due to the merciless nature of witches, the Banyoro have another alternative term to describe them as “*Kanywa sagama*”. In Runyoro, “sagama” means blood while “*Kanywa*” means (the one who drinks) and “*kunywa*” means (to drink). Therefore, it is from these two words that the descriptive term ‘kanywa sagama’ is derived to mean ‘blood drinkers or suckers’. Witches are described so because they are believed to be blood thirsty who feed on blood through the tools they use like “*Amahembe*” or (horns).

Besides the above terminology, “*Kamaanya*” has also been developed in order to avoid a direct conflict from the witches. The word ‘*kamaanya*’ is used in reference to a ‘dangerous person’ in the society. Whenever the witch passes by, the Banyoro use the following description:

“Kamaanya arabireho, Kamaanya omuboine? manya akugya nkaha? hakugya bakigwireho” (OBR, Nyakarongo village, 26/12/2022).

This is literally interpreted as “*the dangerous person has passed around, have you seen the dangerous person? where could he be heading to? those who are where he/she is heading are in trouble*”. The above words are said by the Banyoro because of the dangers the witches stand in the society. Therefore, whenever the word ‘*kamaanya*’ or a dangerous person is used in the society, it relates to the dangerous person who could be a witch in this case.

The witches’ double configuration of ‘casting spells’ and ‘feeding on blood’, made Banyoro to describe them with another terminology of “*Manono*”. The etymology of ‘*manono*’ is ‘*enono*’ which literally denotes “*fingernails*”. Fingernails are an important constituent of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society because the society of Bunyoro believes that witches store their

spells in finger nails, which they later cast on to their enemies. Therefore, the Banyoro use the term ‘*manono*’ as a silent description for witches in Bunyoro society.

Due to the cannibalistic tendency of witches in Bunyoro society, the Banyoro coined another terminology of “*Abajambura*”. This word can literally be translated as “*cutting mercilessly or violently*”. However, the society also use ‘*okutema*’ and ‘*okusara*’ to also denote cutting. The above word of ‘*Abajambura*’ is used to describe witches who cut human beings violently into pieces for consumption of their flesh. In relation to this terminology the Banyoro describe a bewitched person as “*owubajambwire*” that is; ‘one whose flesh has been cut violently into pieces, relating to the process of “*okujamburwa*” that is; being cut into pieces (EBR, Kijambura village; 10/12/2022). Therefore, whenever it is heard that a witch has mercilessly cut a person the above word is used for its description. Slightly related to the above, there is a whole village named as Kijambura in Masindi district. Although the above village exists, the relation of the name of the village to witchcraft was refused to associate the name of their village to witchcraft because of the negative perception of the practice.

Another term which is slightly related to the above is “*Abatikya*”- that is literally interpreted as ‘*to tear*’ in Kiruli language. This terminology originates from the Kiruli language and yet while translated in Runyoro it means “*kukatura*” or to tear. The Banyoro have developed this terminology to describe witches in that when someone is bewitched, they describe that person as “*owubakatwire*” also interpreted as *a torn person* and the process is known as “*okukaturwa*” literally interpreted as to be torn. Although this term was not developed by the Banyoro but rather by the Baruli, this clearly indicates how other tribes have influenced the conceptualization and practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society.

Bunyoro society also describe witches in relation to their way of movement. Witches are believed to move through and by wind, hence being termed “*Nyabayaga*”. ‘*Nyabayaga*’ relates to “*Muyaga*” a runyoro word for ‘*wind*’. The Banyoro believe that witches move through the wind on their way to collect flesh of the buried corpses for consumption. The occurrence of strong winds immediately after burial or the night of burial is attributed to witches who are moving in search of the buried corpse. The strong winds are also attributed to competition for the human flesh among the ‘*basezi*’– cannibal witches. These category of witches are believed to be common in areas of Kisanja village in Masindi district.

Although, “*Nyabayaga*” is also a clan in Bunyoro and its totem or “*omuziro*” is a small reddish bird, this is not the intention of this description. Therefore, when one is cited to as “*Nyabayaga*”, that person is either a member of the “*Abayaga clan*” or is a witch believed to move through the winds for the purpose of collecting the corpse from the burial ground. According to one of the respondents, while talking about the witches who move through the wind, the community has the following description:

“Nyabayaga arabireho titumanyire aharukugya”,(EBR, Kijambura village; 10/12/2022),

The above words can literally be translated as, “*the witch has passed by but we donot know where he is going*”. These words are usually used when a suspected witch passes by a given group of Banyoro. A related terminology for cannibal witches who eat human flesh is “*Banena*”, a Runyoro word literally translated as “*they bite*”. This is also an inclusive term for the different categories of cannibal witches. The description cover witches that include, those who wait for one to die and they eat their corpse, those who capture people alive, and those who bewitch a victim to die so that they can eat their corpse. When a suspected witch passess by the people,

instead of using a direct reference as a cannibal witch, the word ‘*banena*’ is used as a neutral terminology, (OBR, Kisanja village; 25/11/2022).

This indicates that witches are feared and that is why they are not talk about to as witches directly for fear of causing harm on the referee. After burrial in the Bunyoro community, it is common to hear the Banyoro say declarations like:

“*Leero Banena bakurara nibegonza habwokuba bafunire omukubi*” (OBR, Kisanja village; 25/11/2022).

This is literally interpreted, “*today the witches are going to sleep with joy because they have got “sauce”*”. These words carry a lot of meaning if closely examined. For example, they mean that the buried corpse is expected to be picked by the witches “*Banena*” after the burrial. These words also point to the common belief that the corpse of the deceased are always the joy of the witches or the “*Banena*”, as it is believed to a delicacy to them. This belief could be the reason behind the elaborate burrial ritual performed among the Banyoro as a form shield of the corpse from the “*Banena*”.

Bunyoro society also describes witches with a borrowed vocabulary, “*Abayimbi*”. The word ‘*Abayimbi*’ is of the Ghanda origin meaning, the singers. EBR, (Kyambogo village; 14/12/2022) says that this Luganda word, “*Abayimbi*” is a recently adopted word by the Banyoro to denote witches. He connects the word ‘*Abayimbi*’ to the song music of a local Ugandan artist popularly known as Inspector Bash. In his song titled “*Balogo*”, Inspector Bash refer to the ‘*Abayimbi*’, (Music Artists) as witches. The usage of the Ghanda word ‘*Abayimbi*’, depicts the creative nature of the Banyoro and their art of borrowing terminologies. It also points to a lived fact that there is an influence from other tribes on to the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society. It could also

indicate that witchcraft is a common practice among many African societies. The local word is also used because from time to time the witches sing while carrying corpse from the grave yard to their homes. Their singing is motivated by their joy over the acquired soup (corpse), (EBR, Kyambogo village; 14/12/2022).

Since the Banyoro believe that witches have mystical powers, they developed another terminology for witches as, “*Owe’ebyaye*”, literally meaning, ‘*a person with his things*’. This term is used in the society in reference to witches and witchdoctors who possess tools and objects that they use in their craft work. Among such tools are “*Amahembe*” or horns, Cowrie shells or “*Ensimbi*” and “*Enyungu*” or the smoking pipe among others. However, this terminology does not apply to those witches who eat human flesh because the witches who eat human flesh do not use tools. This is the only category called “*owebyaye*” or (a person with his things) because they always move with the charms, tools and are always ready to cause harm to those around them. In other words are always self contained and always ready for action. The supposed supernatural nature of witches also make the Banyoro to term them as “*Enkooto*” – literally meaning ‘*big*’. This is because witches are feared category in the society, and therefore looked at to be the “un touchables”. This terminology is mainly functional to the categories of witches who cause extra ordinary things to happen like accidents, illness, and rain makers, but rarely to those who eat human flesh.

Conclusively, some witches are described as “*Kanyoobwa*”. This terminology strictly points to the category of the witches who cause stunted crop growth. The word ‘*kanyobwa*’ is a local word that relates to ground nuts. The society developed the word kanyobwa because these witches cause crop failure especially lower crops like groundnuts. These witches are believed to make the lower crops fail to yield well to the anticipation of the farmer. Some times the witches make

the lower crops to dry or even remain stunted with no registered growth. This state of no growth in plants is locally known as “*Okwikaara akatebbe*”, OBR, (Gilli village; 2/12/2022) literally translated as, “*remaining stunted*”. It means the stunted state of the plants, with no signs of growth. This practice involves the witches pouring charms in the garden of the victim and touching in the seeds the farmer is to plant. For this reason, the witches came to be dubbed as “*Kanyoobwa*” in Bunyoro society.

In conclusion, a number of jargons are used to describe witches in Bunyoro society as analyzed above. The society of Bunyoro is creative as far as the nomenclature of the witches is concerned. This is because, some terminologies are borrowed from other societies like Buganda, Alur and the Baruli as seen above. These expressions also portrayed the influence of other societies in the development of terminologies for the witches in Bunyoro society. The terminologies given in the society depend on the category of the witches because different categories behave in a different way as some use tools like the witchdoctors whereas others never for example those who eat human flesh. The terminologies also differ depending on the way the craft is carried out for example unlike the “*Basezi*” who are believed to move through the wind, witchdoctors never and this brings the difference in the nomenclature of the witches. Take an example, some terminologies are specific to only those who eat human flesh for example “*Banena*”, “*Rupatika*” to those witches who specifically cause the illness of “*ebihara*” and “*enkooto*” to the witchdoctors among others. Therefore, the above are some of the jargons one could hear individuals making a reference to witches if he or she visited or stayed in above society.

2.2 Bunyoro Society Understanding of Witchcraft

The phenomenon of witchcraft takes both positive and negative realms in the Bunyoro society. In other words, to some Banyoro, witchcraft is a good practice to reckon with yet to others it is a practice not to identify with in the society. Witchcraft is understood to be real and prevalent in almost all spheres of life of the Banyoro. It is therefore presented with fear, by especially those who have suffered from the practice. For example, OBR, (Nyakatoogo village; 1/12/2022) described it with fear and as a very dangerous craft to which no one to participate.

However some present the practice of witchcraft with joy, especially those who claim to benefit from the practice. For example, (EBR, Kiboijogoro village; 9/12/2022) says that when he was born, he was normal and could walk. He would do all his work as any young man does but later at the age of forty, he started feeling pain in his legs not knowing that it was the start of being crippled. This was because, when he was sick, he was taken to a medical hospital where they injected him probably with wrong medicine or may be overdose. Indeed in the next few years he was crippled and could not walk or do any other work. Because he had become crippled, his wife started threatening that he was going to leave him because he would not do anything for himself, not look after her and not perform other duties as a man. He would ease himself from where he is sitting and up to date he still does the same. By then his wife was still young about thirty years. Because of that, he had to go to a witchdoctor to get some charms for keeping her with him. Witchdoctors to him are good because if it was not because of them, he would have failed to be with this woman to date. And by then, they had stayed together for over twenty years in peace yet he was helpless. She now goes and comes back and finds him there at home. He concluded by stating that no one can take her and she cannot leave him.

Therefore, to those who understand the practice in the negative realms, witchcraft is believed to be the cause of misfortunes in the society whereas to those who present it in the positive realms, the practice is thought to be the master card solution for mystical challenges that happen in peoples' lives in the society. However, with such mixed presentation on the subject of witchcraft, the society presents a coherent way of understanding ideas on how and when one comes to be a witch, their categorization and characteristics, methods and tools of witchcraft practice as well as the taboos that govern the practice of witchcraft. These are the key concerns covered in the following subsections.

2.2.1 Becoming a witch in Bunyoro society

The Banyoro believe that becoming a witch is a personal journey and goal for some people in the society. This is because, the practice includes the individual's decision with and reason for becoming a witch without being forced into the practice in most cases. The goals of becoming a witch are developed by the witch- to -be in order to know the intentions of joining the practice and stay dedicated. When the Banyoro talk of personal journey, it relates to witchcraft being ones career just like other careers that individuals may choose in life, for instance, teaching, nursing, engineering among others. In otherwords, witchcraft may be practiced for life by the witch- to -be. Developing goals enables one to focus on what the witch is to learn and what the witch must learn. It is from this point that one could set questions especially relating to ones intentions of the practice, type of spell, and how one expects witchcraft to change his/her life or even how witchcraft is likely to help the people in his or her society. The intentions or personal goals could be to help the society or oneself and to preserve the past practices of the the clan in order to promote its continuity and preserve the practice for the next generations. In Bunyoro society, witchcraft is practiced by many people in secrecy because it is a dreaded practice.

However on the other hand, witchcraft may be a forceful venture where an individual could be forced to become one without his or her choice. This is applicable in situations where it is witchcraft that has chosen an individual. This is because although one may not want to be a witch, witchcraft it self can choose him and it becomes worse when he refutes it. For instance, when one reject it, he can have mental problems for life. This means that becoming a witch in Bunyoro society may or may not be a personal choice because it can chose some one itself. It also means that when it choses an individual who is un willing to take up the practice, it disciplines him or her especially through having mental problems for life.

Witchcarft inheritance in Bunyoro society is a biological, spiritual and a social phenomenon. This is because at birth of a baby, it could be a biological issue whereas inheritance later in life could be a social issue. This is because witchcraft inherited later in life is governed by the society norms especially, loyalty and respect and anyone with such stands at a chance of inheriting witchcraft in Bunyoro society. Heritage of witchacrft in Bunyoro society is both societal and biological. It is societal in a way that one can inherit at a later stage in life and biological in a way that one could be born a witch. Research findings show that both biological, socio-environmental and spiritual factors determine ones decision to become a witch among the Banyoro.

2.2.1.1. Biological factors.

For the biological factors, the Banyoro believe that witchcraft can be inborn or acquired at a later stage in life. The aspect of acquisition of witchcraft relates to witchcraft inheritance. The Banyoro believe that there are two ways in which people inherit the practice, either at birth or at

a later date of one's life, especially after the death of one's parent. The Banyoro believe that there can be a spiritual transfer of genes from the parents to their children. One respondent states that:

“kyoina kumanya kiri ngu amarogo gabaza. Gasobora kukugambira bworaba watwaire obutafaali ba soo orundi Nyoko. Baitu bukira kuba bwa'so obwire obukira bwingi kusigikira haganyakuhura nigabaza. Ekyokuroraho ninyowe, gakangambira nkatwara obutafali obwa isenkuru nyowe” (WDR, Kizibu village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as *“What you should know is that witchcraft can speak. It can tell you whether you took the genes of your father or mother. But it is always the genes of a father in most cases following those I have heard speaking. For example, for me I took the genes of my grandfather”*.

This means that all the parents have the potential of causing inheritance. The child can inherit the genes of either the father or mother. This always happens at birth where the man who is a witch can cause easy inheritance to the child going to be born than a woman. Although this has no clear proof, it is as a result of the belief held by the Banyoro that since a man is stronger than a woman, he can easily cause easy acquisition of witchcraft genes to a child than the woman. However on the other hand, witchcraft may not necessarily be inherited from the father or mother but as well as grandparents. CLR, (Kyesiga village; 22/12/2022) describes this process by saying that when a man marries, he brings the woman at home. This means that if he is a witch, the practice will continue as no body will chase him and for this reason, inheritance becomes easier.

Consequently if the woman gets married in another place, she might be denied from practicing witchcraft since she will be practicing it from another family which may have little or no support for it completely. This makes the man have higher chances of causing inheritance of witchcraft because the child who may be required to inherit is born at the real place of the practice unlike the distant married woman. It is also easy to find a woman who is a witch making the child become a witch. This is possible even if she is married in another family. This is because she will have moved with the genes of witchcraft from her original place of birth to where she has got married. This follows the words of the respondent who stated that;

“Omukazi bwaaba murogo akatungwa omumaka agandi, aba agenzire nobutafali bwoburogo. Honahona mbali akatungwa asobora okubatulira oburogo bwaye. Kyokuroraho hanu twiina omukazi owubakweta Nyabagamba, akatungwa owa Bategeka yaija noburogo okuruga owaabu, mbali nkubaliza binu, abanna boona bayakazara nabategeka boona baroga habwookuba nyinawaabu akasikiira oburogo okuruga owaabu atakatungirwe Bategeka” (OBR, Rwemigali village, 19/12/2022).

Literally translated as *“whenever a woman is a witch and gets married in another family, she goes with the genes of witchcraft. Wherever she gets married, she can cause the children to become witches. For example, here we have a woman called Nyabagamba who got married to Bategeka and she came from their home with witchcraft genes, as I speak right now, all the children she has so far given birth to with Bategeka are witches because their mother inherited witchcraft from their home before she was married to Bategeka”*.

There are various implications of the respondents words for example; the words show that witches can also get married and this could be to their fellow witches or even those who are not.

It also shows that some witches can stay in marriage and even produce children in the families where they get married. This could as well point to the reality that some witches may not be dangerous because by the time of giving birth to children in a new family they could either be peaceful or may even not be noticed by their spouses.

According to this society, all parents can cause a child to inherit the genes of witchcraft. This is because they produce the child together and for this reason share the responsibility of the child's upbringing. If they decide to bring up the child while practicing witchcraft no body can stop them from their family. Therefore, in Bunyoro society witchcraft genes can be spiritually transferred from one family to another and from one clan to the other especially through marriage. Because of this fear, whenever it is rumoured that some one is married to any relative but that person could be from a family with witchcraft practices, she is chased as first as possible before she produces children with a relative. This is aimed at avoiding the transfer of genes from one family or clan to another.

The Banyoro also believe that witchcraft can be acquired at a later time after one's birth. This could even be during one's old age. However the most common is witchcraft inherited upon the death of one's parent, friend or even a relative. The practice can be hereditary just like other properties upon the death of the owner. In these circumstances, a successor to witchcraft is selected among the children of the deceased witch before his or her funeral. The successor to witchcraft can also be selected after the funeral of the deceased witch. It is witchcraft that determines whether the successor is to be selected before or after the funeral. One respondent stated that:

“Amarogo gasobora kugamba ngu babanze bakome omugwetwa wa marogo batakazikire omufumu orundi bagwete hanyuma yokuzika omufu” (CLR, Kisindizi village; 2/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“Witchcraft can decide to first chose a successor of the practice before the burrial or choose the successor after the funeral of the deceased”*. This happens to witchcraft practiced on clan basis or even family basis. The strong members of the clan sit together to select the successor of their craft work. These are always the clan heads and other elderly members of the clan who are knowledgeable about the clan matters. The above people are responsible for the choice of the successor because they are knowledgeable about traditional matters and can do it better. They are responsible for the continuity of traditional practices in the clan. This explains the reason why they are responsible for selecting a successor when the owner of witchcraft dies without picking one.

However, the witchcraft itself can decide on whom it wants although the owner dies without choosing one. For one to be appointed, he or she has to be the child of the deceased or even a close relative. However witchcraft has also the ability to either accept or refute the person the deceased selects upon the owners death. (WDR, Kizibu village; 13/12/2022) says that rejection may occur when one is not a child of the deceased and when one identified to inherit the practice is disloyal. Even though one may want to inherit the witchcraft, if the witchcraft denies that given person, one has nothing to do but to accept the denial. There are no appeal mechanisms for such a denial because witchcraft sees beyond what others see.

Similarly, if the witchcraft chooses a person, he or she has no room for denial but to accept and take on from the parent who has died according to Bunyoro society. This is so because witchcraft in this society is dependant on being the child of the deceased and being loyal.

Witchcraft can not chose a disloyal child who will fail to fulfill it demands at a later stage. Inherited witchcraft after the death of a parent is dependant on the loyalty and humility of someone. This means that, the owner of the witchcraft selects a person with humility and loyalty before he or she dies to continue with the craft. Therefore in Bunyoro society, one does not stick on to the witchcraft if it has not selected him or her but rather witchcraft sticks to an individual when it has selected him or her as the successor.

2.2.1.2 Socio- environmental factors

These are the factors that make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives. These factors affect people that share the living or working spaces. In other words, environmental factors are external influences that can affect an individuals health and well being. According to Bouchard (1997), the manner in which human beings behave is primarily determined by the environment in which they are brought up. However, unlike environmental and geographical factors like temperature, pollutants, population density, sound and light among others Bridgeman (2003), witchcraft in Bunyoro is influenced by mainly two factors that is to say; buying witchcraft from the owner and learning how to practice witchcraft from others.

Just as (Llega, 2001: 210 & Nkonge, 2014) observes that witchcraft is bought by some of the people using their own money in order for them to also have the same, it is not a secret that witchcraft can be bought and sold in the society of Bunyoro. Witchcraft in Bunyoro society is like a good that can be exchanged by another for money. However this only applies to witchcraft that is not innate because witchcraft that is innate can not be bought or sold to another person as it involves inheritance by blood. This kind of witchcraft that is sold does not involve genetic

inheritance from a parent to the child. There are two circumstances that compel the sale of witchcraft in Bunyoro society mainly getting tired of witchcraft and owning a lot of it.

Usually every human being gets tired of certain things at some point even though it may not necessarily be witchcraft. For the case of witchcraft, when one gets tired of possessing it or even possess a lot of it, he/she is at the verge of selling some to those who may need. Witchcraft is tiring because it has a lot of demands for example the practice may require monthly or annual sacrifices. This is too tiring and demanding especially if one does not have what they are requesting for example animals and some times human beings. This shows that witchcraft is tiresome and too demanding. This is because it demands for animals and later human life and because of this, some people may need to be free from such through selling it away.

However not every witchcraft can be sold as it may depend on how one may have acquired it. Only witchcraft that is acquired through buying that can be sold and bought in Bunyoro society. Witchcraft that is inherited by an individual can not be bought or even sold by any person. This is because it is genetically transferred from the elder to the biological children or even other close relative. More so, witchcraft that is inherited by an individual after the death of a parent or the owner cannot be sold and bought because it may be witchcraft itself that may select the successor it needs. This is because it can accept or reject the person selected by the deceased and selects its own successor. As it has been noted that witchcraft can select its own successor to be incharge of it, it should be noted that one has no way of refuting witchcraft once chosen. Notably is that, even when an individual forcefully acquires witchcraft, it can not work for him/her according to the Bunyoro society. It is also important to note clearly that in Bunyoro society, witchcraft cannot be stolen. One can not wake up overnight and steal witchcraft from a neighbor or a distant person or even from the relative.

EBR, (Nyakarongo village; 15/12/2022) says that the Banyoro believe that witchcraft in Bunyoro society is patient enough and can wait for an individual to steal it and carry it away but after taking it, the consequences are grave for example being mad for life, dumb, death among others. The witchcraft is believed to kill the thief and then goes back to where it had been picked from meaning that witchcraft is dangerous and can move back to where it had been picked from without its owner picking it. This also points to the fact that witchcraft can kill as well as causing some other illnesses like mental illness. Therefore trying to steal witchcraft in Bunyoro society is one of the worst things a human being can do in Bunyoro society.

For the case of witchcraft acquisition through learning, the Banyoro believe that it is possible to become a witch through the same method. Witchcraft acquisition by learning is that which is provided for by a senior witch. A witch- to -be first learns craft work and then acquire the essential tools for craft work. In this society, learning to be a witch is very simple because the most important thing while learning is loyalty as well as patience between and among the trainees. This is because, learning helps the trainee to be conversant with the skills of craft work. Loyalty helps the witch to be able to perform all the necessary demands in craft work with loyalty for example offering sacrifices to the spirits and the tools used. On the other hand, patience is also necessary especially during the training as it may take many years. The trainers are those witches or witchdoctors who have stayed in craft for more than thirty years or else those who have engaged in the practice through out their life.

Loyalty is crucial because the trainee needs to be loyal to the trainer and patience is necessary because learning is continuous until one becomes a senior witch that is acquired after a period of about thirty years. For matters of illegibility for the learning and training, there is no specific age as it depends on the category of witch one would want to be. Those who want to cause illness,

can be taught when they are relatively old about fifteen years, those who eat human flesh can be taught at an early age of about a year. This is done by giving them some soup from the cooked human flesh by their mothers until their teeth grows, they are introduced to the flesh, those who affect crops are trained at an old age when they have started participating in farming. However some can be trained even when they do not grow crops but rather purposely for this reason whereas those who cause accidents are trained when they are old enough especially from eighteen years. These may not even be trained but rather just given charms to set people into accidents.

The greatest condition necessary for the enrolment into witchcraft is that of secrecy. In this case, the witch-to-be is expected to be a person who can keep secrets because matters of witchcraft are matters of darkness and that is why witches do not always have light in their shrines and they always operate in the evening hours especially from 5pm. The trainer of the witches -to -be is required to be a senior witch. In this case, a senior witch is that who has been in the practice for over thirty years. WDR, (Kizibu village; 13/12/2022) says that the the age is thirty because at this point one is expected to have learnt all the dos and donts of the practice and well experienced them, learnt all the skills of craft work like casting spells and knowing all the kinds of spells. The kind of schools are informal where there are no specific and organized classes for lessons into craft work. Although the lessons are always conducted in the shrines, the witches-to-be can also learn by following the senior witches wherever they go to perform craft work especially from peoples homes. WDR, (Kisambu village; 13/12/2022) acknowledges that she also learnt in the same way whereby she used to go wherever the senior witch would go for craft work and she had become a senior witch as well. For matters of training the witches- to- be, it is possible to find the witchdoctors with more than one shrine in order to serve different purposes

for example healing, training the witch-to- be among others. Some trainers always have more than one shrine for different purposes for example one for real craft work and the other for training those who enroll in craft work. There is no curriculum for witchcraft but rather learning from simple to complex.

The witches –to- be are taught how to become witches by starting with simple spell casting trying it out on their friends and later heal them also locally known as “*okurumuura*”. The above words from the respondents mean that learning starts from simple to complex. It also shows that witches can cause illness and at the same time heal them meaning that they are problem makers and solvers at the same time. The above words also point to the fact that the witches spare no body as they also cause illness to their friends and children.

Therefore the friends of the witches could be learning aids for the amateurs in craft work. On the side of illegibility of learning craft work, all those willing to learn are allowed although some times some are stopped by their parents especially if their parents are not practitioners of witchcraft. This is because of the negative attitude that people have towards witches and witchdoctors in the society. Those who want to learn the practice are taken as those who are starting bad habits which can wipe out the whole family EBR, (Nyakarongo village; 15/12/2022). Moreover, the practice is considered as something that can wipe out the whole family. Exceptions from witchcraft are limited because it sometimes practiced in secrecy when other people like friends and relatives are un aware. Those who may be exempted from witchcraft are those who start learning the practice and yet in their clan or families it has never been practiced and those who are young as they are taken to be practicing and learning what they do not understand.

2.3 Categorization of witchcraft and witches in Bunyoro society

Witchcraft in Bunyoro society mainly includes three categories that is; “*Abarogo*” (Witches), the “*Abasezi*” (*Night dancers*) and the Witchdoctors locally known as “*Abafumu*”. These terms are always used interchangeably by the Banyoro to mean witchcraft yet these are different as they will be discussed later. Both women and men in Bunyoro can be witches although women are more likely to be categorized as witches, because they are always blamed for all bad things in the society including barrenness, and dullness of children in the family among others.

2.3.1 The “Abarogo” in Bunyoro society

Under this category, the society of Bunyoro acknowledges three kinds of “*Abarogo*”. These include the rain stoppers and rain makers locally known as “*Abarogo abenjura*”, those who cause all kinds of illness or diseases locally known as “*Abarogoabendwara*” and those who cause accidents locally known as “*Abarogo aba’koohe orundi abobutandwa*”.

2.3.1.1 The Rain stoppers and Rain makers

In relation to Tanzania, Mbiti in his book “*African Religion and Philosophy*” 1969 writes about the rain makers and rain stoppers. According to Mbiti (1969), there was a time this category of specialists were approached after a period of prolonged drought and the effect of their consultation led to too much rain to the extent of causing floods in Tanzania. Besides, Mbiti also notes that because they caused too much rain that led to the destruction of peoples properties about two of them were arrested Mbiti (1969). This relates to his other writing in the book titled “*The concept of God in Africa*” where he looks at the rain stoppers and makers as essential people in the society (Mbiti, 1970). However, unlike in Tanzania where there was a noticeable

role played by these specialists (Mbiti, 1969), in Bunyoro society these are known as witches and are also part of the society though not so active. These are known to the Banyoro as “*Abarogo benjura*” literally translated as, “*the witches of the rain*”. These have the chief duty of either causing rain to fall like those of Tanzania or causing it to stop.

When the society lacks rain for along period of time, they are consulted to do something about the need and also consulted when the rain is too much inorder to stop or cause it to rain in bits. These witches were believed to have compounds that were full of trees from where they kept their charms that they would use to evock the rain. There compounds had many kinds of skeletons and bones of different kinds of animals that are used to evock the powers that either cause rain or stopped the rain. While evocking the power to cause rain to fall in Bunyoro society, these bones were made to face upwards where the rain comes from and after evocking the super natural powers, when the witch wants to stop rain, all the bones or skeletons are made to face down wards were the rain falls and the rain would stop (EBR, Kisanja; 15/12/2022).

The rain stoppers and rain makers in Bunyoro are always approached when there are some big functions for example introduction ceremonies, thanks giving ceremonies among others. These rain stoppers are invited to perform their rituals before the function starts. In most instances however, the rain stoppers are invited to attend the functions so that if the weather changed, they would take their course of action. The rain stoppers are also believed to have powers to protect peoples gardens from heavy storm and also send the storm to the gardens of their enemies in the society of Bunyoro. It is common in Bunyoro to find a storm that has destroyed peoples gardens yet for others have been spared. These rain makers and rain stoppers always dress in old rugged clothes although the respondents failed to justify the reasons such poor dressing code.

Unlike others, this category of witches are given a good public image. These are treated and branded as good people in Bunyoro society because of what they do unlike Awolalu (1978) who looks at all witches in general as implacable enemies of the society. Infact the Banyoro refer to this category of witches as “enemies of none” in the society and prayed that they even lived longer. It was also found out that there are possibilities of these category of specialists carrying rain from a certain village and make it fall in other areas or even carry it to other areas when it is likely to be too much. While evocking rain to fell, these category of witches use the following words.

“Rain is very soft and it gently falls under the fields of men, it reduces the heat, and the windy weather. Its water washes away the dust and all the griefs of the people animals and birds in the society. It comes above from the clouds gently, falling and bending the leaves, let all evil go, let the rain fall gently for it is the source of life and joy of all creatures” (WDR, Kizibu village; 9/12/2023).

However most of the Banyoro although un able to stop rain or cause it, were found to have abilities atleast to make heavy storm to reduce. Since the study was carried out towards the end of the rainy season that is around November and December, old men and women were seen throwing bottles in their compounds, axes in the middle of the compound among others in order to reduce the magnitude of the storm. These items would be accompanied by the use of some words for example, “*ogarukeyo mbali waruga*” meaning go back where you are from, “*abowanyu bakwirukize naitwe tukugaraayo okubiiha*” literally translated as, “*your people have chased you away and we are also sending you back, you are telling a lie*” (EBR, Kisanja; 15/12/2022).

Other methods that were found out to stop rain especially with storm or completely end it included the use of the un ripe paw paw whereby a stick is pierced inside the un ripe paw paw, and put at the fire place. Another method involved the use of the cloth of the deceased that is thrown on top of the house, placing a mortar tied together with spear grass (*essojo*) which is put in the compound while it is raining, throwing a plant known as “*Rukoni*” in the compound while it is raining among others. It was found out that the concept of rain stopping and rain making were one of the most known by the people in the society of Bunyoro.

2.3.1.2 The witches who cause illness

Unlike the category of the rain makers/stoppers who were found out to be friends of the society, this category of witches were branded to be the most dangerous in the society as no one wishes to be sick in the world. These were found out to be great enemies of the society just as (Awolalu, 1978) observes that witches cause all sorts of illness in the society like still birth, accidents among others. This category of witches causes all form of illness in the society for example;

“*Ebihara*” was identified as an illness caused by these witches in the society. “*Ebihara*” is an illness that involves stomach ache and diarrhoea whereby a witch casts the spell of “*ebihara*” through her fingers by pointing at the intended victim. The spell affects every category of people whether young or old including his or her own children. This is because it was found out that there is a time when the spells have to be cast out and any one who is found to be near the witch suffers the consequence. It is also believed that the witch has a period when he or she feels pain if the spells are not casted out to the victim. This illness is so dangerous because it was found out that it is more dangerous than diarrhoea. The witches who inflict the “*ebihara*” illness do not spare even the young children. However, this illness could be cured through the use of the black

jack that is squeezed and the fluids drunk by the victim, it could also be treated through the use of “*ekirenga*”.

The “*ekirenga*” is squeezed and mixed with other medicines and also drunk by the victim. This illness could also be treated using leaves of a plant called “*Omusomoro*”. The mother of the baby uses one of the above leaves by chewing it until the fluids from the leaves come in the mouth and then spits the fluids in the mouth of the baby to swallow supporting the baby with the breast milk so that baby thinks it is breast milk. This illness can also be cured by the witch herself/himself. The process by which the witch heals the victim by himself/ herself in Bunyoro society is known as “*okurumuura*”, (EBR, (Kisanja; 15/12/2022).

The witches in Bunyoro society were also known to cause sight problems by making their victims get difficulties in seeing by causing pain in their eyes. An individual with such illness is believed to have red eyes which would itch continuously. It is worse to note that such illness is very hard to be detected and treated by a medical doctor. More so, “*Okukwata enda*” was also found out to be common among the women in Bunyoro society. When a woman conceives, it is expected that after a period of nine months she will give birth but unfortunately, this is not the cases in Bunyoro society. It is possible that a pregnant woman could remain pregnant for a year and above. This habit was common among the co-wives who may not wish the other well. However even the other ordinary people could cause this especially if they had ill intentions against someone. Therefore, it is not advisable in Bunyoro society for any pregnant woman to allow any person touch her stomach apart from her own husband. Relatedly, these witches could also use their supernatural powers to cause miscarriages among women. Because of this, whenever a woman is pregnant, she may rarely move from one place to the other for fear of such problems in Bunyoro society.

“*Okuzimba ebigere*” or swelling of the legs of the victim was also common in Bunyoro society. Okuzimba in Bunyoro society means to swell and ebigere means legs or feet hence “*okuzimba ebigere*” literally translated as, “*the swelling of the feet or the legs*”. The legs do not only swell but the swelling is accompanied by troublesome pain. Besides the legs, other body parts could also swell and when the victim is taken to the diviner also known as the “*omuraguzi*”, the body could be cut and many things removed from such bodies for example banana clusters, bones of different animals and fish, seeds among others. Notably, such things are inserted into the body by the witch depending on the livelihood of an individual for example a farmers body will contain seeds, clusters and even grains because he/she deals in such. Therefore it is such kind of misery that makes Banyoro say that “*buli omu affeera hamulimo gwaye*”, OBR, (Kiboijogoro village; 25/11/2022) literally translated as, “*every one dies as from his/her own job*”. It should be noted that the witches in Bunyoro society have the ability to cause illness that may seem to be medical like malaria but when diagnosed, it may not be detected. Therefore, witches in Bunyoro society have the ability to cause both physical, mental, spiritual and some times medical illness or even combine many illness at a go.

In conclusion, the above category of witches is responsible for all sorts of sickness just as (Nkonge, 2014 & Mbiti, 1969:201) states. However, the difference between the witches in Bunyoro with those of other societies like the Azande of Colonial Sudan is that; for the case of Bunyoro society, the witches have the powers to combine normal sickness together with spiritual illness in that the illness would require both medical attention from the hospital as well as attention from the shrine.

2.3.1.3 The witches who cause accidents

These witches are totally different from the rest of the witches in Bunyoro as their main intention is the death of the victim. The death caused by these witches was found out to be mysterious and sudden going beyond human understanding and explanation. These witches were found to be those who caused accidents like motor accidents, snake bites and drowning especially in lakes and falling from the trees. This is in line with what Awolalu who argues that witches are responsible for all sorts of misfortunes for example, accidents, sudden death, barrenness among others (Awolalu, 1978). For example assuming the targeted victim is in the taxi carrying fourteen passengers, thirteen passengers could survive the accident and only the targeted individual perishes according to this category.

The categories of individuals who are likely to be victims of such accidents in the society are those who have won elections. This however relates to what (Shelag, 2014) states that witchcraft is used in politics to cause harm to the opponets. A witch would cause an individual who has just won elections to die mysteriously. These categories of witches could also set someone to be knocked down by a speeding car, mortocycle or even a bicycle. This kind of death is known as as “*orufuorwa’koohe*”, (OBR, Kiboijogoro village; 25/11/2022) literally translated as, “*a set death in the society*”. Those who have excelled in exams irrespective of the level of education could as well be victims. It is common to find the Banyoro witches setting such people into accidents like snake bites and even causing them to hung themselves which the Banyoro termed as “*orufu orwa a’koohe*” or set death. Other category of those who were likely to suffer included those with promotions, those with new appointments among others. Therefore because of such, the society came up with a saying that “*omuntu, tayefeera*”, EBR, (Kisanja; 15/12/2022) literally translated as, “*a person can not die own his or her own*”.

2.4. The Abasezi in Bunyoro society

This is the second category of witches in the society of Bunyoro. These are sub divided into three categories to include; the witches of the gardens “*Abasezi abasera emisiri*”, those who eat human flesh “*Abasezi abalya abantu*” and the night dancers or “*Abasezi baniga abantu*”

2.4.1 The Witches of gardens or “Abasezi abasera emisiri”

In Bunyoro society, these witches were found out to cause misfortunes to the crops planted in the garden. This is always done by the witches at night and sometimes during the day both in the presence and the absence of the owner of the garden. The “*basezi*” do this by pouring the charms in the garden in order to prevent the crops from growing completely, sometime crops could grow very well but do not yield among others. These witches could also cause crop failure by touching in the seeds the farmer is going to plant. This is done to the peasants who harvest highly and yet the witches harbour ill intentions against them. In addition to the above such farmers would also be made sick by those witches who have ill intentions against them. For example, if the peasant grows bananas, banana clusters would be inserted in their bodies, those who planted seeds, they would be inserted in their bodies among others. Whenever the above would be inserted into the bodies of those who practice agriculture, their bodies would be cut and the same items removed from their bodies by the diviner also locally known as “*omuraguzi*” using the method known as “*okurumika*”.

The basezi were found out to transfer the well yielded crops from one garden to another for example if ones groundnuts yielded well, the witch could transfer them to another garden and during time of harvest, one could realize less harvest yet he/she was to harvest highly and the reverse is true. This is the same category of witches that was also found to make people dig at

night in mainly in banana plantations offering free labour. They possessed certain powers that they used to make ones body leave his/her bed at night and start digging in their personal, friends or other peoples plantations at night. They caused people to dig by using their medicines to cause them leave their beds and dig up to the portion they need and it is from this that they used the same powers to cause them to go back to their beds and continue with sleep. Therefore in the society when one wakes up tired and even dirty, it is possible that the musezi could have made them dig in the night and later set them free after finishing to dig or weed a given piece of land. These basezi were found out to be very dangerous because they also caused famine in peoples homes especially when they caused crop failure. This category of witches harm all gardens whether the farmers garden is a new one, the farmer has used fertilizers or not, whether the farmer has planted early according to the season or not and whether the farmer has sprayed his/her crops or not making it hard for an individual to escape the danger.

Contrary to the above, another category was found out in the society and this category of witches favoured agriculture. These were found out to be friends of farmers and were credited them for giving farmers and peasants the medicine called “*ekirenga*”. The “*ekirenga*” is given to the farmers and the peasants by this category of witches to boost crop production. This medicine works to the level of fertilizers and to those who use this medicine, telling them about buying fertilizers is a waste of time. The “*ekirenga*” is very easy to use, cheap and less tiresome compared to the fertilizers. This is because the leaves of “*Ekirenga*” are planted only in the first hole the farmer digs unlike the fertilizers that are put under each hole dug by the farmer in the garden. Sometimes the farmers are given charms to protect their gardens and harvest highly supported with the following words.

“Lord, may you receive my seeds that I plant. Allow them to germinate in my minds and my heart and let the seeds grow to maturity as you care for all of them and utmostly encourage them so that our grandchildren have plenty of food to eat in your gracious and holy name”(WDR, Kyesiga village; 19/12/202022).

The words above indicate that some witches believe in God especially those that are concerned with crop success because God is called upon to receive the plants of the farmer. The words also show that they practice witchcraft with good motives of having plenty of food to reduce hunger in the society. Therefore, witchcraft in this case is practiced with the intention of increasing productivity and reduce shortage of food in the society.



Figure 3: A photo of the “Ekirenga” plant used to boost crop production and treatment of the “Ebihara” illness

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher –Richard Atuhairwe (15/12/2022)

In conclusion therefore, the society of Bunyoro acknowledges two types of witches under the witches of the gardens in Bunyoro that is; the witches who cause crop failure and those who boost crop production. However, it should be noted that some witches under this category could cause both crop failure and at the same time give charms for crop productivity. Therefore under this category, these kinds of witches double as causers of misfortunes to crops as well as solution providers to the stunted crops in the society of Bunyoro.

2.4.2 The Abasezi who eat human flesh or the cannibal witches

The Basezi who eat human flesh according to the Banyoro were quite interesting in terms of their conduct. They were the category of witches who were found out to dig up grave yards and carry corpses at night or even during the day. They carried the corpse by themselves, used other people in the society without their consent as well as using wind to transport the corpse. The flesh of these corpse would be eaten immediately or even kept for eating at the intended time especially during Christmas and other festive seasons like Easter period. It is believed by the Banyoro that festive seasons are ideal to this category because it is the time when almost all relatives have come at home and hence forth the best time for sharing the best home meal together with those that could have stayed away from home for some time.

The Basezi in the society of Bunyoro were believed to be driven by a dangerous spirit commonly known as “*ekitambo*” unlike other witches. This is inline with witchcraft among the Basoga of Eastern Uganda who are also driven by a mystical power called “*ekitambo*” (Isiko, 2018). This dangerous spirit pops up on those who are witches and forces them to cause harm especially to those around them although even the distant may not be spared. EBR, (Kisanja; 15/12/2022) believe that: *when the spirit pops up the witch runs toward the corpse, shivers and salvating.*

From this point the witch is seen running where the corpse is going to be buried or even running to the grave yards, (OBR, Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022).

The “*musezi*” starts by shivering when the corpse is being taken for burrial because he or she is scared of fresh flesh being taken way from his or her presence. He or she also runs to the graveyards because it is the only place he is sure of getting the kind of meat he or she wants. This category of witches may learn the practice from friends, parents or marriage partners. It is possible that a member of the family may know the practice when without them being aware. However, the omusezi has no control over the ‘ekitambo’ and when it pops up, he or she can be noticed and is quickly removed or taken aside by the close relatives. When the “*ekitambo*” pops up, the musezi is seen shivering especially during funeral time, he or she salvates. The basezi also love moving through the grave yards especially at night. To Bunyoro society, the musezi can eat a corpse of any person whether a friend or relative and even kill a living person for flesh. The process of the “*ekitambo*” or the dangerous spirit popping up is locally known as “*okwimuka kwe’kitambo*” (OBR, Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022).

The basezi are further believed to keep their corpses in big trees around their homes and near valleys or even in swampy areas. Some basezi could also keep their corpse in their banana plantations, may have special rooms in their houses where they preserve these bodies wheras some are believed to have some underground pits locally known as “*embiso*”. However “*embiso*” can also be used as pits for keeping un ripe bananas by those that are not witches in order for them to ripen so that the people get “*ensande*” literally translated as “*banana juice*”. The basezi also kept corpses in trees along the road side especially in trees like the “*Emisisa*”, and “*emitoma*”. In this society still, it was found out that corpse could be borrowed to other basezi of the same practice. For example, one could lend the other a corpse just as the way one lends a

friend money and later pays back. This would be done among the people who understands themselves well and have been friends. It could also be done between two clans that understand themselves better.

However, problems are only caused by the failure for one to pay back the borrowed corpse. When one fails to pay back a borrowed corpse, the colleague in the same occupation retaliates by killing one of the relatives of the one who has failed to pay back the borrowed corpse. This is always common during festive seasons especially during christmas and Easter days. This is because the basezi feel bad when one makes them fail to have meat for the festive season. It is from this that the Banyoro derive this description;

“Tosobora kunyatissa ebyokulya mugenzi waawe! eryo itima nyabaki?” (OBR, mile 16 village; 11/12/2022).

This is literally interpreted as *“you can not make your associate eat without meat”*. The “basezi” borrow corpse to the colleagues from the same line of work because they are sure that their equals are conversant with the goodness of the meat and will pay back at an agreed time. The agreed time is a result of a consensus between the two parties. Notably, during these consensus, no written agreements are made but the practice depends on the loyalty and trust the different parties have. However, in Bunyoro society although there are the abasezi who eat human flesh, they can be further be sub divided into three categories that is;

2.4.2.1 Those witches who bewitch people so that they can die and eat there corpse

These witches are believed to use charms in order to kill people so that they can have their bodies for flesh. However this category of witches may not affect all the people in the society. This is because it was found out that the charms they use mainly affects those with grudges

against them. The main people who are likely to be affected by this category of witches is the one that is borrowed a corpse and fails to pay back. This is because some witches do not eat the corpse of their clan members whom they borrow and they later pay them back after their person has also died.

When they fail to pay back, those who borrowed them a corpse retaliate by bewitching their clan member in order to pay themselves back. This kind of borrowing only applies to those clans that know themselves as “basezi” and long time friends. These clans understand themselves better and are sure that they will pay themselves back at an agreed time.

2.4.2.2 The Abasezi who capture people alive in order to kill them for flesh

This category of witches are so dangerous as they captured anyone without necessarily using charms. These witches capture living people and kill them for flesh. These witches are believed to be impatient as they do not wait for someone to die a natural death and come for their corpse. These capture an individual both at night and day as long as an individual moved or passed through their area. These witches always captured lonely travelers, those who went unknowingly to their homes to request for some water for drinking, those who are lost and do not know where they are going and those who loved moving at night among others. This practice is however not done basing on a given clan but rather these witches capture people to kill for flesh for their own families. These corpse may not be borrowed but rather they can borrow out just some pieces but not the whole corpse as the case may be with those who practise witchcraft on a clan basis.

2.4.2.3 The Abasezi who patiently wait in vain for people to die so that they can eat their flesh

These were found out to be the commonest in the society of Bunyoro. These category of witches neither bewitched an individual to die and they get flesh nor captured people alive because they are the most patient witches in the society of Bunyoro. These wait patiently for the news about the death of someone in the society and then plan on how they can pick the corpse. These are believed to pick their corpse using some charms and they were believed to move through the wind. In Bunyoro society it is very common to find a strong wind in the evenings especially when some one has been buried. Infact whenever this kind of wind is experienced, the Banyoro believe that the corpse has already been taken by these “*basezi*”. This is the category that always have the spirit of “*ekitambo*” or the dangerous evil spirit unlike the other two categories as already explained above.

2.4.2.4 The Abasezi who squeeze peoples necks at night

This category of witches are very interesting basing on what they do and their area of operation. In Bunyoro society, these witches operate from the compound especially at night when every member of a family is sleeping or having a rest and no “*musezi*” operates during the day time. These were found out to begin with night dancing and then started harassing people in their sleep at night. The basezi are known to move at night while naked distablizing peoples doors by bending on them to the extent that if the door is weak, the musezi could accidentally break it. It is also very possible to find your door with faeces the next day if these basezi operate on someones door while naked (OBR, Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022). These witches are known to be very dangerous as they can kill a family member or even any friend. This is because, they

harm anyone they find sleeping at home when they come to do their craft. For example, they are known to press peoples necks at night using some special powers something that leads to death. Although in most cases these witches only press peoples necks, some of these witches also eat their corpse when they die.

These witches are believed to begin with night dancing which they do while naked although sometimes do night dancing while dressed. This kind of night dancing is locally known as “*Okuligita*” in Bunyoro society. They then use the grass on the huts of the Banyoro to squeeze the necks of the people. They touch on the grass thatched on the huts, twist the grass and as they twist the grass, they will be twisting the necks of the people in the house.

It is very simple to know that a witch has come because it starts with a feeling that you are dreaming, then you either the witch pressing your neck when he or she is in another form especially a cat, dog among others. In other words, even if there are two people on the same bed, the “*musezi*” could press ones neck while the other is un aware. This means that the other person on the bed only hears an alarm when the “*musezi*” has left pressing your neck. Most of the times, these “*basezi*” always do this when they are in human form and can be known by those they have disturbed. However, the basezi of Bunyoro society could also squeeze someone when they are in the form of a relative or even a friend. In other words, through a dream one could think it is a friend who did so or a relative when it is not the case.

2.5 The Abafumu or witchdoctors in Bunyoro society

This is the last category that falls under witchcraft in Bunyoro society. As it has already been noted especially on how one may become a witchdoctor, at this point the focus will mainly be to know who the witchdoctors are, what they do and what they do not do. The witchdoctors are

known as healers or “*abajanjabi be’ekinansi*”. The society takes them as healers but who are mainly concerned with diseases that are spiritual in nature. Some witchdoctors operate from inside their houses in special rooms whereby they erect up shrines whereas most of them have shrines in their compound. The shrines or “*Amasabo*” can be many up to even three although most of the witchdoctors have one. These witchdoctors are consulted on private basis and each witchdoctor has his or her own fare for consultation but the minimum amount by the time this study was done was 30,000 shillings only.

The real healing is quite expensive as it can go for over 500,000 shillings depending on the magnitude of illness and the kind of the healer the client approached. It can even be more expensive where it necessitates the witchdoctor to go to the patients home. This is because they will have to move with their tools like “*ensimbi*” or cowrie shells and “*enyungu*” or smoke pipe among others depending on the illness of the patient. However their fare is not necessarily financial but can even be through giving them cows, goats, chicken and some times even land although it could be both monetary and material.

The witchdoctors in Bunyoro have both good and bad reputation in the society. This is because it depends on their ability to heal the illness and remove misfortunes. This means that there are those who are good whereas some are bad. The witchdoctors are those who initiate those who want to enter the practice of witchcraft and train them secretly. Although the witchdoctors denied to describe the process of initiating a new entrant, at least, some words were got that they use in order to initiate an individual into witchcraft. For example, if an individual wanted to join the family of the witches, he or she would be told to repeat the statement that:

“I have come with all the love and joy to worship the gods in whom I believe and to become one with them, my ancestors, my brothers and sisters in craft work. I come with nothing but my true

self. I am here for my own choice. May you accept me as a new member of the family” (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022). Then the witchdoctor continues stating that:

“Here is one who is joining us with utmost love and joy, he is joining our family, please welcome him/her and bring him/her joy in the fields of craft work of our grand parents so that he or she can see the goodness of craft work. May you accept him as a new member of the family” (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022). Then the initiate says there after that, *“I pledge all my strength, joy and love, support and strength to the gods and all my brothers and sisters in craft work, the bell is rung three times and the celebration can begin for giving joy the new entrant in the craft work”* (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022)

Witchdoctors in Bunyoro society are those healers that the society always runs to in case of any need. They believed but perform different roles in the society especially healing those with mystical and spiritual problems that can not be diagnosed in the medical hospitals. They can train and initiate those who want to enter craft work, give defensive charms whereas some could as well work as diviners among others. The witchdoctors in Bunyoro society rarely work as herbalists. Consequently by the time this study was done, they had started buying the herbs from the herbalist in order to equip themselves with treating diseases that are not spiritual in nature as well. For this reason the witchdoctors are starting to perform and assume the roles of other specialists especially the herbalists. However, in spite of them being healers, they do not admit patients in their shrines. They work on the patients either from their shrines or may go to the patients home but this is always rare but also expensive.

2.6 Common characteristics of witches in Bunyoro society

2.6.1 Introduction

The signs possessed by the witches in Bunyoro society can easily be understood by the witches themselves, friends to the witches and those who embark on a serious study about the practice. However to get the characteristics from the witchdoctors themselves is one of the hardest task because it requires one to swear to the powers of the devil that he/she would not tell others who are not witches these signs. As one approaches some witchdoctors, one may be forced to take an oath because matters of witchcraft are secret or else if disseminated for others to read, it would be for the purpose of the expansion of the kingdom of the devil. For this reason, the oath had to be made by the researcher because what was to be said would be the secrets of the underground which was not be disclosed to the non witches and the following was an oath that the researcher made.

“I Richard Atuhairwe, the grandchild of the underground do swear with utmost loyalty at this sacred altar that I will always use this knowledge for the expansion of the underground kingdom. The knowledge I seek, the knowledge I will always seek and the knowledge I will always make others seek” (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022). Later on the witchdoctor stated that:

“Blessed are the feet that brought you here and blessed they shall be while taking you back, blessed are the breasts that fed you and shall always have abundant milk for others to also feed on, and blessed are the lips that utter such words at this sacred altar and shall always be blessed. Then a hug and a kiss may be given by the witchdoctor” (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022).

2.6.2 The characteristics of witches in Bunyoro society

The witches in Bunyoro society have a common or related and hospitable way of welcoming their clients and greeting when they are approached. The witchdoctors always use common words like *“Blessed be”*. *These are always accompanied by either a hug or a kiss. Later this would also be followed by words like Blessed be the feet that have brought you this way. Blessed shall be the knees that will kneel before the sacred altar. Blessed be the womb that without which you would not be alive and blessed be the breasts that fed you with flowing milk, blessed be the breasts that were given abundant milk for your growth and in strength and blessed will be the lips that shall keep matters of the kingdom secret for its expansion,* (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022).

The words above are always said by the witchdoctor and later repeated by the clients. These words would be concluded by a hug and a kiss. Infact, witches in Bunyoro society are very hospitable and give psychological treatment even before working on the problems of the clients. The pupose of this hospitality is to enable the clients realize that the witches are also like any other human being basing on the scary items found in the shrine CLR, (Kisindizi village; 10/12/2022).

Witches change from human form to animal form especially at night. Although the respondents were not able to describe the process involved for one to turn to another form, they greatly agreed that truly a witch can turn to any form for example one respondent said that the Banyoro witches can turn into animals like cats, rats, birds, dogs, foxes, and frogs. This is in line with (Magesa, 1997:170 & Wyk, 2004: 1211) who argues that witches are able to turn themselves into animals like hyena, owls or other nocturnal animals. Witches turn into animals in order to hide their identity and that people are always sympathetic to such animals and may not harm them.

Infact one could even pick it and keep and yet he/she has hand-picked and kept a witch. In the society of Bunyoro, witches can leave their bodies in their homes sleeping just as the way (Magesa, 1997) observes that witches can abandon their bodies to meet with others and turn into different animals like dogs and cats or even spirits and go for their missions. If the animal that a Muniyoro witch has turned into is killed, the body of the witch could be found dead in bed. More so, if such animal is not killed but it is beaten severely, the body of the witch could also be found with severe wounds the next day. Therefore whatever happens to the animal that the witch turned into in Bunyoro society at night is what happens to his/ her original body that he or she left at home in the bed lifeless. Therefore in Bunyoro society, witches have that power of changing to other forms including animals, anti hills, birds, bats and rats among others.

It is also common in Bunyoro society to find that some of the witches do not really want to be looked straight into their eyes. In other words they fear eye to eye contact between them and other people. This applies especially to the witches who cast spells and store their spells in their eyes who do not want to be looked straight into their eyes because looking at their eyes may be interpreted by the witches to mean looking at their spells. It is worse with those people who keenly look at the people especially in the eyes. Such people who keenly looks at the others are hated by the witches and could easily lead the witch to harm them. Infact they (the witches) themselves do not want to see people into their eyes for fear of being noticed. CLR, (Kisindizi village; 10/12/2022) states that, “*Witches do not like one to look into their eyes because one can suffer from illness due to such because their eyes are “stores” of their spells that they cast*”. This is because when a witch takes time to cause illness he/she never relaxes as they always feel pain in her or his body. Where possible, a witch causes harm to her or his biological in order to avoid pain in his or her body.

Later on the witch can heal the victim by him or herself through what the society term as “*Okurumuura*”. This is the process by which a witch inflicts harm to an individual and at the same time heals the victim.

Just like universities, schools and other organizations that always have meetings to discuss matters concerning their institutions, witches in Bunyoro society hold meetings to also discuss witchcraft matters just as (Magesa, 1997) puts it that witches abandon their bodies to meet with other witches. In their meetings, discussions mainly center on how to get and win more members into the practice. Other discussions involve assesment of their fellow witches on the different tasks accorded to them in order to assess their progress. However contrally to the universities, schools and organisations that hold meetings during the day, witches in Bunyoro society may not have any meetings during the day but rather have their meetings in the night. It is believed by the Banyoro that, “*Witches prefer to have meetings in the night for mainly two reasons and that is; during night time, the witches are active and yet their enemies are passive, and secondly it is the time they can be undercover without being recognised. Witches in Bunyoro society may always have meetings from the time of 2am because they are sure their enemies are asleep, passive and can use this chance to call their spirits as well*” (WDR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022).

During these meeting, the witches are known to feed on blood of virgins and those from miscarriages which the witches themselves cause, sacrifice their children and animals as well as make covenants with the devil. In these meetings, the main witch or the senior witch also punish those that are rebellious, rewards the loyal and the hardworking. WDR, (Kisambu village; 13/12/2022) states that, “*Rewards include being a leader of other witches and guiding the young witches in the craft work*”. The rewards may also include demotions and exemption from attending meetings. In Bunyoro society, about two condition could lead to punishment among

the witches. These include; the failure accomplish the task assigned to the witch for example; causing illness, accidents, barrenness and killing the victim among others. Similarly, hardwork and loyalty of a witch to the senior witch leads to rewards. These are done so that they can get as many patients as possible in their craft work. These rewards come as a result of doing evil acts like accidents, barrenness, killing the victim among others. Rewards are always in the form of promotions as witches have ranks or levels in Bunyoro society.

Ranks of witches were found out to be three that is;- the junior rank, semi junior rank and that of the senior rank. To qualify for the junior rank, it takes about 10-15 years in craft work, semi junior rank takes about 15- 30 years and the senior rank is where some one has practiced witchcraft for over 30 years. The senior witch is the trainer of the juniors and the semi-juniors witchcraft as well as initiating them into the practice. Revealing secrets of the kingdom of darkness could also lead to punishment especially if revealed to those intending to destroy it. The punishments to such people mainly included madness and living a miserable life, or sudden death, rotting of the outer skin as well as smelling in the public. Therefore, the more hardworking a witch is according to Bunyoro society, the higher the chances of promotion and the lazy the witch is, the higher the chances of remaining at the same level.

There is also the practice of sexual abandonment among some witches in Bunyoro society whereby these witches are rarely involved into sexual intercourse. This is because, these witches make pacts with the spirits not have sex or even to only focus of the spiritual work. Consequently, in many instances although the witches are married and have even children, they may have spiritual partners but without their physical partners being aware. They may always engage into sexual relations with the spirits making them complain of lack of sexual satisfaction because their spouses have multiple sex with spiritual partners at the expense of their physical partners

that they do not know about. Those considered to be witches in Bunyoro society always had family conflicts because their spiritual partners always have conflicts because they were always at war with the physical partners. The reason for having spiritual partners is to enable them have more powers which is believed to be acquired through sexual intercourse and also to make covenants with those who give them powers. Therefore, a witch in the society of Bunyoro is most likely to be “*polygamous*” with one partner in the physical world and another in the spiritual world.

Just like Pritchard (1937) puts it that the witches among the Azande of Colonial Sudan were driven by envy, greed, jealousy and hatred, it is worse in the society of Bunyoro. OBR, (Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022) describes how she studied in Kampala until she finished her studies because she feared that witches would kill her if they noticed that she was studying. Notably in Bunyoro society Kampala is known to this society as “*Buganda*”. Relatedly, OBR, (Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022) suspects everyone as a witch as well as the relatives. This therefore denotes that the witches in the society of Bunyoro are never distant because they also include relatives. The Banyoro were those known to be people who harbour jealousy, envy, greed and hatred in all spheres of life for example in education, agriculture, business, marriage, relationships, politics among others. Infact the same respondent in her closing remarks during the interview exclaimed that “*Abanyoro tibagondezangana!*” literally translated as “*the Banyoro do not wish themselves well*”.

As already noted above under the categories of witches in Bunyoro, some witches eat human flesh. These witches may eat human flesh irrespective of whether it is for their relatives or not and whether living or dead. In Bunyoro society being got with a corpse may not be a headline in news because it is not new in the ears of the people in this society. These witches keep their flesh

in the underground pits, houses, big trees especially those around their homes, in valleys among others. The same witches are known to borrow their fellows flesh who in turn pay back after the agreed period of time for example during special days like, Easter, christmas intending to share with relatives who are distant who could have taken long without such meals. This flesh is always kept in form of dry meat locally known as “*omukaro*” in order prevent it from roating.

Soliloquy is one of the characteristics of witches in Bunyoro society. Surprisingly, in the eyes of the people, witches are known to speak alone, yet to the witches, they have spiritual friends whom they communicate with. Therefore witches in Bunyoro society always communicate to their spiritual partners from the physical world. Witches in Bunyoro society know themselves for instance a witch from one society can easily know the associates who is in another area. In fact the witch can tell the client if the illness has been caused by another witch that he or she knows about. For the genuine witches, it is from this point that they will tell their clients if they are able to give them a remedy or not. If not, they can refer you to another witch for further solutions.

There is hierachy in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society among the witches. Witches are categorized interms of the juniors, semi juniors and the senior witch. The junior witches always speak of the client to another witch for futher assistance. Infact, the senior witches train the juniors and initate them into craft work in Bunyoro society. The junior witch is that who has practiced witchcraft for less than fifteen years, the semi- junior is that who has practiced witchcraft for about thirty years and the senior witch is that who has been in witchcraft for over thirty years.

Conclusively the characteristics possessed by the witches are matters of secrecy and are either known to themselves, those who want to be initiated and are undergoing training and only those who make an oath to keep them secret. It is a matter of life and death to reveal such

characteristics as the witches believe that if they are revealed to the non witches, they could be used by their enemies to fight them. Therefore matters concerning witchcraft are matters of utmost secrecy and who ever reveals them out may suffer the consequences for the rest of his or her life.

2.7. Methods of Witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

2.7.1 Introduction

Methods are ways through which the witches in Bunyoro society practice witchcraft. Methods include the processes of their actions in order to realize their intentions, what the witches use and what they do not use and more importantly how they perform their craft work in case they want to realize a certain result.

2.7.2 Methods through which the Witches practice witchcraft in Bunyoro society

In Bunyoro society, witches and witchdoctors practice witchcraft through many ways for example, EBR states, (Bugambe village; 9/12/2022) believes that the Banyoro are witches and bewitch in many ways and nearly bewitch every thing. In other words, plants, animals as well as human beings irrespective of age, sex, rank, educational background among others can all be affected by witchcraft. For this reason the society practices various methods in the practice of witchcraft to include the following.

“Siika nosiriiza busiriiza” literally translated as, *“to fry while burning”* is common in Bunyoro society. This method is believed to have been copied by the Banyoro from the Alur people who also live in Bunyoro society. To the Alur the method was found out to locally mean *“chelle wangawanga”* which means that *“fry while burning”* (Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022). In

Runyoro dialect, ‘*okusiika*’ means to “fry” and ‘*kusiriza*’ is to “burn” literally meaning “fry while burning”. Similarly in Alur language, “*Chelle*” literally means “frying” and “*wangawanga*” means to “burning”.

Before describing this method as used in Bunyoro society, the respondent first listed the requirements needed for this method to be effective and these included; water locally known as “*amaizi*”, fire or “*omuuro*”, saucepan or “*esefuliya*”, “*omuhiko*” or “*mingling*” stick, plate or “*esahani*” and flour or “*ensaano*”. The method requires a married woman to put an empty saucepan on fire before pouring water inside. The woman undresses herself and she is required to squat with her back facing the fire point. Then the woman pours the cold water into the saucepan she had earlier put on fire and passes the water over her back as she verbally stating that:

“Nkwenda musaijja wange olyegge ebyokulya ebyange nyenka hatali ebyabakazi abandi”. (EBR, Kisambu village; 12/12/2022).

Literally translated as, “*I want my husband to be eating my food alone not for other women*”. After having poured water in the saucepan through her back she waits for the water to boil. When the water boils, the woman pours the flour into the saucepan on fire and starts to mingle the posho continuing with the same words given above or any other words depending on what she wants a man to be.

When the food is ready, she removes it from the saucepan and then puts the posho on the plate and she serves the husband at home on the table or the one she intends to get married to in case the relationship is new. It is believed by the Banyoro that if such food is eaten by the victim, the person can never leave a woman. Surprisingly still, by the time the child is about ten years, she is already aware of this method. This method only applied to those who were in marriage and those

who are intending to marry especially the engaged. Therefore in Bunyoro society, if marriage seems to be failing, this method is always sought for as the solution to divorce.

The method of using the female private parts is also used in Bunyoro society. Under this method, the woman in her menstruation period can use the blood stains from her private part which she mixes together with the food she has prepared for the man and the man is served that food to eat (EBR, Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022). A woman can also drop some blood stains of her menstruation into the sauce she is cooking in order for the man to eat, the blood stains can also be mixed with the water for mingling posho among others. Furthermore, the woman could also wash her private parts even without necessarily being in her menstrual periods and bewitch a man by using this same water for cooking the food. This method is used by mainly women who do not want their husband to have sex outside marriage. The above method could also be used by the witch in order to prevent the man from eating food cooked by another woman so that the man always ate food cooked by her alone. However for this instance, this is done irrespective of whether married or single although so common among the married women especially those who were still going through menstruation.

Birds are also important in the practice of witchcraft in the society. As it was already established under the economic setting of Bunyoro, birds are kept in Bunyoro society and were also found out to be very essential in the practice of witchcraft in the society. These birds are used to carry medicine from the sender to the targeted victim. This is in line with (Isiko, 2018) who states that birds are used to transport medicine from the sender to the targeted victim through mainly pigeons locally known as “*engyibwa*”. This explains the reason why most of the Banyoro greatly discourage the rearing of pigeons because these pigeons can be used to carry charms to those the witches hate. In this society, bats “*embugubugu*” can also be used to carry charms from the witch

to the targeted victim especially at night just as Magesa, (1997:170) puts it that there are animals and birds used to accomplish the evil ends of the witches. This explains why the Banyoro always have great fear when bats start to come to their homes as well as pigeons from other peoples homes.

“Okuyoora ebbigere” literally translated as *“collecting the soil where someones legs stepped”* method is also common among the witches in the society of Bunyoro. Unlike other methods that are continuous, this method is mainly fruitful during the dry season. The dust where the victim has stepped is used to perform evil acts on an individual. Because this involves dust, it is very efficient during the dry season. This method was identified to be appropriate to all categories of people as long as one are the target of the victim.

In this society, the method is mainly pragmatic to those who have stolen peoples property and the ladies who are beautiful who refuse somebody. A respondent described how he applied this method by stating:

“I attempted to use this method when my only banana I had kept to cook on Christmas day celebration was stolen from the plantation by an un named person. Unfortunately, when I was in the due process, it rained heavily and I could not proceed with my mission. It is the soil of a place where the thief has stepped that is collected and taken to a witchdoctor using any material like a polythene bag. It is from this point that the witchdoctor performs the rituals and gives the individual who intends to catch the thief the charms that he/she will apply at the exact point where an item was stolen from. If it is a pig and stolen from a sty, the charms are put in pig sty, if it is a cow and it was stolen from a kraal, the charms are put in the kraal among others” (EBR, Kiboijogoro village; 9/12/2022).

On the same note, it is surprising to note that the same method could be applied to force any one into love or marriage. For example if a man or woman wanted to marry or be in love with someone, he or she could collect the soil where that given person stepped and then take it to the witchdoctor for evil purposes. Later on, one could find him/ herself in love with a person without knowing how the love came about. This applied to the ladies who show off to men in the society of Bunyoro. Therefore in Bunyoro society, it may not be a go-show-off area for ladies especially the very beautiful ones.

Another way of practicing witchcraft in this society is through the “*Ekiinamyo*” method in Bunyoro society. “*Ekiinamyo*” is from a Runyoro word “*okwinamy*” which means “*to bend*”. This method is commonly used by the married women in the society of Bunyoro especially those who want to be the regulators of their families leaving a man with no say in a home. It is believed by the Banyoro that when this method is used, a man becomes a “*yes man*” because the charms makes him accept everything the woman says in a home. This is practiced by a woman especially when she realizes that the husband does not listen to her. A mans heart is “*bent*”so that he does not think about other women (OBR, Gilli village; 9/12/2022).

The society acknowledges that when the method is applied to the man, he begins to perform the roles of a woman at home when ‘*bent*’ the heart for example, cooking when a woman is at home and the man serves her, bathing children in the presence of a woman and instead of the man going for an evening walk, it is only the woman who goes. Infact this methods is used to make the man dance according to the tunes of the woman. A female elderly revealed that this method involved the use of a leaf that is always bent naturally although she never disclosed how the leaf looked like. It is believed that the woman picks the leaves from the plant and squeezes them by the use of the left hand.

When the woman squeezes the leaf by the use of the left hand, and the fluids are got from the leaves, the fluids are dropped into the sauce or tea especially black tea and the man is made to eat the food or drink the tea. The woman squeezes the leaf as she speaks words describing how she would want the husband to be and to behave. OBR, (Gilli village; 9/12/2022) referred to this process as “*okulamiriza*”. The method involves the use of the left hand. The left hand is used because of many reasons for example; it is used because the hand is considered to be useless in the society hence meaning that when it is done, the man will be a nuisance at home and can never oppose what the woman speaks. This because, the way the leaf is bent will exactly be the same way the man will be as he will always look down like a sheep or “*entaama*” when a woman speaks. In other words, the method would make the man submissive to the woman all the time. The food and tea also had an implication because it meant that the man was to always be eating food and drinking tea prepared by the wife at home. The fluid from this leaf does not involve the use of sauce that is in the form of meat because blood is a taboo. It only works with the food that is in the form of vegetables or any other sauce that does not contain blood as it is a taboo. However, it should be noted that this method may be irreversible because, if the woman changed her mind and wanted to put the man back in his original senses, it would not be possible. Therefore a woman in Bunyoro who does this may always live with her man but when he is a nuisance at home for the rest of her life because this process may be irreversible once it is done on to the man.

“*Kalimi kamu*” (one tongue) method. This was also found to be used in the society of Bunyoro during witchcraft practise. “*Kalimi*” in the society of Bunyoro locally means a tongue and “*kamu*” means one thus *kalimi kamu* meaning one tongue. This method is mainly used in marriage and in work places like offices. This method was found out also to be aided by the use

of some leaves. These leaves are found in the valley although the respondent was hesitant to describe the exact appearance of the leaves. The leaves are always picked, dried and then smashed them into powder form, kept separately or even mixed with the normal tea leaves that people always take in their homes or even offices. This charm in powder form is picked and mixed with tea and given to the intended victim in order to make a boss, husband or even a woman to always listen to only that person who has applied the pounded charms.

The leaves are dried because when they are dry, they can easily be turned into powder form. This is done by drying them up something that makes it not easier to notice when put into the tea. For example, taking a scenario of two people working from the same office and have one boss, when this pounded medicine from a leaf is put in the tea of the victim, he/she cannot be listened to by the boss compared to the witch when she or he speaks. Whatever the witch speaks matters compared to what other colleagues speaks and the witch is loved at the work place compared to all other colleagues. This pounded medicine influences everybody when applied including someones boss in order to always look at the medicine giver as more sensible than other colleagues.

Similarly in marriage, when this method is used, a man stands a risk of taking such medicine both in the presence or absence of the wife because in most instances, this medicine that is powdered is mixed with the normal tea leaves and could easily be taken by the man. It was found out that whenever a married man took this powdered medicine he would only listen to the words of the wife even when they not have sense. Whatever the woman instructs is what the man implements even if she to propose the sale of the land, house, a car among others, the man can never have a no in his mouth. In otherwords, the woman influences all the affairs of the home than the man. OBR, (Kyesiga village; 21/12/2022) says that itis believed by the Banyoro that

when a man eats this medicine from the food, he is the one who becomes a woman, and a woman becomes a man, The woman becomes the head of the home in marriage. Food was found out to be essential in trapping a man while using witchcraft because, every man is expected to eat food cooked by his wife. Failure to do so is why married women resort into witchcraft.

The words of the respondent also pointed to the view that women have remained voiceless as a result of the married men infringing upon some of their rights like expression. This is why married women always retaliate by engaging into witchcraft in order for them to exhumate their rights instead of being oppressed by the men. These women go for witchcraft as one of the ways of enabling them to express themselves through bewitching the men. This method was found out to be used on especially the men who are educated because they may reason out their women when they suggest something in the home. These women may be undermined because they never went to school, the wealthy men were bound to also be victims and men that are generally tough could also not escape as the practice was one of the ways of making them calm down. The respondent added that:

“..... ahaaa abasaija balya kandi banywa biingi omubufumbo.....ooohh”
(Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022).

Literally translated as, *“.....ahaaa men eat and drink many things while in marriage.....oooh.* The observation from the respondents conclusion had many implications for example, her talk was filled with pity over the married men which revealed that this method was bad, similarly the regretful nature that was on the face of the respondent implied the suffering that men undergo unknowingly in marriage. However, the same respondent was later filled with tears as she stated that:

“Harubaju orundi, abasaija kababonabone habwokuba batubiha muuno. Batwiiha omumasomero nibatuswera, bubamara nibafuna abaiski abato bagalegere nibatulekea omumaka itweenka nabaana orundi nibatubinga, nibatunagira abaana, nibafuruka nomubufumbo nibabandukira mubagalegere nibeebwa ngu nukwo naitwe batusangire. Ebintu ebyo bituruma muuno nkabakazi abafumbo. Mukiikaro kyokuraba amuburumi obwo weewe, hakiri kababagemege”
(OBR, Kiboijogoro village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as *“On the other hand, let the men suffer because they lie to us a lot. They pick us from schools and marry us, they later get the young ladies with sharp breasts and leave us in homes alone with the children or even sometimes chase us with the children, they shift and run away to those with sharp breasts forgetting that they also found us like that. Those things pain us a lot as married women. Instead of going through that pain, it is better we bend them”*.

Basing on the words from the respondent, it meant that witchcraft is practiced as away of paying back evil for evil. This is because some women were found out to perform witchcraft in marriage as away of paying back the men who make them fail to study but later drop them by marrying other young ladies. This means that they were paying back such men so that they stayed together in marriage. It also pointed to the fact that women take men as liars who do not live up to their promises or as people who do not stand by their words as they induce women in order to get married to them but later leave them. In line with the above, men were found out to cause failures in education especially to the female students as they lied and made the female student fail to complete their studies. Married women were found out to live a miserable life as they were at risk of being divorced by their partners and the need to avoid such life is what led the married women into witchcraft. Therefore the observation at this point was that the life and the

behaviour of the Banyoro married men especially in marriage was in the hands of their wives as Banyoro women were the drivers of their behavior and their lives since they determined what they were to eat, drink as well as how they should behave while at home and in public.

The finger nails method is also a common practice during witchcraft in the society. Pointing fingers at people is a bad practice as some people take it as a sign of indiscipline in Bunyoro society. However, for the case of witchcraft, it is not a sign of promoting discipline among the people but rather a way of promoting respect of human life and preventing sickness. This is because they are used as stocks of spells by the witches. This is why the witches do not point fingers at the people. In Bunyoro society, the spell that is stored in the fingers is called “*ebihara*”. When this spell is casted and directed towards an individual, it causes stomach ache and the victim can always have a running stomach. Although this spell is always directed to all categories of people, the main target of the spell is always the young children particularly those who have just been born. This spell is always directed to the young children because the witches believe that if this spell attacks the young child, it grows very fast (OBR, Gilli village; 9/12/2022). It is also believed that the more this spell is casted to the young ones, the stronger it becomes. This spell is very strong as it can lead to death especially to the young children.

The method of blowing the charms from the hand or a piece of a broken pot. This is the method that involves blowing the herbs in powder form in order to reach the targeted individuals. This involves blowing the charms following the direction of the intended victim. The charms are believed to reach the victim by the help of the wind as this is always done by the help of the words of the witch through the process locally called as “*okulaamiriza*” or “*okulaama*” (Kibojogoro village; 25/11/2022). For example, assuming that the intended victim is B and the witch is A, the witch who is represented by letter A will direct the charms to the direction of the

victim B by commanding the charms that “follow this route, when you reach where there is a junction, follow the left hand and enter through the back door”. More so, the charms are well directed on how it is to attack the victim B. For example weather the charms are to make the victim B run mad, make the victims’ body parts swell or even cause him/her to die among others. The witch A is the determinant of the route of the charms and the effect it causes on to the intended victim B. The charms are believed to follow exactly the words of the witch and performs exactly what the witch directs.

“Kidibyo” or the method of making someone un successful or unlucky in everything. The word kidibyo is from kudibya which may not exactly mean but relates to making someone seemingly less important or unlucky. This method is always used by the witch in order to make an individual fail to get a marriage partner for the rest of his or her life. It is believed that, the witch use faeces of a person that she finds by the road side. The witch gets a leaf and covers it on the faeces as the person speaks the name of the victim he or she wants to be a failure in life. The witch speaks words following exactly how he or she wants the victim to be. This is usually done when pouring the charms in the faeces and could even use a razorblade to cut into the faeces. For example: OBR, (Kyambogo village; 9/12/2022) say that the witch utters(*Name*) *you will get stuck like faeces on the way*. This practice is always done while the witch is spitting saliva on the faeces as he calls the victim by their name. Faeces are used by the witch because they are considered to be something useless and no body would wish to associate with them. This means that if faeces are used to bewitch someone, he or she would also be useless like that faeces.

Similarly the razorblade is used to cut the faeces to demonstrate the fact that whatever the victim would intend to do would tore into pieces and never succeed in life. The spit was also found out to be relevant because spit on to anything is a sign of showing the irrelevance of something. For

this reason, the individual will always be useless for life. The Banyoro believe that when the witch does this in the enemies name, he or she can not get married, get a job or even succeed in life because he or she will live a cursed life. Additionally to this method, the witch also could use the same faeces but not to cause someone to fail to marry but to punish him or her for defecating on the road, in the garden or any other place. This is done by pouring the charms on those faeces and cutting through the faeces using a razorblade. It is believed that when this is done, the buttocks of the person who excreted the faeces from a given place decays leading to death (OBR, Gilli village; 9/12/2022).

The women also use the method of water for bathing upon their husbands in the society in the practice of witchcraft. Under this method, a married woman gets the charms from the witchdoctor or the witch that is always in the form of powder just like tea leaves. Then the woman pours this medicine that is in powder form into the water that the man is to bath. This charm is believed to cause men to be loyal to men. This would be witnessed by seeing married men bathing children, washing clothes for their women, utensils and clean the house among others. However, this method could also involve the use of some green leaf locally known as “*ekiinamyo*” which the woman would dry, pound and later put in the tea the man was to drink. It could also involve the use of the fluids of the leaf even without necessarily drying it. These fluids could be mixed with the water the man was to bathe, drop the liquid in the sauce the man was to eat, drop some liquid in the tea the man was to take among others. This would be accompanied by words like “*obbege omusaija omuwulize*” EBR, (Kisanja; 15/12/2022) literally translated as, “*always be a listening husband in the family*”.

In relation to the above, another method of mixing the charms with water and then putting the water in the mouth is common in the society. Unlike the above method which is practiced by the

woman, for this case it is the men who carry out this. This method is applied to a woman who has divorced and does not want to come back. The married man is supposed to mix the charms with water and puts that water in the mouth. After that, he spits the water out of his mouth through the direction or route that the woman used as she was divorcing. The man then utters words like, “*Ogenzee, baitu oija kugaruka wenka*” OBR, (Gilli village; 9/12/2022), literally translated as, “*You have gone, but you will come back by yourself*”. It is believed by the Banyoro that if this method is used and such words spoken by the man to the woman who has divorced, the divorced woman would not settle wherever she would have gone or divorced from. These two related methods are common in the society of Bunyoro. The mouth has an implication on the outcome of the divorce. This is because, it is believed that the same mouth that convinced the woman to get married to the man should be the same mouth that should be used to cause her to come back. The direction of the water that is spat also matters because if it is spat from the mouth from the direction the woman never used when she was divorcing, the charms would not work. Similarly, the words used by the man also matter as the man is expected to be specific pointing exactly how he wants the woman to come back. It is believed that the man could dictate on when the divorced woman was to come back at the husband's place.

Cosmetics and lotions are also common ways through which the practice of witchcraft is done in Bunyoro society. After bathing, most people smear their bodies with cosmetics like samona jelly, Labonita, baby junior among others. While using this method the witch buys the cosmetics and does not use it but keeps it for the targeted victim. The witch pours the charms in the cosmetic that he or she gives to the targeted victim. When the targeted person uses this cosmetic or jelly to smear him or her self, will always think about the person who bought for him or her that cosmetic or jelly. It is believed by the Banyoro that in order for the charms to work very well, the

witch is not supposed to use the cosmetics together with the targeted person. If the witch forgot and used the same jelly or cosmetic, the charms would not work. This method can also be used by smearing it in ones hands after mixing it with the charms and then greet the targeted person. The witch has to only greet the targeted person or else if he or she greeted another person, the charms would not work. It was further found out that even if the woman or man never loved someone at first, when you used this method, the woman or man would love you. In the society of Bunyoro, those who know this method can never accept free cosmetics or even send one to buy for them cosmetics or jelly for use because of this kind of fear. Notably, this method was got from the village called “*Kizibu*” a Runyoro word literally translated as, “*a problem*”. This could also mean that the society is infested full of witchcraft right away from the nomenclature of the village.

Besides the above, there is the door method in the practice of witchcraft. Following this method, the witch is believed to collect the charms from the witchdoctor and pours the charms at the entrance of the house or the door way of the intended victim. However it may not necessarily be charms but the witch could also bury the head of a human being at the door way especially while setting the foundation of the house. When this is done, the society of Bunyoro believes that the house will be strong and no one can interfere with it. Infact not even another witch can interfere with such a home. This method is done in disguise of self defence in Bunyoro society. The charms could also be collected by the witch from the witchdoctor and the pour the charms in the well known road or route where the intended person always passes and they would indeed affect the targeted person according to the society of Bunyoro.

Under this main method, some other related methods could be used by the witch. For example, the charms could be poured where the woman always pours ash after cooking, the witch could

even slaughter a chicken dig a hole and then put in the ground the chicken with some charms. This method is used by both men and women and only applied to those in marriage. The woman or man lay to rest the chicken of any colour following the instructions from the witchdoctor would utter a word “*nkuchulikire*” EBR, (Kisanja; 15/12/2022) literally translated as, “*I have bent you*”. This was believed to promote loyalty and permanence in marriage in the society of Bunyoro. The end result would be that the woman or man would never leave the partner in Bunyoro society after using this method.

The use of clothes is also a method that is used in the practice of witchcraft in the society. Following this method, the witch sends someone to pick an individuals cloth or part of any cloths inorder to bewitch the victim from his or her own cloth. If not the witch could come by herself and pick it for this practice. Any cloth of the targeted victim is picked although the witch love the inner clothes for this practice for example the vests, nickers, pants among others. The witch picks the cloth of the targeted victim, and takes them for witchcraft purposes. The cloths are later thrown into the latrine intending to make the victim always fail in whatever he or she does.

On the other hand, the cloth can also be thrown into the holes of the anti hill in order to make sure that the termites eat the cloth and the more they eat the more the victim dies silently. This is because the clothes are put on by the people and once taken by the witch, it is so risky as one could lose life. This means that in Bunyoro society, a witch can harm a victim from a piece of cloth and this explains why most Banyoro fear to leave their clothes hung outside their compounds for fear of using evil purposes against them. All in all, a number of methods are used by the witches in their craft work in Bunyoro society. Just a few methods have been written as they are inexhaustible. However, according to the observations, the methods mainly affected the married men as most of these methods are directed towards men. This is because women have a

belief that 'men can spoil peoples daughters and leave them later and go with other women. Therefore women mainly use these methods to protect those who ruin their future so that if it suffering, the two have to suffer together and if it is enjoyment, the woman has to enjoy with her husband alone but not the co- wife. However, men also use these methods but on rare instances compared to the women.

2.8. Tools used during Witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

2.8.1 Introduction

In Bunyoro society, it is very hard for witchcraft to be practiced without any tool. This is because, tools are relevant in Bunyoro society when there is need to unearth what can not be seen with our naked eyes. In other words, they act as the microscopes of the witches as they help to deal with the mystical forces that can not be seen by our own eyes. Tools help to add on the visibility of the witchdoctor that is vital for the spiritual work. Witchcraft in Bunyoro does not include very expensive tools, but rather the witches use what appeals to them and the best tools are self made although some can be bought and inherited from one individual to another or from one generation to another. The tools used during witchcraft in Bunyoro are protected not only by the witchdoctors but by the spiritual powers and for this matter they cannot be stolen. These tools are found in the shrine which is respected by ensuring that the client removes the shoes before entering inside. The client is then told to sit down on either skins of animals, mats among others depending on how the floor of the shrine is organized. After sitting, the client is greeted and then the witchdoctor asks the client the reason for his or her coming or if not the witchdoctor tosses the cowrie shell which helps him or her to tell the reason for the clients visit.

2.8.2 The tools used for witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

The altar also locally known as “*orutaali*” is the main center of every witch in Bunyoro society as it is considered to be the sanctified place for every witch in the society. The altar is the center for the witchdoctors’ and witches’ power as it is a place where the witch performs his or her spells. The altars of witches in Bunyoro are comprised of the altar cloth and the altar floor although some may not have. For those with the altar cloth, it is made up of any colour according to the witches’ choice. However the colours are mainly red and black although the intentions of using these specific colours is not clear. One of the consulted witch doctor sarcastically revealed that their use of the red colour is represent the blood that their “bosses” feed on well as the black color simply signifies the source of their powers, (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022). The altar cloth is used to decorate the altar of a witch and make it to look organized and attractive but the organization of the altar depends on the art of the witchdoctor.

The altar is also vital during the purpose of ritual work as it is where sacrifices are made from. The altar floor takes any shape but usually takes the shape of either circle or square and on rare occasions can also be rectangular in nature. The altar floor is where the sacrifices are rested awaiting dedication to the spirits, its where the witches meditate from, cast spells from and keeps their power from. Additionally, the altar floor of the witches in Bunyoro are always made of various materials especially wood, papyrus mats, skins of animals among others. The altars of the witchdoctors always have salt and water dishes. This is because the salty water represents life in Bunyoro witchcraft. For example whenever the new moon appears, “*okuboneka kwo’ mwezi*”, a dish is filled with water mainly from the swamp or rain or even the water that stagnates in a special place after rain. The best water is that which collects from the trunk of a tree because such water is considered pure thus ritually clean for witchcraft.

After filling the dish with water, the client puts his or her left or right finger depending on whether one is left handed or right handed into the water. From this point, it is believed that the power enters the client through the finger that were inserted into the water up to the arm. Then the client keeps the fingers in the water and speaks the word for example; here I direct my power into this water, let it be pure and do its intended purpose. Then the client takes either one, two or three tea spoons of the salt from the sea or any other salt if the witchdoctor is a beginner if the witch has no sea salt. The client then stirs in the salty water clockwise signifying that life should move on well as the clock moves and also show that life should not stop. The client then stirs with his or her finger while uttering words like:

“Ekisura kanubwo bwomezi, obwomezi buli hanu, oburukwera kandi obushyaka hali nyowe Obutalihwaho. (WDR, Biseenyi village, 9/12/2022).

This can literally be translated as, *“salt is life, because salt is life, life is here, the holy one and new to me and life everlasting”*. This statement signifies that the clients acknowledgement and reaffirmation of the presence of the life source around the altar. The offering bowl also locally known as *“Ekiibo”* is also used as another tool for craft work in Bunyoro society.

First of all, every one who visits any witchdoctor in Bunyoro society is bound to have an offering or a gift. The offering or gift is used to thank the witchdoctor for the services she or he provides. For this reason, every devoted witch in Bunyoro society is bound to have an offering bowl in the shrine where the presents are put. Any devoted witchdoctor in Bunyoro society can never receive an offering or a present with his or her own hands. This is because there is need to respect the offering or the present as it is not dedicated to the witchdoctor himself or herself but rather to the spirits. The offering bowl used by the witches in Bunyoro are of mainly three types that is; a flat stone or rock, a shell or a dish. If it is not changed money, the spirits come and pick the money it

wants and then brings back the change for example if they requested for 30,000 shillings and the client had a note of 50,000 shillings, the spirits picks its 30,000 shillings and put back the balance of 20,000 shillings. This only applies to the items that can be put in an offering bowl. If they are the animals and birds, they are put at the altar floor as they await sacrifice.

For the witchdoctors who were visited during the study, only money in the form of paper was required because money in the form of coins implied disrespect to the spirits. The fee for one to be told the problems he or she had was 30,000 shillings. However this fee could be more than that as it rest on the kind of the witchdoctor one visited. Other items included a special goat of black colour, sheep where mainly its ear was required to sort out the clients problem. Special birds were also required especially chicken that was to be black in colour although other colours like white and brown were also to be used for blood. However the chicken with ruffled feathers, although black in colour, was not needed. Such chicken was considered a habitant for misfortunes thus not suitable for the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022) . The black colour is esteemed in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society because witchcraft in this society does not tolerate any form of light.

Motars also locally known as “*ensekuro*” and the pestle “ *omuurunguso*” are also common tools among the devoted witchdoctors in Bunyoro society. These tools are vital in crushing the herbs especially dry leaves to make them appear in powder form. However the mortar can also be used to crush the fresh leaves that the witches give the people to drop into the food or drinks of the targeted victim (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022). The mortars that are used by the witchdoctors and witches in Bunyoro are not supposed to be used to pound any other foods. This is because these herbs could be toxic and thus leading to loss of life. It is also not good to use the same tools because it weakens the power of the medicine of the witch by undermining the

sacradeness of the medicine. While pounding this medicine, the witchdoctors in Bunyoro keep calling upon the spirits to come and intervene so that the intent of the medicine is achieved. After pounding the medicine, it is then stored in bottles awaiting the clients. Therefore the mortar and pestle are vital in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society.

The pots and their pieces are also used for witchcraft practice in the society. The pots also literally known by the Banyoro as “*obunaga*” are another category of tools used in Bunyoro society during witchcraft practice. These pots are used by the witchdoctors to keep their charms particularly after pounding it using the mortar and the pestle. The pots are also used to keep water that the witchdoctors use to sprinkle their clients as a sign of fortune. These are the same pots used by the witchdoctors in Bunyoro society to bathe the client who go to the witchdoctors in Bunyoro society. These pots vary as some have one opening whereas some have many openings. Relatedly, the witchdoctors also use pieces of broken pots commonly known as “*enguyo*” where they first put their medicine after removing it from the pots. Its from this piece of broken pot that the witchdoctor gives some to their clients or blow to the direction of the targeted victim. The broken pot pieces or the “*Enguyo*” can as well be used for burning charms that is used when the client visits a witchdoctor locally known as “*okuchumikiira*” (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022).

Relatedly, some witches use bottles to keep their medicines for their craft work. These can be used as substitutes to the pots. However most of the times, the pots are used as they can store more medicines than the bottles do. All kinds of bottles can be used by the witches. However, most witches prefer to use plastic bottles as they are considered more appealing because they are always light and easier to open and close when picking charms to give to the clients (WDR,

Kisambu village; 13/ 12/ 2022). Therefore the witch has the liberty to choose what is appealing to him or her in the practice of craft work in Bunyoro society.

After visiting a shrine, one could think that dolls used in Bunyoro society during witchcraft practice are useless and yet vital. These dolls are made of different materials and depends on the the art of the witchdoctor. Some are made of banana fibres, some made of woods among others (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/ 12/ 2022). The dolls become very vital because they help the witch to focus as they are used as a target of the witches' spell. In Bunyoro society, if the witches want to cast spells to someone, the witch can cast a spell through the doll. In other words dolls are like demonstrations of the targeted person. For example if the witch wants a person dead, she or he could pierce the doll as a demonstration of the targeted person and the targeted person dies (WDR, Bisenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022). The dolls also represent the source of power of the witchdoctor and may represent the deities of the witchdoctors altar.

The cup is another tool that is used in the practice of witchcraft in the society of Bunyoro. The cup is used to pour libations to honour and share with the ancestors. This is because ancestors are living dead and needs to share with the living people. This is done by pouring some water or any other drink from the cup to the ground where the ancestors are believed to live. Besides the ancestors, the cup is used by the witches when they assemble together especially when they hold meetings as already noted under characteristics of witches in Bunyoro society (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/ 12/ 2022). For example, the cup is filled up with water, later distributed on around the circle of witches in order for all of them to take a sip. This helps the witches to be united, show that they have a common goal to achieve which has to be achieved jointly among others.

Every witch in Bunyoro is supposed to have a personal spiritual knife or sword. This personal spiritual knife is locally known as "*Empirima*". This spiritual knife is supposed to be double

edged although it could also be single edged. Every witch is supposed to make her or his own knife although it could be bought as well. The witch makes a knife by heating the spiritual knife until it is red hot and then put the metallic part of it into the water or any liquid. The witch then cleans the spiritual knife with a wet and a clean piece of cloth. The size of the spiritual knife does not matter in witchcraft but what matters is whether the knife made appeals to the owner . In other words, the witch makes the size that appeals to him or her because he or she will be the manager of the knife or sword during craft work.

On the other hand the sword is not always important especially when the spiritual knife is not present. The sword is always used to mark the circle when the witches are going to have a meeting. But this can also be done using the knife. However, the knife or the sword can also be used by the witch to kill the intended victim. This happens when one visits the witchdoctor with the photo of the person who is to die. The witch is to perform rituals and then pierce the photo brought to him and then the intended victim dies from wherever he or she is immediately. This could also be done using a spiritual knife and that is why a sword can substitute the spiritual knife during witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society. This explains the reason as to why most Banyoro guard their photo albums jealously because they can be stolen and taken to the witchdoctor for such practice (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022). Then sword is also used to cut the top part of the horns when blood is going to be poured in the horns, used to cut some sticks in the shrine among others.

Another tool used in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society is the smoke pipe. The smoking pipe is locally called “*enyuungu*” in Bunyoro society although some others called it “*emindi*” but this is a Luganda word (Ssekamwa, 1967). First of all, the smoking pipe is where the medicines and dry leaves are put especially those that are in the form of dry leaves. It is also

used for smoking by the witchdoctor where the witchdoctor inhales the smoke into his or her body. After inhaling the burnt medicine from the smoke pipe then her work begins. This smoke pipe was found to have mainly two functions that is to give the energy the witchdoctor before he or she started her work and to help the witchdoctor to dream and know that is going on around her work and the special charms she or he is to give his or her clients. Although the smoking pipes vary for example, there are those with one opening and those with many openings, all serve the same purpose although some witchdoctors claimed that those with many openings are stronger than those with one opening. However those with many opening were found out to be costly to buy or even make and were also found out to consume a lot of charms as each hole was to be filled up with medicine before and during the smoking period by the witchdoctor.

The bark cloth and skins of different animals are vital in the practice of witchcraft in the society. Although the bark cloth is always a representation of culture in Bunyoro society, for this reason it rarely misses in the shrine of any focused witchdoctor. It is also used as a seat by the clients when they visit the witchdoctor. This is the same case with the skins of different animals that are also used as a seat by the clients when you enter shrines in Bunyoro. However, currently many things are changing for example some shrines donot have the bark cloth. For example papyrus mats, are used for sitting on by the clients each time they visit the shrines. Another reason for the use of these items is that they are cheap and easily available to the witchdoctors. These are always laid down in the shrines of the witchdoctors for the clients to sit as the await the diagnosis of the witchdoctors.

Cowrier shells are also used during witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society. These are locally known as “*ensimbi*” although others refer to them as “*Nyege*” in Bunyoro society. The cowriershells are always used at the start of the diagnosis of the patient. The way they are used

by the witchdoctor is very interesting. For example the witchdoctor tosses the cowrie shells and throws them on the floor of the shrine or in the clients hands and they fall tells a lot. If they fall upside down on the ground or in the hands, it implies that client is very ill or in great danger. If they fall on the ground upright it means that the danger is minimal. The cowrie shells were also used by the witchdoctor to know the intention of the clients. Infact, for the researcher to be told information about these tools, the witchdoctor used the cowrie shells to first determine the intention of the researcher. Infact, it was after tossing the cowrie shells and all of them falling upright that the witchdoctor was able to reveal this kind of information. At this point, the client is told by the witchdoctor to speak the problems that have brought him or her through the “*Nyege*”. Therefore, witchdoctors in Bunyoro always have cowrie shells in order to aid them in craft work.

Saucepans especially the old ones are also used during craft work in Bunyoro society. These are locally known as “*esefuliya enkuru*” (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/ 12/ 2022). It is this saucepan where the medicine in form of dry leaves are kept. This old saucepan is first used from outside the shrine in the evening before it is carried by the witchdoctor into the shrine. From outside the shrine, different dry leaves are put and burnt. The smoke from the old saucepan is used to cleanse around the shrine before the witchdoctor starts her work. After cleansing around the shrine, the saucepan is then carried inside the shrine by the witchdoctor. From inside the shrine, the witchdoctor uses it together with the smoke pipe where by the powdered charms and other leaves are removed by the witchdoctor and poured using the hands into the smoke pipe and she/he starts to smoke the powdered medicine. It is from here that the function of the smoking pipe starts as it has already been explained above.

Horns are also important tools during witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society. These are locally known as “*Amahembe*”. These horns are in most cases twisted but not straight horns and dark in

colour to relate to the principle that the tools are used in darkness. The horns are always fed on blood for both animals birds and sometimes humans. The top part of all the horns are always cut using the knife or the sword and later sealed with other items. Then later all blood is put in the horns and that is the way the horns feed. The “*amahembe*” are sent to the targeted person in order to kill him or her and after killing the person they come back to the shrine. When these horns are sent, they can introduce themselves to the targeted person and tell him or her the reason as to why they have been sent. However they disclose the reasons why they have been sent especially if the intended victim is innocent. These “*amahembe*” are also used for divination also locally called “*okuragura*” They can also be sent to the targeted person as a way of warning him or her for the impending danger that is to come to him or her. These are always the same horns that are always brought by the people in the society for defensive reasons from the witchdoctors. That is why it is always heard in the society that he/she brought horns for protection. These horns are too demanding as they require monthly or annual sacrifices.

The tricky part with these horns is that, they start with minimal demands for example blood from birds and animals but however later grow and later start demanding for blood from human beings. This is because in Bunyoro society it is believed that the horns ‘*grow*’. That is why they start with minor demands of blood from animals and when they ‘*grow*’ they demand for blood from the human beings. It should also be noted that the ‘*amahembe*’ also do not spare the owner who brought them. In conclusion therefore, although witchcraft can be performed without tools in Bunyoro society, tools are relevant while unearthing what is spiritual in nature. Tools in Bunyoro society have principles and rules they are accorded as explained above and any breach of the rules affects both the client and the witchdoctor as explained above. Therefore the above are some of the tools used in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society.

2.9 Taboos associated with witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

Taboos of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society are those dos and donts or secrets that govern the practice of witchcraft and witches in the society. They are the rules, principles and guidelines that all witches and clients of witchcraft are meant to follow and failure to do so, negative consequences follow those who violate them.

Witches and witchdoctors do not use their tools before performing a general body ritual bath. Generally, bathing is a sign of good sanitation among people not necessarily to witches in Bunyoro society. For the case of witchcraft in Bunyoro society, bathing before using the tools helps the witchdoctor to be clean before using the tools. This is because these tools are highly respected as the “*bosses*”, (bakama), to the witchdoctors, (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022). It is widely believed by the Banyoro that if one used the tools without a ritual bath, they do not work. Therefore for the effectiveness of witchcraft practice by mainly the witchdoctors in Bunyoro society, performing a ritual bath is core. Slightly related to the above taboo, the witchdoctors are also forbidden from touching religious tools while from a journey. This is because those from a journey are considered ritually dirty. To ritually use the tools, the witchdoctor is required to perform the ritual birth and later announce his return to these tools. The announcement of the return to the tools is made through a direct verbal communication with them, as though the witch doctor is communicating with a fellow human. It also involves words of appreciation for the protection accorded to the witch during his/her journey. This is done at the start of craft work while smoking using a smoke pipe locally known as “*enyungu*”. From this point the witchdoctor is believed to have gained recognition from the tools and therefore safe to use them.

Besides the above, witchdoctors in Bunyoro society do not share their ritual clothes that they use in the shrine with other people. Such clothes are believed to be owned by the spirits and sharing them would be a way of relinquishing the personally owned spiritual powers to another person. Such a belief in dynamism of the ritual clothes, is very common among the Banyoro. The witchdoctors believe that their spirits may mistakenly recognize a wrong person putting on their ritual clothes and cause misfortune to such an individual. Therefore it is for the safety of both the witchdoctors and their contemporaries that the ritual clothes are not shared. It is also a practice that the witch doctors have to re-introduce themselves to the spirits whenever they appear before them dressed in new ritual attires, (WDR , Kisambu village; 13/12/2022). This re-introduction is intended for surety by the tools or else the client worked upon may not heal or even the charms sent while dressed in new ritual clothes may not work as well. Therefore for effective functioning of witchcraft by the witchdoctor, sharing clothes is a taboo in Bunyoro society.

Witchdoctors are not supposed to touch the tools if they are from attending any funeral related rituals. Funerals are associated with agony. The weeping and mourning that always cover peoples faces and hearts during ritual are believed to mystically infectious to the participants. The witchdoctor is therefore require to perform ritual birth after attending any funeral rituals. It is believed that if the ritual is not performed, the witchdoctor is likely to transfer such negative mystical power which may put his or her fist client in danger. Such negative mystical powers are likely to infect the first client and even to worst cause death. (WDR, Biseenyi village; 16/12/2022). The client too are stopped from consulting witchdoctors after participating in funeral rituals. Such clients are considered ritually unclean and their participation in the craft work may desacralize the witchdoctor's tools.

It is a taboo to take the photographs of the tools while on the study. First of all, the tools do not deal with light which may be flashed into them as matters of witchcraft are matters of darkness. It is also because, when you take their photographs, it is believed that you will have taken the tools wherever you will have gone and may cause you harm. It is believed by the Banyoro that if one took the photographs of the tools the witchdoctors use, it triggered pain and sickness to the witchdoctor and the one who took their photographs. The illness that result from taking their photographs are; roating of the skin, smelling while in public and loosing the hair on the head by the person who will have taken their photographs. More so, the client could become mentally ill or even die. For this reason, the researcher was exempted from taking the photographs of the tools in order to have life as many are never told this truth. Because of this exemption, a respondent said:

“Iwe musigazi, okwenda kweretera mahano, okwenda kugamba ngu ndi muntu mubbi, okwenda kutwara mahano habwobutahura?. Ooohhh, tinkwenda oweijukye hanyuma yo-okutolereza kwaawe okworoho. Abanyoro tugira orufumu orugamba ngu Agafundukire gatambwa otturo” (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“You young man! do you want to bring yourself problems because of not listening?. Oohhh, I don’t want you to regret later because of this research you are doing”*. The respondent continued to say that the Banyoro have a saying that the medicine for open eyes is sleep. The above word had many implications when closely analyzed. For example, they pointed to the fact that some witchdoctors are genuine people who do not want others to fall into trouble as she exempted the researcher from taking photographs emotionally explaining the impending consequences. It also pointed to the fact that the Banyoro have a rich culture of proverbs as given in the respondents words above. Additionally the above words means that there are those

witchdoctors who try to protect the good image of witchcraft as she never wanted the researcher to call her a bad person after getting problems. It could have also pointed to the fact that witchcraft has no relationship with light but rather darkness.

The tools are not pointed at with fingers while in the shrine by the clients as another taboo in Bunyoro society. This because when the researcher was inquiring about what he had seen in the shrine by pointing at tools, the witchdoctor rebuked him when she loudly said that:

“Iwe obaireki? okwenda kuleta mahano? bakamabange tibabatyongoza nebyaara.

Literally translated as, *“What is wrong with you? do you want to bring problems? they do not point at my bosses with fingers!”* (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022). When the tools are pointed at with fingers, it is treated by the witchdoctors as a sign of disrespect to the tools and could make them strike the client dead or any other illness could affect the client. Additionally this is not allowed because the tools are the *“bosses”* of both the clients and the witchdoctors and needs maximum respect.

The witchdoctors do not admit patients like the way medical doctors do. This means that they work on their clients immediately and leave them to go back to their homes. One respondent clearly states that:

“Itwe titwikaza abarwaire baitu omumasabo habwokuba omwanya guba mutaito kandi nabakamabaitu tibakihikiriza habwokuba baba nibagonza okwetongora omumasabo gabu” (WDR, Kizibu village; 16/12/2022).

This is literally translated as, *“For us we do not hospitalize patients because of limited space and our bosses do not like it as they need independence and privacy in the shrine”*. The above words from the witchdoctor points to the nature of the shrines that are small as well as the need for

privacy of the tools used in craft work by the tools in Bunyoro society. Witchdoctors do not handle illness that are medical in nature but rather those that are spiritual. This is because, they are endowed with the spiritual knowledge that helps them to cure any illness that the victims suffer from. The client or any other person including those on study are supposed to thank the tools for helping them after the witchdoctors have offered the client his or services.

The clients are forbidden from entering the shrine while putting on shoes. This is because doing so it is taken to be a sign of disrespect of the holy place and for this reason, the client is supposed to leave the shoes at the entrance of the shrine. This is aimed at maintaining the sacredness of the shrine and showing respect to the tools that are used in craft work. If one entered with the shoes, he or she would have undermined the power of the shrine and could not receive healing and could instead be more ill. After disrespecting the shrine, one could not get assistance even if the person later went to another shrine.

It is forbidden for the witchdoctors to receive money with their hands while performing craft work but rather pick it from the offering bowl. It is believed by the Banyoro that when money is put in an offering bowl, the spirits acknowledge the money or offering and then it becomes purified for the witchdoctor to pick. It is also believed by the Banyoro that if the witchdoctor holds the money in his or her hands, the charms that are given to the clients may not work and the offering itself remains impure for any ritual practice. According to one of the respondents:

“Obwokwata esente ezze mungaro zawe, omuntu takira orundi abba atasimire bakamabaitu. Nukwogamba babba batamuhulire kandi batamurozire” (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as, “*when you receive the money from your hands, the client cannot be healed or will have not thanked the spirits. Therefore means that the client will not be heard and seen by the spirit*”. The above words mean that witchcraft involves money especially while thanking the spirits for their work. It as well means that there is need for to put money in the offering bowl in order for the clients to receive healing from the witchdoctors. This is always done at the end of craftwork or even when the client has just come back to thank the spirits from the shrine.

In conclusion therefore, the above taboos govern the clients of the witchdoctors and witches, the tools used in the practice as well as the witchdoctors and witches themselves. Violations to such taboos leads to madness, roating of the body, smelling in public and could as well lead to the death of all those who violate the taboos, (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022). However it is believed by the Banyoro that if one did it for the first time, he or she could be pardoned but this required the client to sacrifice a goat or chicken inoder to appease the spirits so as to be forgiven and this is to be done according to the days that the witchdoctor gave. For example if the witchdoctor gave the client only one week to appease the spirits, the client was to sacrifice within the given week and if the client failed to do so, he or she would even suffer the more. Therefore, the taboos that govern witchcraft practice needs to be valued in the society bearing in mind that their violations are followed by negative consquences by those who go against them.

CHAPTER THREE

MOTIVATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT PRACTICE IN BUNYORO SOCIETY

3.0 Introduction

In most of the African societies, witchcraft practice is motivated by the human needs and day to day crisis that the people face. It is worse because the Banyoro believe that the world they live in is a terrifying one, full of pretenders and full of those who wish others evil (CLR Kyakayaga village; 13/12/2022). The Banyoro believe that catastrophes of all nature including political, economic, social or religious require alternative solutions from the normal. For lack of a realistic answer to these needs and crisis, the Banyoro are always distressed to turn to whatsoever that can aid them in meeting those needs especially through the time of crisis and urgency. Consequently, in abid to find an alternative solutions to this crisis, witchcraft is sought for in the society.

3.1 Political motivations of witchcraft

Politics has become a great concern in the society because of being monetized. As a result of this, for a society like that of Bunyoro, it has become a do or die matter. For instance, those who lose elections do not accept such loss because of the expenditure that they incur during the compaigns. Right away from the time of compaigns, contestants look at themselves as enemies and proceeds up to the time for voting or even after voting. To those who succeed, they try to look for ways of holding themselves into power for long while those who loose elections look for all possible ways of seeing that those who won loose their offices instantly. As a result of this, the practice of witchcraft becomes necessary and innevitable in the society as a tool for self defense leading to a local societal saying:

“Okwerinda tibuba butiini” (EBR, Kiboijogoro village; 05/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“self protection or defense does not mean fear”*. The Banyoro do this through putting on amulets especially around their waist, cutting their bodies and putting medicines inside them locally known as *“okwesandaiga”* among others. Self defense is also aided by another saying among the Banyoro that you cry to the gods when you have also put in your effort and their effort is witchcraft in this case. (EBR, Kiboijogoro village; 15/12/2022) says that the Banyoro have a saying that you cry to the gods when you have also put in your effort and their effort is witchcraft in this case (EBR, Kiboijogoro village; 15/12/2022). This relates to the story that was told by a respondent of what happened after the elections of the area Member of Parliament of Buruli Constituency in 2021. The day the area member of parliament of Buruli won elections, like any other person who has succeeded in politics, he decided to celebrate with his voters. However, at the eve of the celebration, one of his cars got an accident to the extent of burning down. This is alleged to have been caused by one of the rivals that the member of parliament won in the concluded elections of 2021.

The above brief story points to the fact that the witches are swift at their rejoinder as they do not wait for their opponets to hold offices so that they can kill them. They harm their opponets instantly because they are aware that if they hold office, they will also use the same to even hold offices longer. The story also points to the fact that there are those witches who cause accidents as it was earlier elaborated under the category of witches who cause accidents under chapter two of this study. However, there are other forms of accidents that can also be caused to the opponets in the form of snake bites, drowning, falling from trees and rest room among others.

The Banyoro do believe that when one defends himself from such accidents using witchcraft, he or she lives longer since he or she is able to escape such risks. The people in the society defend

themselves from such through the process locally known as “*Okwesandaiga*”. This is the procedure where by an individual goes to the witchdoctor and his or her body is cut and charms inserted inside the body for protection. The client is required to undress or remove the shirt, the body is cut with a razorblade and charms for defense are inserted into the body. The charms are always inserted around the chest and at the back of the person. To the Banyoro this is the economical and one of the few ways of self defense as there is no medical hospital that gives medicine for self defence against accidents and other similar or related problems in the society.

The client strip off in order to allow easy cutting of the body because it is challenging to put charms in the body while the cloth is on. This is because some charms are rubbed on the body until they disappear. Un dressing is common among the witches because it is a sign of total obedience to the practice of witchcraft. The charms are inserted around the chest and at times at the back of someone as it is believed that the whole body will be fully protected from the front and back and no danger happens to that given person (CLR, Kyakayaga village 13/12/2022). This is always done because the some Banyoro believe that it is only through witchcraft that one can be protected from danger. This practice is always done in the evening hours as it is the time the witches are free and not at night because there will be darkness and it will be hard to see where to cut.

However, the cutting and inserting of charms is always done when the individual is till young so that he or she grows up while fully secure from danger and lives longer. The cuttings are always four where by two are on the chest and two at the back. The cuttings are not necessarily two or four but can also be more. OBR, (Kiboijogoro village; 25/11/2022) believes that the cutting is always done because no Munyoro wants to die, and because of this, most Banyoro will resist death at whatever cost. When the Banyoro perceive any threat to their lives, they always seek for

everything they think will give them life whether fully or even partially. All in all, politics has been infiltrated with witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society at all times both before, during and after elections.

In terms of power politics among women, witchcraft is complex and multifaceted reflecting broader social and power dynamics. For example in some historical contexts, women in Bunyoro turned to the practice as a form of empowerment and resistance especially during the time when the roles of women were greatly restricted and their engaging in the practice would give them a sense of autonomy against the patriarchal norms. Political leaders and societal institutions in certain circumstances also used witchcraft as a tool to suppress women who were seen as threats to the society. Such accusations could be politically motivated to discredit or remove the women who were active in challenging or redefining societal norms. However in the contemporary times, witchcraft and related spiritual practices have been embraced by the feminist and political movements as a way of reclaiming and redefining the feminine power. This makes women look at the practice as a symbol of resistance against patriarchal structures and as a means of advocating for women's rights and social justice.

In conclusion, politics among women in Bunyoro and witchcraft have intersected in various ways reflecting that it has been used as a symbol of power, resistance and societal change in Bunyoro society. Therefore, the Banyoro women have engaged into the practice in order to have power and resist the older societal perceptions that women can not be leaders

3.2 Social-Cultural and Religious Motivations of Witchcraft

In most of the societies, people always have jealousy and always envious of other people's achievements. For this reason, witchcraft becomes relevant in Bunyoro society. If one graduated

or even scored highly in exams, others could be envious, if one started a business and it succeeded, others could be envious among others. In Bunyoro society, the source of enmity is not very clear as even goodness of someone could lead to enmity. There are always those who are heartless and those with evil eye who do not wish others well in the society. This is what motivates them to be jealousy and envious of others in the society. To illustrate more on jealousy and envy in the society, one respondent stated that:

“Bwenagenzere Buganda okusomera Makerere, Nkamara emyaka esatu ntakagyaga omuka habwokuba bakaba nibasobora okunyita habwe eihali. Mwanaiwe, naboruganda bantu bakaijura eihali” (EBR, Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022).

This is literally translated as, *“When I went for studies in Buganda at Makerere, I stayed for three years without going back home because they would kill me because of jealousy. My friend, even relatives are full of jealousy”*.

The above words from the respondent shows that some people in this society are literates as the respondent talks about studying from Makerere University. Because of witchcraft, she was told never to go back home until she finished her degree which points to many facts for example; some other people could still be going through the same whereas some could have even run away from the society to other safer places because of witchcraft. It also means that witches kill as the respondent said that she was told never to go back home until she finished studies. The words shows that there is jealousy among the people including the close relatives.

Therefore it is very hard to be free from witchcraft because the witches’ are believed to be closest people in Bunyoro society. The words of the respondents were found to also be in line with Pritchards view of witchcraft among the Azande of Colonial Sudan where witchcraft is motivated by envy, jealousy, greed and hatred (Pritchard, 1937). However unlike Parrinder

(1963:16) who says that the belief in witchcraft is a tragic error, a false explanation of the ills of lives of the people. Paradoxically, the Banyoro do not believe such and need for healing motivates them into witchcraft practice. Just as people always go to hospitals for healing, others go to shrines for healing as well.

In Bunyoro society, there are always certain illnesses that the medical doctors fail to diagnose and because of that, such illnesses are taken to witchdoctors so that they provide solutions. For the case of Bunyoro society, such illnesses include, madness, “*ebihara*”, leprosy also locally known as “*ebigenge*”, “*empuuka*” or swelling of the stomach among others. These illnesses may not be diagnosed by the medical doctor and thus the witchdoctors are sought to solve this problem. What is surprising is that, the same people who cause these illnesses are the same people who are always sought to provide solutions to these illnesses. The term of providing solutions to these problems is known as “*Okurumuura*”. The kind of healing that is provided by these witchdoctors is both physical and mental. They can heal any problem that is physically observable and mental like madness. This healing involves people taking their patients to them as well as people themselves seeking for solutions from them. This does not mean that the Banyoro do not consult the medical doctors neither does it mean that the society does not have medical hospitals.

The Banyoro are clever people and know where to go depending on the illness for example, when they go to the medical doctors in the hospitals and they seem not to be providing solutions to their illness, they quickly run to the shrine for solutions other than leaving their patient to die. It is for this reason that EBR, (Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022) believes that some Banyoro seek for solutions from the shrine first even before going to the medical hospitals. In fact, EBR, (Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022) further puts it that by the time someone dies in Bunyoro society, a lot has been done to stop his or her death. It is believed by the Banyoro that healing the patient

can be done when the patient is naked or clothed. In most cases, the patient lies on his or her back, his or her feet put together with the arms while in the shrine, his or her feet can be together and his arms at the sides. The patient does not deserve to be naked but he or she may be as this depends on how a given witchdoctor heals. He or she may close the eyes and then leaves the rest of the work to the witchdoctor. However this method involving undressing may be dangerous for the women in case the witchdoctor is male. This is because, it may lead to sex abuse in terms of rape because it may involve nakedness and the closing of the eyes by the patients who seek for solutions. Therefore, the need for healing motivates the society into the practice as it is looked at as one of the ways of healing from certain illness.

The influence from other tribes has also worsened the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society. To be exact, the Banyoro have been influenced by mainly the Alur people who are well known practitioners of witchcraft in the society. The Alur people are found in all areas of Bunyoro but more especially in Masindi, Hoima, Buliisa and a few from other areas.

In Bunyoro society, the Alur have introduced witchcraft practices like “*Chelle wangawanga*” which was already elaborated under methods used in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society. This could also relate to need for defence in the society. This is because, it is believed by the Banyoro and the Alur that when that method is used by a woman, she is sure to stay with her husband thus there can't be divorce among the two married couples. In relation to the above, witchcraft is practiced in Bunyoro society in order to stabilize marriages in Bunyoro society. This explains the relevance of the “*chelle wangawanga method*” in stabilizing marriages among the married couples. Therefore the Alur people have greatly influenced witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society.

There are always life challenging situations in the society that always happen and always leave people asking themselves the the reasons for such kind of life. One may ask why others succeed in politics and yet others fail, why others succeed in business and he fails, why others pass exams and he fails, why others give birth yet others are barren, why others give birth and others always have miscarriages, why others are promoted and others demoted or even remain at the same rank, why others are retained from jobs yet others are terminated among others. The above life threatening issues are painful and if not solved, they lead many into death. But why fail to know the cause of suffering?. It becomes worse when some of these life threatening questions are beyond human understanding. For this reason, it becomes pertinent for some individuals to go to the witchdoctors to seek for solutions. This is because the witchdoctors in Bunyoro use the tools that are locally known as “*ensimbi*” or “*Enyege*” in Bunyoro society. The cowrie shells are always used at the start of witchcraft practice in order to find out the cause of suffering. In order to explore more on the above, (CLR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022) describes that: “*Bunabaire omumyaka yange eyomunyeto, nkatwara enda. Bunatwaire enda, nkomukazi weena, namanya bundahikya emyezi mwenda, nkwija kuzaaara. Dora bumpikya emyezi mwenda edisa bikangira kimu. Nkaikara nenda okumara omwaka gumu okuzaaara kwayangira kimu. Weewe, bunarozire byangiire kimu, nachwamu kugenda kwehabuza hali omufumu. Omufumu dora bwangamba ngu Mukaise nyowe nuwe yankwasire enda ntazaara. Mufumu yampa omubazi nukwo kusumururwa*”.

Literally translated as, “*When I was in my youthful age, I conceived. After conceiving, like any other woman, I knew that after nine months, I would give birth. See how I make nine months and fail to give birth. I stayed with the pregnancy for one year without giving birth. She decided to go and consult a witchdoctor who told me that it had been caused by my step mother. The witchdoctor gave me some charms and I finally gave birth*”.

The implication of the above description is that through witchcraft, one can get to know who is making him or her suffer and the cause of suffering. Besides the above, it is very clear that witchdoctors are healers and that their remedies work as the woman was able to give birth later.

Witchdoctors can some times restore the lost happiness as they did to the woman. Infact, the woman responded with a lot of joy and confidence in them. This showed that witchdoctors are sometimes saviours of those in need as one was able to save her life and possibly the life of the baby. The above woman was saved not because of money but by the supernatural power of the witch.

Witchcraft practice is a common practice among the illiterates in Bunyoro society. For the uneducated, the practice is sought as one of the remedies for acquisition of wealth in the society. To this effect, one of the respondents said:

“Obutasoma nibwo bulesere kandi bukutwara abantu mu kainazi egyo. Omuntu asomere aina obwire bwa kainazi egyo?” (OBR, Rwemigali village; 16/12/2022)

Literally translated as, *“Illiteracy is what has brought such behavior among the people. Can an educated person be with time for such?”*. The above words from the respondent clearly shows the role of illiteracy in causing witchcraft practice. This is because, to the respondent, witchcraft is a common practice among the illiterates because they have a lot of time as they do not have what to do. This could mean also that, to the literates, this practice may be rare because they are always busy at their work places. This signifies that the practis motivated by the high levels of illiteracy in the society because the illiterates will always go to the witchdoctors for any kind of solution because of the perception that witchdoctors will solve all their problems unlike those

attained education can distinguish the two that is; illness that needs medical attention from the hospital and that which needs witchcraft.

The illiterate are also at the verge of practicing witchcraft because it is one of the option they can use in order to earn a living as they never studied. This relates to witchcraft in northern Nigeria where in the early 1950 witchdoctors had started to pursue their art professionally like any other business to make money (Kohnert, 1992:468). Infact, many young people were found out to be learning this practice secretly especially the illiterates one in Bunyoro in order to earn a living in the society. This is why in Bunyoro society most of the practitioners of this practice are illiterate people and were found in deep villages. Additionally, this does not mean that the educated do not practice witchcraft in Bunyoro society. They were found out to practice witchcraft but on a few circumstances especially to get jobs by the un employed, those who had jobs wanted charms for either protection of their jobs or promotions at their work places. Therefore in Bunyoro society, both the educated and the illiterates practice witchcraft in the society.

For the case of the witches and witchdoctors, they are motivated by the need to preserve some African traditional religious practices strongly motivates the Banyoro into witchcraft. As already discussed, some people may become witchdoctors in Bunyoro society especially through inheritance, some times some people are bound to preserve the cultural, clan practice or even family practice. If such practices end from the society, it could be the end of the clan or even a family. Therefore, there is need to always chose those who can carry on the practice in the society in order to preserve it for the next generation. This always emerges when the senior practioner of witchcraft dies before picking a successor. The family or clan may decide on who to take over.

However this is always on rare occasions as in most cases the witchdoctors always train at least one of their children the practice of witchcraft. This explains the reason as to why when the witchdoctor dies in Bunyoro society, the child always assumes the office in order for the continuity of the office. More so, some people have a strong love for the continuity of some practices because of the strong attachment they have towards them. Some will need to promote their continuity because it could have helped them at some point. Witchcraft practice may be opted for as a solution for the continuity of the clan or family practice other than leaving the practice to diminish. One respondent was quoted saying:

“Ebintu ebyanzarwa orundi ebya baisenkuru itwe bikuru muno habwokuba bituyamba. Habwokuba bikuru, twina okubirinda nukwo biyambe nabaijukuru baitu. Tuleke kugiira eitima abo abakugenda kuzarwa hanyuma habwokuba a basisenkuru itwe, batalitugiire. Tulinde ebyobuhangwa nukwo biyambe abakwijja kuzaarwa hanyuma (CLR, Kisindizi village; 15/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“The things of our ancestors are very important because they help us. We have to pass them on in order to help our grand children. Let us not wish bad those who are going to be produced later because our ancestors never wished us bad. Let us shield traditional things so that we save and help those who are yet to be born”.*

The words from the respondents show that our ancestors were people who were able to cater for the present by passing on some of their traditional practices to others. This means that witches and witchdoctors can pass on their traditional practice on to the others which is inline with the fact that witchcraft can be inherited by another in the society. The words teach the present generation to have a good concern about the future just like the way our ancestor did it for us. There is need to shield the traditional knowledge against those who may need to destroy it. This

is because, the knowledge is relevant in modern society more especially in the current problematic world. This is because the traditional knowledge is relevant as far as the continuity of the people is concerned and the society at large. Sometimes people are prompted to do things not that they want them but because they are surrounded by those who engage in such practices. This relates to Bunyoro society where some people in the society practise witchcraft because of band wagon. Some do the practice witchcraft because they are told in secrecy by their peers that they always go there.

Following the saying that ‘birds of the same feathers flock together’, indeed these people end up practicing the same. It is always worse when one is faced with an urgent problem that may need a quick solution for example if one suddenly lost his or her only dear in unclear circumstances. It may become worse if one knew that he or she had enmity with someone. It becomes very easy to convince the person by the peers to find out the cause of the death. As it was also elaborated already under chapter two on how one may become a witch in Bunyoro especially through buying the tools used in the practice, one may be motivated to buy them especially if the peers possessed some. This is because the friends could easily train him how to go about witchcraft, infact they could even sell him cheaply some tools of craft work and this could easily motivate a person into witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society.

3.3 Economic motivations of witchcraft in the society

The current economic situation has worsened the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society and for this reason, many people are poor and are prompted to practice witchcraft in order to escape poverty. However, this does not mean that the witchdoctors give their clients money but rather they go to get blessings from the witches so that they can get jobs and become rich. Indeed the

witchdoctors have given some people riches and they are doing well. Peoples business are doing well because of the witchdoctors who do not only give them blessings but give them some charms for attracting customers, guarding their business among others. However the challenge with the riches they have provided is that they are temporal. The reason why they do not last for long is not clear but atleast the society cherishes them for that. The Banyoro say that “*Akaffa kaliire, tikaleka omukyeno*”, (EBR, Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022) literally translated as, “*those who die after eating, do not leave a curse behind*”. Because of this saying, the society rather accepts something temporal than nothing completely. The riches are also too demanding and tiresome as they are given with many rules. For example, they always start with sacrificing animals and birds, later human beings and later ends with the owner of the riches.

Some similar conditions for the riches are not to put on shoes for the rest of ones life, not to have sexual intercourse with any woman or man, not to produce children if one has not yet married among others. This is quite unfortunate as witchcraft in Bunyoro society may wipe out the whole family. Additionally because the people are poor, they think witchcraft could aid them escape poverty. The more the people go to the witchdoctors, the more they are likely to remain poor. This is because even the little they have sometimes is taken away for such practice in the society rendering many to be poor.

Contrary to the clients motivations into the practice, witchdoctors have economic motivations into the practice as well. This means that they also perform the practice in order to earn a living. According to one of the respondents:

“Naitwe gunu nugwo mulimo gwaitu. Nuho tulya kandi nuho tufuna akasente ahamu ne’bintu ebindi ebyokwebesaho nkabantu” (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“This is also our work. This is where we get what to eat from our work and get some money as well other needs like any other human beings”*.

The above statement from the witchdoctors means that the witchdoctors truly earn a living from the practice of witchcraft. They use this practice in order to get money so that they can get their needs as human beings. This means that witches and witchdoctors also have needs like other human beings do. The money is usually less for the case of those witchdoctors that are genuine and inherited compared to those who just bought witchcraft. This is because, they incurred less during the start of craft work. However even to those who buy witchcraft expensively are supposed to charge less because money paid for witchcraft is always that for consultation and for *“Nsamba kisaka”* or *fee for searching charms in the bush*. This means that there are those witches that are genuine and those who are liars in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society. Because of the presence of liars in craft work:

“Abafumu abatali bamazima bantu babbi muno habwokuba nibo bajumisa omulimo gwaitu. bakantamirakimu, timbagonza. Biro binu nibo abo abakyayegere bwega omulimo kiramuno. Bakunihira obugaiga baija kubwiha mukujanjaba” (WDR, Kisambu village; 13/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“Witchdoctors who are not genuine are very bad people because they make people abuse our job. I hate them, I do not like them at all. These days they are those who have just learnt the practice and think it is where they are to get riches from. The hope that riches will be got out of healing”*.

The above emotional words from the witchdoctor presents the fact that there are professional witchdoctors and the learners in the craft work. However it also presents the fact that there are

those witchdoctors who are genuine and liars in the craft work. The above statements also point to the fact that the amateurs in the practice of witchcraft are known in the society but could be pardoned because they are still in the process of learning craft work. Therefore all in all, this point means that a lot of money can be spent in craft work especially by the clients.

Similarly, job related issues have greatly led to such practices in the society of Bunyoro. Under this, there is need for a job first, need for job protection and later need for job promotions. There is high rate of joblessness in Uganda. Because of this, witchdoctors are sought to provide solutions to such problems. These are not consulted to give the people jobs in the shrines but rather to give them charms so that in case there is an advert and they apply anywhere, the charms help them go through the interviews successfully and get a job. After getting the job, witchcraft becomes relevant as the charms are used to protect ones job while at the work place. In this case, the individual goes to the witchdoctor in order to get charms for favour at the job place. The witch can bewitch anyone at the place of work so that he or she has no competitor and he or she is loved by the boss. This can be through bringing the charms at the work place, always bathing the charms, putting them always in the pockets or even wallet while going for work. According to one of the respondents:

“Mugenzi wange, ebintu tibyanguhire, emirimo yaaha. Nemitaito enyakuroho, tekufunika ataroho akumanyire. Emirimo ekafoka yooha akumanyire?. Baitu bworubata omu bafumu omulimo ogufuna kandi nookukuza nibakukuza hamulimo..... abafumu barungi obwire bundi” (OBR, Kyamudikya village; 5/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“My colleague, things are not easy, jobs are not there. Even the little jobs that are there can not be got when there is no body who does not know you. Jobs remained for*

technical know who. But when you move to the witchdoctors, you get the job and you could even be promoted at the work place as well, witchdoctors are sometimes good”.

The implications of the respondents words pointed to a great challenge of joblessness in the country as he said that jobs are scarce. This truly justifies the view that un employment motivates people into witchcraft practice in the society. For this reason whenever any job is advertised, many run for it and witchcraft is sought as the remedy for success in the interviews. More so, it shows that there is a lot of favoritism, discrimination and tribalism as the few existing jobs are given to individuals depending on the technical know who and yet it is believed by the society that witchcraft crosses the boundaries of tribalism as one can be given a job even without being a member of that tribe (WDR Kisambu village; 13/12/2024).

The words point to the reality that witchcraft is used to promote people at the work places. In this case, witchcraft is done by the un employed. This includes all those who have just finished studies, those who are working and may need faster promotion and those who have lost their jobs and needs to be called back for the same job or even other jobs among others. The words also show that in this case, the intention of witchcraft is not bad. This points to the view that some individuals engage in the practice in order to earn a living in the society. With this, the people think that the witchdoctors will offer instant solutions to their needs. In this case, it means that so the individuals are working for along time without promotions which is a painful thing. This does not mean that these people are not good workers but because of discrimination and tribalism at their work places. Some new workers are promoted at the work places and the old ones left which is painful. Infact it also shows that some are promoted while still young and the elders left at the same rank.

However this also means that the old workers should add themselves value if they do not have it. For example, if it is to go back to school and continue with studies, let them do so in order for them to also be promoted if that is the problem at the work place. Relatedly, even those who fail to be promoted or even some times demoted think that witchcraft has been used against their lives and will use the same weapon to look for promotions. Therefore to avoid such humiliation of only others being promoted whereas others being left out or even being demoted the people in Bunyoro society will always seek for solutions from the witchdoctors.

In conclusion, witchcraft motivation in Bunyoro society is as a result of very many factors as analyzed above. These factors range from social, political, economic as well as religious. However, it should be noted that, most of the motivations relate to social life between individual to individual as the practice is almost a way of life of the people in Bunyoro society. Although the motivations of the practice were found to be both positive and negative, witchcraft was practiced at the verge or point of death because witchcraft is a dangerous practice because most of those who engaged in the practice did it as their last option purposely for saving.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPACT OF WITCHCRAFT PRACTICE ON BUNYORO SOCIETY

4.0 Introduction

For every practice in any society, there are always effects that follow. Similarly, in Bunyoro society, witchcraft practice had a number of effects on the society. The effects were vast but ranged from one individual to another. Some individuals regarded the practice as completely negative whereas to others, it was a practice to reckon with especially in the time of urgency. Witchcraft practice had affected the society of Bunyoro both socially, politically as well as economically. The impact of the practice have been categorised basing on the wider community, witches themselves and on individuals basis as analyzed below.

4.1 Impact of witchcraft practice upon the wider community

Although there was no imperial evidence and statistics, all the respondents agreed that many people have lost their lives because of this practice in the society. This has been a result of very many reasons for example; due to the presence of the witchdoctors, some individuals fail to go to medical hospitals but rather go to the shrines in order to seek for healing. Some people in the

society have been bewitched with strange diseases like “*ebihara*”, strange headache, swelling of the legs among others. This is as a result of the category of witches who are known to cause illness as already elaborated under the category of witches in Bunyoro society. This make the patients fail to get treatment from the hospitals thus ending up losing life.

Some have lost their lives because they have been set into accidents by these witches themselves because there are witches who specifically set individuals into un usual accidents as already elaborated under the category of witches in Bunyoro society.

These accidents have been in the form of motor accidents, snake bites among others. Some have lost their lives because they have been seized alive and killed for flesh following the category of witches who eat people alive, some sacrificed in the shrines particularly the children among others. Infact all categories of witches have led to loss of lives of the people including the elderly and the young in the society. It is worse with the children because they become ill and cry with pain until death as they can not explain how they feel to their parents yet their parents can not diagonise their illness while taken to the hospitals. Loss of lives has further been through the sacrifices they offer in their shrines. Already aware that these witches sacrifice humans as well, this has led to the death of people especially the young ones and the elderly. The witchdoctors sacrifice children and the elderly by slaughtering their heads, private parts among others which are believed to contain certain supernatural powers relevant to their practice of witchcraft.

In Bunyoro society, sacrifice does not necessarily indicate slaughter, one could be sacrificed un knowingly and dies mysteriously or even dies silently. This is because a spirit can be taken away from a person by the witch and this can lead to death. This is what is locally called “*okuhonga*” in Bunyoro society. Atleast some respondents had to give painful experiences about the loss of their dear ones for example one respond described her experience in the following way:

“On the 26/December/2010, my mother Kabahumuza Harriet went to fetch water very early in the morning from a well. She passed in the neighbours home and she felt that some un known things had entered her body although she took it for granted. However, she told us as home members about how she was feeling and how she had continued to feel un well. This compound was for a man who had bought tools for witchcraft in his home. The illness increased on the same day and by evening of the same day, my mother was feeling too much pain. In the evening of the same day, my mother collapsed and in just two minutes she had died. Her body looked dehydrated without water and blood. That was the end of my mothers life. Ooooh witchcraft it is very bad, she broke down and cried bitterly because it was a painful moment for her” (OBR, Kiboiogoro village; 2/12/2022).

The story of the respondent had various implications for example, in this situation, the mother was attacked by witchcraft very early in the morning implying that witchcraft attack has no specific time for attack. More so, the story indicates that witchcraft is painful and the death is usually in a short time she had died which denotes that witchcraft can kill an individual in a very short time. This is because, the woman was attacked by witchcraft in the morning and on the evening of the same day, she had already died. Witchcraft in this case had sucked the blood of the woman which pointed to the fact that it feeds on blood. The woman died innocently indicating that those who die as a result of witchcraft are not necessarily enemies but even innocent people may not be spared as the case was with woman in the story above. The respondents emotions greatly showed that witchcraft is bad as she cried out bitterly.

To the respondent, witchcraft was something that created endless misery in his life. This is because, the respondent seemed to have been psychologically affected by the witchcraft since he

saw the mother dying but he had no way of rescuing her as death was abrupt. Since this instance was there after Christmas day, one could think that witchcraft had not been fed on blood by the owner on the previous day and it had to get the blood by itself through attacking the innocent woman. The practice was presented hideously by the respondent which showed that she totally had no good words for witchcraft as it was not something to reckon with in the society.

In addition to the above, the practice has led to under development of Bunyoro society. This is because the practice has scared many potential people from investing in the area. This is because many of the people fear to lose their lives, sick of unknown illness, set into accidents among others thus scaring many people to run away from the society. This is because the witches do not wish other people well especially those who are progressing in life both politically, economically and academically among others because they always have evil eyes towards those who succeed in the society. To this effect, some respondents have a belief that many of the Banyoro people have developed other areas but have failed to develop Bunyoro because of the fear of witchcraft. This means that the Banyoro are scattered all over different areas possibly because of witchcraft although other factors could have made them stay in other areas. Witchcraft causes fear and this makes many Banyoro leave their area in search for secure areas. Because of the fear it causes, some developmental people are scared away and the end result is that Bunyoro has remained under developed.

4.2 Impact of witchcraft practice on the witches

Witchcraft has led to loss of lives among the witches and witchdoctors in Bunyoro society. This is because, those witches suspected to be enemies of the people in the society have been ill-treated leading to their death. This has mainly been through destruction of their crops leaving

them to languish in hunger, burning them alive especially with petrol as well as stonning them to death. This means that there are many methods of punishing the witches for example witches are easily killed while in a group because they can not cast spells to many people at the same time. However, witches sometimes kill themselves something that has also affected them in their practice. This is always caused by the failure of the witches to pay themselves back borrowed corpse especially for those witches who have already been described under those who eat human flesh or the cannibal witches.

As it was earlier noted that witches in the society of Bunyoro have ranks, those who are seniors in witchcraft are more powerful and this may cause them to kill their beginners in craft work in case of miss understandings among themselves. Therefore, although the witches are the leaders of causing death among the individuals in this society, they too are also victims of such deaths. Slightly related to the above, there has been loss of peoples properties and excommunications of those suspected to be practitioners of witchcraft. It is not only lives of the people that have been lost but their properties as well. BR, (Buraru village; 19/12/2022) believes that some properties like houses have been destroyed by burning them to ash, crops destroyed among others being a way of punishing those suspected to be practitioners of witchcraft in the society. This means that the witches are treated negatively in the society of Bunyoro. Infact it also points to the fact that they are punished even without proof which could also lead to the ill-treatment of the innocent people. This has left the suspected persons homeless and languishing in hunger. It is worse noting that the suspects are even chased away from the villages where they stay. This has been done in order to make a society a peaceful one for living. These are always done without the awareness of the police.

However on the few grounds where the police it is notified, there is always lack of evidence to show that really the suspects are guilty. The police also fears such people and sometimes it does not respond for the safety of their lives. This is because whenever the police is called, it does come because of the fear of being bewitched by the witches. This also means that witchcraft is a dreaded practice, feared in the society by even the security personnel forces like the police. It also means that witchcraft can lead to death as even the police men and women fear it for the safety of their lives in the society. Therefore witchcraft has led to loss of lives, properties and expulsion of the people from the society. Additionally, the practice has been blamed for causing mental retardation among the witches and their families. For example, it was found out that at least their children had been affected in one way or the other psychologically with mental retardation. This is because, witchcraft had made their children to fail to complete studies and even those who completed studies were found out to be mentally retarded. This was because witchcraft had chosen them at an earlier stage which sometimes made them fail to complete their studies and sometimes the children of the suspected witches are discriminated in schools and society at large something that greatly affects their academic performance.

4.3 Impact of witchcraft practice on individuals

Witchcraft impact has also been on individual basis in Bunyoro society. By individual basis, it denotes that the practice had affected certain individual on individual basis and not necessarily as a community. This connotes that some individuals had either suffered with the practice privately, with their family members or even friends but not as the wider community. This is because witchcraft can be directed towards a specific individual by the witch. Basing on the fact that the society depends on agriculture, when ones' crops fail, he or she is bound to be poor as

agriculture is the main source of income, some peoples business have been crippled whereas it has also been as a result of destruction of peoples properties like houses and crops especially those suspected to be witches in the society.

“Nkwenda kukugambira mwana iwe, nyowe nalimaga ebinyobwa muuno baitu bikangarura munaku. Nyaguraga embibo ningibyara baitu ebinyobwa byona nibikaara akatebe. Singa bitafaaga, nyakubaire nyinaho akasente” (OBR, Bugambe village; 19/12/2022).

This can literally be translated as, *“I want to tell you that I would plant ground nuts so much in the past but they left me in poverty. I would buy the seeds but all the ground nuts would sit on the ground. If the ground nuts would not be failing, I would be having money”*. In addition, poverty has been as a result of business failure caused by the witches in Bunyoro society. This is because they use their powers to cripple peoples businesses by having the ability to cause the buyers to hate ones business and send away customers from the victims business. This cripples peoples business and in the end they collapse.

In contrast, the study shows that some witches used their powers to cause high crop production through the use of *“ekirenga”* as already described under the categories of witches in Bunyoro. The *“ekirenga”* has to be planted together with the seeds or stems in the first hole of the garden by the witch in order to be able to attain high harvest. One respondent explained the how a farmer can attain high yields:

“Iwe musigazi, bwooba noyenda okweeza, kiri kyangu muno. Okwata Ekirenga nokichwaho ebikoora byaakyo, bwomara nokisimba mukiina ekyobanza okutema

mumusiri. Ekiina ekyo nikyo ekiha omugisa ebiina eindi. Noyeeza nkabyalisize orwezo”
(OBR, Buraru village; 15/12/2022).

This can literally be translated as: *You get the Ekirenga, pick its leaves, after that you plant it in the first hole that you have dug in the garden. It is the first hole that blesses the other holes and this makes you harvest like those who planted using the fertilizer”*. The respondent spoke proudly with a lot of confidence and joy something that proved to the respondent that the method was a good one. Infact the method also pointed to how the method was cheap compared to the fertilizers that are always bought and how it is less tiresome as it is put in one hole unlike the fertilizers that is put in each hole. Because of this, some peasants have been able to attain high yields and increase on food supply for both home consumption and sale. This had raised their standard of living in the society thus being able to construct good houses, take their children to the ‘so called’ good schools among others. In this case, witches have been neutral in the society as far as agriculture is concerned in Bunyoro society.

Although it was earlier clearly stated that the people in the society go to seek for wealth and riches from the witchdoctors, on the contrary, the practice was instead leading to loss of wealth thus causing poverty among those who engage in the practice. Even if witches were believed to give wealth and riches, it is always temporally and yet even how to maintain this wealth itself later causes poverty. For example one is required to always sacrifice in order to the appease the tools that were given to him or her and yet appeasing the tools requires blood from animals like goats and cows thus all the cattle is sacrificed leading to mushrooming poverty in the society. This mainly applied to those who pick the tools from the witchdoctors for defence as they needed periodical sacrifices. For example, a respondent attributed poverty to witchcraft when he said:

“I went to the witchdoctor because I was poor. The witchdoctor gave me one small stick and told me to keep it with me because it would make me grow rich. however after a few month, I started getting dreams and the stick that the witchdoctor had given me started demanding for blood. At first I took it for granted but the stick kept me experiencing dreams and after a few month I went back to the witchdoctor to explain what I was going through. The witchdoctor told me to sacrifice one black chicken and that would be the end. I indeed went and sacrificed the hen and the dreams stopped. But later, the dreams started again and I sacrificed another hen. Later on, the stick demanded for a goat and later a cow. Infact I started buying animals to feed the stick. I sold all that I had acquired to feed the stick. I thank God that the stick that the witchdoctor gave me was for only birds and animals otherwise if it was for human blood I would have lost my children. Oooh..... Witchcraft is bad” (EBR, Kyambogo village; 13/12/2022).

It was also found out that once someone joined these practices, with time, all his wealth would diminish and become poorer than before. If an individual had animals kept at home, all of them may get finished because of being sacrificed. This because, witchcraft practice is very demanding and more so, people spend a lot of money when they visit these witchdoctors. For example the research shows that just to consult the witchdoctors, the minimum amount is thirty thousand shillings thirty thousand shillings. This is a lot of money to the poor people in the society. It is worse that even amidst spending a lot of money, some do not get solutions to their problems. Additionally, witchcraft has been used to make innocent students fail exams in schools and higher institutions of learning. This has been through causing them to become sick during exams, making their hands fail to write in exams, making them sleep during exams or even

during lessons among others. One respondent narrated a painful experience of her daughter when she said:

“Omwaka oguhoire, muhara wange bakamuroga omukono. Akaba asembleire okwikara ebigezo bya senior eyomukaga. Obwire bubwahikaga obwo kuhandiika ebigezo, omukono nigwanga okuhandiika orundi niguhandiika mpoora. Kinu kikatandika asigaireyo week isatu baikale ebigezo. Abasomesa bakabanza kunihira omwana akubiha orundi akutiina ebigezo baitu baambi omukono gukaba gutakyasobora okuhandiika. Omwana akatandika okweyegesereza okuhandikisa omukono ogundi. Omwana akamaliira aikaliire atyo ebigezo. Abakuru abeisomero bakanguha ba nyegera ha Uganda Nationa Examination Board nubwo omwana bamufunira omulinzi we wenka. Omwana bamwongeramuga edakiika ana naitanu buli kigezo. Timanyire bwarahika kurungi ebigezo ebyo, ruhanganga weenka nuwe amanyire!” (OBR, Walyooba village; 2/12/2022).

This can literally be translated as: *“Last year, my daughters’ hand was bewitched. She was nearing her six final exams. Whenever the time for exams would reach, the hand would fail to write or write slowly. This started when she was left with three weeks to her final exams. At first the teachers thought that she was fearing exams but surely the hand could not write. The girl started teaching herself to write using another hand. The child ended up sitting for her exams in that situation. The school administrators hurried to report at Uganda National Examination Board and they got her a special invigilator where they could add her extra forty five minutes for every exam. I do not know if she will pass those exams, only God knows!”*. In this case, the story shows that witchcraft does not spare the young as the girl was bewitched and also points to the fact that the practice is used in academics. It can be used by the witch at the eve of someones

success even when one is innocent but just because she was bright in class and this prompted the witch to cause her hand not to write or even slow the speed of the daughters hand.

Witchcraft is used by the witches to slow the enemies progress when he or she is suspected to become better in life. Some times when when the harm is inflicted on to someone, there are tendencies of the society denying the fact that it is witchcraft. For example, in this case, the teachers of the above student thought that it was not witchcraft but rather the fear for the exams by the student. It also points to the view that there is need to attend to certain matters urgently just as the school administrators did by reporting to the concerned authorities. Witchcraft causes fear and loss of hope among the people as the parent concluded the story showing that she was not sure whether the girl would even pass well the exams.

However since the study was conducted later after the girl had finished her exams, the researcher asked whether the girl was still having the same problem but the parent said that she had become well. How she became well, is what the respondent failed to explain which could be interpreted to mean that either it disappeared by itself or the parent used other un kown means to curb the problem. Marriages have been broken and continuous separation between the married couples and relatives has occured as aresult of witchcraft practice. Some married couples have divorced their partners because of very many reasons. First of all, the need for safety of their lives and secondly for fear of the consquences that follow the suspected witches in Bunyoro like excommunication, destruction of their properties, burning them alive, stoning among others. For fear of such grave consquences, some couples have separated.

Additionally, this has also been as a result of the fact that the witchdoctors especially the male ones have multiple partners whom they get from the clients who visit them. To those who get married to them, are forced to divorce them due to the fear of infections. This is because,

witchdoctors in Bunyoro especially the male ones are believed to always engage in sexual intercourse with the women who enter their shrines for healing. Sometimes families have also separated because of witchcraft especially if it is not a family or clan practice. Families decide to separate in fear of the grave consequences that always await those suspected to be practitioners of witchcraft. Separation in families has also been as a result of lack of sexual satisfaction among the married couples. This is because the witches have sexual partners who are spiritual and this causes them to have less time for their physical partners as already discussed under the characteristics of witches in Bunyoro society. Similarly, because of the invisible sexual partners, the physical partners are always at war with the other in terms of quarrels that are always caused by the invisible spiritual partners as they intend to consolidate their husbands or wives in their physical world.

On the contrary, some respondents cherished the practice of witchcraft especially in marriage. For example one elderly of about seventy five years cherished the practice of witchcraft through a narration as it had made him stay with his wife for long without her going away. In his own words, an elderly respondent describes:

“When I was born, I was normal and could walk. I would do all my work as any young man does. When I reached the age of forty, I started feeling pain in my legs not knowing that it was the start of my being crippled. This is because, when I was sick, I was taken to a medical hospital where they injected me probably with wrong medicine or may be overdose. Indeed in the next few years I was crippled and could not walk or do any other work. Because I had become crippled, my wife started threatening that she was going to leave me because I would not do anything for my self, not look after her and not perform other duties as a man. I would ease my self from where am sitting and up to now I

still do the same. By then my wife was still young about thirty. Because of that, I had to go to a witchdoctor to get something for keeping her with me. Witchdoctors to me are good because without them, I would not be with this woman todate. Now we have stayed together for over twenty years in peace yet Iam helpless. She goes and comes back and finds me here at home. No one can take her and she can not leave me” (EBR, Kibojogoro village; 9/12/2022).

The words of the respondent indicated that he had tried medication from the medical hospital which was a good thing. The fault made by the medical personel is what drove the man into witchcraft practice because it left the man crippled and this was the start of the wife threatening to divorce because of his helpless situation. The man went for witchcraft without the intention of destroying his marriage but instead protecting it from divorce which was a good thing. This means that even if others may present the practice as a bad one, it can be used to do good as the way the man did in this case. This also points to the fact that witchcraft practice may be long lasting as the man had lived with the woman to date despite being helpless. It also pointed to the fact that witchcraft is something to boast over and a source of joy because the man talked with joy and even prayed that witchdoctors even lived forever as they restored his lost happiness. Similarly the situation revealed that witchcraft does not heal lameness because if it did so, this man would have also been healed from the situation of lameness. Therefore, although witchcraft may be presented as negative, to some people, it is a way to go and a positive tool to reckon with to some people especially in marriage incase of need an urgency. This is in line with (Isiko, 2019) who argues that witchcraft may not be bad but depends on the intentions of the practice. In this case the man intended to protect the marriage, and because of this, witchcraft became a good practice to reckon with according to him.

Theft has been contained and safety of peoples properties has been improved among individuals as a result of witchcraft practice thus giving the society a breathing space and a chance to engage in economic activities like crop growing, animal and bird keeping among others without fear of them being stolen. This is because the witchdoctors give their clients protective charms against those who want to steal their properties by giving charms that protect land from being stolen, animals, crops from the garden among others. These charms work in a pro- active manner and post- active manner. This means that the witches give charms to prevent theft thus witchcraft has been cherished in the society. For instance, thieves have been made to crow when they steal chicken, eat grass when they steal domestic animals, bees have been sent to arrest the thieves, snakes have coiled around their bodies among others. One respondent was quoted saying:

“Buli banyibaga, bakanyiba ente zange kingana zoona. Baitu nafuna amagezi agokurubata, nafunayo omuti ogunasimbire omu ruggo rwente zaange. Kuruga obwo tibakagarukaga okunyiiba. Bepankapanka kundibaije baziibe turole!” (OBR, Kisindizi village; 3/12/2022)

Literally translated as, *“Those days, they stole almost all my cows. But I got wisdom and went to the witchdoctor who gave me some charms that I planted in my kraal. Since then, they have never stolen me again. They joke a lot,let them come and steal them again and I see!”*.

When a client uses witchcraft, it is not possible for the thieves to steal him or her. Even though they do so, he has the power of arresting him. The respondent looked at practicing witchcraft as a way of acquiring Knowledge. The story from the respondents was told with a lot of pride which was interpreted to mean that when one uses witchcraft, he or she is protected and possibly no danger can come to him. Practicing witchcraft to the respondent is the everlasting solution to

those who steal peoples property as he said that since he planted some charms in the kraal, the thieves had never stolen his cattle.

However in contrast to the above, the same witchdoctors who give protective charms to people are the same who give them to the thieves so that they are not captured when they steal. Although some are arrested, it is believed that they have charms that make the police officers release them from the areas of detention. The thieves do this by going to the witchdoctors who cut and put the charms in their bodies for not being captured while stealing through the process locally known as “*okwesandaiga emibazi*” whereas some go to steal while the charms are in their pockets. This has also been done through giving them protective charms which they wear around their waists, legs and necks among others. These charms do not make the thieves invisible but just helps them to steal without being caught by the owners of the items. According to one of the respondents:

“Mwijukuru, tikikwetagisa omuntu okupangisa emundu agende okwiiba kwaha, aijje muhe omubazi gwona gwona. Tibasobora okumukwata, obubaramukwata aije anyite okuzanabuzana” (WDR, Kizibu village; 15,12/2022).

Literally translated as, “*Grandson, it does not necessitate somebody to hire a gun and go to steal, let him come for protection. They cannot capture him, if they do so, let him come and kill me..... you are just joking*”.

Witchcraft is equated to the gun that when one uses it for defense, he is not different from one who defends hiself with a gun. This means that witchcraft is so powerful as one could even not be noticed while stealing. The witchdoctor was emotional as he loudly spoke cherishing his charms to the extent of saying that when he gives charms for protection to his clients, he tells

them that if they are captured, they should come back and kill him. This pointed to the level of trust that the witchdoctors have in his charms. Therefore for the case of theft and safety of peoples properties, the witchdoctors have been likened to a double edged sword helping the either sides of the people in the society that is; the thief and the owner of the items.



Figure 4: A man returns a stolen subwoofer after being attacked by bees

Source: Daily Monitor Nov. 27th. 2017 News paper.

In conclusion, generally, witchcraft has affected the society of Bunyoro negatively and positively as analysed above. Conversely, the observation here is that even though witchcraft usually starts in a positive way, and later ends negatively to both the clients and witchdoctors themselves. For instance, some earlier practioners had already died, their children whereas some had mental illness among others. Consequently there were mixed reactions in the society of Bunyoro where some ill repute the practice although others cherished the practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Basing on the fact that the study was conducted with the aim of exploring the conceptualization of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society, analyze the motivations for the practice as well as examine the impact of the practice on the society, the study adequately answered the objectives of the study. In this respect, the summary, conclusions and the recommendations were based on the findings from the field as well as the specific objectives of the study. Therefore, following the above, the objectives of the study had been adequately answered.

Just as it was observed by Idowu, (1976) that it is an idle talk to ask whether witchcraft exists or not because it was an urgent reality, similarly to Bunyoro society, witchcraft was found out to be real although not seen but always evidenced in the outcomes as also observed by (Amadou, 2010). Witchcraft in Bunyoro was found out to be a comprehensive practice, relating to human actions, intentions and experiences as it was also observed by (Amadou, 2010). Additionally, although in this society witches were known by the community descriptically and metaphorically, the knowledge about witches circulated in the society in form of rumours with no substantial evidence just as the way Ashforth (2005) observes. Because of the secrecy and neutrality involved in the practice, a clear definition of what the practice is according to this society was found out. In this respect, witchcraft is understood as the process of using the supernatural powers by evil and wicked persons for mainly evil purposes. The major motives of the practice among the Banyoro was found out to cause pain, harm or even kill the victim.

Unlike in other societies like Busoga where witchcraft is mainly directed to an individual to cause them pain as it was observed by Isiko (2018), for the case of Bunyoro society, the intentions of causing harm, pain and death does not only center on humans but also stretches to people, plants, their animals and all their properties. Thus witchcraft in this society was found out to mainly cause harm and pain to almost all living things in the society. Witchcraft in Bunyoro society was found out to be slightly related to the way the Azande came to be witches just like Pritchard (1937) who observes that the man easily caused a child to be a witch unlike the Azande women who had less possibilities of causing witchcraft to be genetically transmitted to their children. Thus with this kind of genetic transfer, this practice is believed to continue in the society for the next generations because it was also found out that through this practice there are abilities to choose a successor when its owner dies. One could have hope that if the owner died, that would be its completion. However, when a witch dies in Bunyoro society, its becomes the beginning point of fresh witchcraft by a fresh person especially that which is clan based.

Becoming a witch in Bunyoro society was further found out to relate to what the psychologists and philosophers termed as the “Nature & Nurture” debate (Lippa, 2005). Nature means that the behaviour of the witches are a result of genetic inheritance and Nurture means that the witches become who they are as a result of their their surrounding. This debate was a result of a number of philosophers and psychologists like Plato, who says that humans develop unique traits because of their biological make-up but can adapt in a lifetime because of external factors in life events. When this is related to Bunyoro society, it means that the witches in this society develop traits because of their biological make up as well as their surrounding. However, Charles Darwin probably the most influential Philosopher in the nature-nurture argument, argues that overtime any species adapt to the surrounding and pass these genes on to the next generation (Maroni,

2000). Therefore, in relation to the nature and nurture debate, witchcraft in the society of Bunyoro is a result of both biological and environmental factors as already analyzed under becoming a witch.

Slightly related to the above, both women and men were found out to have abilities of causing their children to inherit witchcraft genes although the man was found out to have higher chances of causing genetic inheritance in children compared to the woman. This was also slightly related to the way the Azande came to be witches according to Pritchard (1937) who observes that the man easily caused a child to be a witch unlike the Azande women who have less possibilities of causing witchcraft to be genetically transmitted to their children. More so, witchcraft is thought to continue for the next generations in Bunyoro society because it was found out that witchcraft has the ability of choosing a successor when its owner dies. One could have hoped that if the owner died, that would be its end but unfortunately however, when a witch dies in Bunyoro society, it becomes the beginning point of witchcraft by a new person especially the witchcraft that is practiced on clan basis according to the findings.

Further more, various categories of witches were found out in Bunyoro society for example; the rain makers and stoppers, witches who caused illness, those who ate human flesh or the cannibal witches, the healers also wrongly labelled as witchdoctors as Nangoli (2002) observes, those who caused crop failure and success and those who specialized in causing accidents in the society. Because witches are of various categories, there are also those who are neutral doing both good and bad in the society and yet they are very hard to identify following the characteristics of witches already discussed above. Some witches in Bunyoro society possess characteristics that are invisible and worse of all, for one to know who witches are in detail, it may compel one to take oath deterring them from disclosing the secrets of the witches unless it is

for the expansion of the practice which was also life risking. In any case why fight witchcraft and yet other witches are friends of the society especially the rain makers who cause rain to fall as well as the rain stoppers because sometimes the rain may be too much and its reduction may be essential. Hence the neutrality in the actions of witches in the society of Bunyoro also has made the practice to be rampant.

Witches in Bunyoro society were found out to be closest people that one could not even expect to be witches. For the justification of this assertion, one respondent was quoted saying:

“Bwenagenzire Buganda okusomera Makerere University, Nkamara emyaka esatu ntakagyaga omuka habwokuba bakaba nibasobora okunyita habwe eihali. Mwanaiwe, naboruganda bantu bakaijura eihali” (OBR, Kibojogoo village; 9/12/2022).

Literally translated as, *“When I went for studies in Buganda at Makerere University, I stayed for three years without going back home because the witches would kill me because of jealousy. My friend, even relatives are full of jealousy”*. The above words meant that the witches could even be biological parents because it was found out that there are those times when the witch casts spells to any one near them. This is because there is time when the spells of the witch start paining the witch as a result of staying too long in the witches’ body. This would force the witches’ to cast spells to whoever is nearby at that time. The study further showed that everyone is a potential witch in Bunyoro society. This is because some people were seen throwing bottles, old rugged clothes on top of the buildings among others in order to reduce on the magnitude of the rain. This is in line with other literature for example Kohnert (1992: 468) who observes that in African societies everyone is a potential witch. This shows that most of the Banyoro are potential witches

as they had the ability to cause heavy rain with storm to reduce which was also in line with Mageša (1997: 167) who observes that all human beings are potential witches in the society.

Besides the above, the practice has currently been compounded with liars who forge the craft work and end up distorting the image of the practitioners. This is because there has been the development of other means of acquiring the tools of witchcraft in the society which was not the case in the past where the tools for craft work were not bought. This is because formerly, witchcraft would mainly be acquired through inheritance unlike today where some other means have been developed which has made those who do not know how to perform witchcraft to also engage in the practice and spoil the image of witchcraft in the society.

Witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society has continued to be influenced by many factors especially ethnic intrusions by other ethnic tribes especially the Alur, the Baruli and the Baganda who have greatly impacted on the practice. For example the Alur have introduced other methods of practicing witchcraft in Bunyoro society for example "*Chelle wangawanga*" as already discussed under the methods of witchcraft practice where the Banyoro have integrated it into their witchcraft especially in marriage. More so, the Baganda have also influenced the practice of witchcraft to the extent of using some Luganda terminologies in describing witches in the society for example the terminology of the "*Abayimbi*" or singers as already discussed under terminologies used to describe the witches. Similarly, the Baruli people have also influenced witchcraft in Bunyoro society where by the society had even borrowed their words like "*Abatikya*" in describing witches in the society. Because of such, the practice has become intense to the extent that even some children of about ten years already know some of the methods used in the practice of witchcraft.

For the case of the motivations of the practice in the society, these were found out to be political, social-cultural and economic among others. Thus, witchcraft practice was found out to relate with the peoples daily activities in the society. This means that the practice of witchcraft was nearly in the whole lives of the people for example in business, in politics in order to win elections, harm political opponets and also to keep in politics for long. However, it should also be noted that witchcraft motivations were not only based on the clients especially those who visited the witches and witchdoctors but also based on the witches themselves in the society. In otherwords, the motivations of witchcraft in the society were both on the side of the clients as well as the witches and witchdoctors themselves. This was because, the reasons for engaging into the practice of witchcraft were not only from the clients who visted the witches and witchdoctors but also the witches and witchdoctors themselves in the society. This means that in Bunyoro society, witchcraft motivations are two way that is; clients motivations and witches or witchdoctors motivations.

Additionally, the monetary economy had also become a great influence in the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society as it has made many young youth to practice witchcraft as a profession in order to earn a living thus relating to what was observed by (Kohnert 1992: 468) were witchcraft was practiced to earn a living. Many young youth especially the boys had started engaging in the practice in order to earn a living especially those with no stable incomes. Services that were formely meant to be almost free have been monetized because of the current economic hardships. Commercialization of witchcraft practice has ursherd in many evils in the practice for example raping of women as some male witchdoctors claim that some medicine works well through sexual intercourse which has also made many acquire sexually transmitted diseases from witchcraft practice, sacrifice of children to get private parts which are believed to

contain some supernatural powers essential for healing and increasing their spiritual powers. This has led to loss of confidence and disrespect of witchcraft in Bunyoro society which was formerly not the case.

The practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro society has affected all categories of people for example the wider community, the individuals on individual basis as well as the witches and witchdoctors themselves. To some however, in a few instances, the effects of the practice were positive whereas to others, the practice has adversely affected them. This means that there was a mixed presentation on the effects of practice in the society as every individual had a different experience on the phenomenon which yielded different results during the research. However the major observation on the impact of the practice was that those who had been affected negatively, their lives had become worse than before. This is because, some had lost all their property, some had been excommunicated whereas some had lost their friends as well as relatives and children as a result of the practice. Young children mainly below ten years were also be affected especially when there was need for sacrifice as they may be captured and sacrificed by the witchdoctors because of the need for some of their private parts which the witchdoctors believe that they have some special powers that are essential for the performance of witchcraft.

This practice also affects the men especially those who are married as already discussed above under the methods of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society. In this case women mainly use witchcraft as a tool to prevent divorce although on rare occasions, men also engaged in the practice. The Albinos were also found out to be best spots for witchcraft as their bodies are believed to have special powers essential to aid witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society. This is because, there body parts are believed to contain some spiritual powers essential for the performance craft work.

5.1 General Conclusion

In Bunyoro society, witchcraft is a widely known practice that is understood through metaphorical and descriptive terminologies understood by nearly all the members of the community. These terminologies are continuously used by the society because they are less offensive and this helps to minimize direct confrontations from the referees. Though this practice is publically dreaded, its survival is highly necessitated by the Banyoro quest for mystical powers and protection from the evil users of the mystical powers. The spiritualization and the belief in dynamism among the Banyoro makes the human environment threatening for an impotent individual to survive in the society consequently necessitating a search for powers outside man making the practice persistent in the society. All natural and unnatural happening are interpreted in terms of the workmanship of mystical forces. Many have been motivated into the practice for example the witches themselves, individuals as well as the community at large. Furthermore, because of the clear understanding of the phenomenon in Bunyoro society, the Banyoro have been motivated into the practice nearly in all their lives that is; politically, socially economically. Similarly, because of a clear understanding of the phenomenon, its impact have adequately been evidenced and experienced in the society whereby some have been negative whereas to others being positive affecting the witches themselves, individuals and the society of Bunyoro at large.

5.2 Recommendations

Having looked acutely at the the purpose of the study which was to explore the understanding of witchcraft, motivations and impact of witchcraft on Bunyoro society, in light of the findings and conclusions, the researcher wished to propose the following recommendations.

There should be community awareness programs about the dangers of engaging in witchcraft in the society of Bunyoro. These programs can help to reduce the misconceptions and promote the understanding of the Banyoro local beliefs.

There is need for the government to economically empower the society of Bunyoro as this will help to reduce on the number of those who go to the witchdoctors to look for riches. This could be through giving the people simple loans with low or no interest rates, starting up some industries where some people can be employed. The government should also make sure that the programs it started like “*emyooga*”, and the Parish development model among others really benefit the intended local people as this will economically empower them and in doing so, they will become self reliant.

The government should strengthen the health sector. This can be done by investing in mental health awareness and services because some witchcraft accusations stem from confusions of mental illness, equip the health workers with the skills to identify and address health issues that might wrongly be attributed to witchcraft practices.

There is need to establish support systems for individuals accused of witchcraft, including legal aid and counseling services. This will be vital in mitigating the stigma and the violence against the suspected and accused persons.

There is need to encourage dialogue between traditional healers and medical practitioners in order to create a more inclusive health care systems that respects the local belief systems while providing evidence based medical care.

There is need to utilize the local media to share positive stories and testimonies from individuals who have overcome witchcraft-related challenges. This will help to reduce fear among the people in the society.

Finally, there is need to create platforms for conflict resolution that include traditional leaders and local community members. This can help to address disputes arising from witchcraft accusations in a culturally sensitive manner

5.3 Areas for further research about witchcraft

There is need to study the health, healing and witchcraft among the Banyoro looking at the relationship between healing practices and witchcraft beliefs. How do the Banyoro reconcile these practices with modern medicines?

There is need to carry out a comparative study of witchcraft with other neighbouring communities for example the Alur, Baganda among others. This will help to uncover the regional influences and differences in belief systems.

There is need to assess the role and relevance of witchcraft in everyday lives of the Banyoro, especially with modern influences like education, technology and Urbanisation.

There is need to study how gender plays a role in accusations of witchcraft among the Banyoro, including whether women are more frequently accused than men, and the societal implications of such accusations.

There is need to carry out a study on the youths' perception of witchcraft. In this cases , research how the younger generation perceive witchcraft in comparison to the generations. This will help to point out whether there is a generational shift in the belief systems.

There is also need to conduct a study on the influence of media and witchcraft. This will help to examine how the portrayal of witchcraft on media has impacted public perception among the Banyoro.

Lastly, there is need to investigate on the legal perspectives of witchcraft . In this case, investigate how the Ugandan legal system addresses witchcraft practices and beliefs, and the extent to which the law align with or contradict the traditional Banyoro beliefs and practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Atuhairwe Richard. I am a Master of Arts student at Kyambogo University. I am carrying out a study on ‘The phenomenon of witchcraft “Oburogo” in Bunyoro and its impact on the society’. The study is simply academic and all that you tell me will remain confidential. Neither your name, nor your location will be recorded. I would like to ask you a few questions about your knowledge on ‘The Phenomenon of witchcraft “oburogo” in Bunyoro and its impact on the society’. The study does not specifically target witches or those affected by witchcraft but it seeks to establish what is generally known about witchcraft in Bunyoro society. There are no monetary or any other immediate benefits of participating in this study. If you accept to participate in this study, I shall record your voice in order to back up what I am unable to capture in writing. Thankyou.

Section A: Background information of the Respondents

1. Occupation
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Marital status
5. Education level

Section B: Bunyoro society ideology on Witchcraft practices

1. Have you ever heard about witchcraft in Bunyoro Society? If yes what is witchcraft according to this Society?

2. Could there be terminologies used to describe witches among the Banyoro? If yes, could you explain those you know?
3. Could you explain how one may become a witch among the Banyoro?
4. Are there any characteristics and categories of witches among the Banyoro? If yes, could you explain those you know?
5. Are there methods used in the practice of witchcraft by the witches in Bunyoro Society? If yes could you kindly explain those you know?
6. Are there any tools the witches and witchdoctors use during the practice of witchcraft in Bunyoro Society? If yes what are they?
7. Could there be taboos that govern the practice of witchcraft in the Bunyoro society? If yes, what could they be?
8. What are the roles of the witches in Bunyoro Society? What do the witches actually do? and actually do not do?

Section C: Motivations of witchcraft in Bunyoro society

Why do you think people practice witchcraft in Bunyoro society?

Section D: Impact of witchcraft practice in Bunyoro society

Are there any effects of witchcraft in Bunyoro society? if yes, could you kindly explain those you know?

Thankyou for your kind responses

Appendix 2: OBSERVATION GUIDE

The researcher observes and participates in the following during the study

1. Places/shrines.
2. Artifacts/ Articles used in the practice of witchcraft by witchdoctors.
3. Any other relevant issue identified.

Appendix 3: A LIST OF SOME DIVINITIES IN BUNYORO SOCIETY

1. Mulindwagoddess of the royal clan
2. Isaza goddess of the moon
3. Muhigo..... goddess of war
4. Ndahura goddess of Health and Epidemics
5. Nyakakaikuru goddess of the sun
6. Mugizi goddess of water bodies
7. Kigara goddess of cattle
8. Kaikaragoddess of harvest
9. Nyamiyonga..... goddess of the underworld
10. Munume the goddess of weather
11. Wamaragoddess of plenty

Appendix 4: A LIST OF SOME LOCAL WORDS USED IN THE THESIS

1. Ekisurathe local word used to mean local salt.
2. Ekirenga..... a plant used for increasing productivity of the soil and treatment of some ailments of witchcraft.
3. Ebihara an ailment in the form of diarrhea caused by witchcraft.
4. Ekitambo a dangerous evil spirit that pops up an individual when he or she sees a corpse.
5. Kibro..... the traditional place where local salt is mined from in Hoima district.
6. Abanyakibiro..... the natives of Kibiro where local salt is mined in Hoimsa distict.
7. Ekisura..... ... the Runyoro local word for local salt mined at Kibiro in Hoima district.
8. Enkooto..... the Runyoro local word to mean something big.
9. Abatikya..... the ruruli local word for tearing.
10. Okukatura..... the Runyoro local word for tearing.
11. Enono..... finger nails.
12. Chelle wanga wangathe Alur local word used to mean to fry while burning.
13. Amahembe..... the Runyoro local word for horns.
14. Enyunguthe local word for a smoke pipe used in witchcraft practice.
15. Eddogo..... the Luganda local word for witchcraft.
16. Oburogo..... the Runyoro local word for witchcraft.

17. Abafumu..... the Runyoro local word for witchdoctors.
18. Okurumuurathe act of being healed from an illness by a witch who caused the illness to an individual.
19. Amasabo..... the Runyoro local word for shrines (Plural), Eisabo (singular).
20. Okwesandaiga..... the methods of preventing one self from witchcraft through body cuttings by inserting inside protective charms.
21. Orutali..... the Runyoro local word for an Altar.
22. O'le the Acholi local word for witchcraft.
23. Omuziro..... the Runyoro local word used to mean a totem.
24. Omuzimu the Runyoro local word for a ghost.
25. Kairagura..... the name given to a dark skinned person.
26. Sagama..... the Runyoro local word for blood.
27. Okusindika..... the Runyoro local word for sending someone or something.
28. Okujambura the Runyoro local word for cutting something violently.
29. Banena or Kunena the Runyoro local word for Biting.
30. Okwikaara akatebbe..... Remaining stunted or having a seat.
31. Okuziimba..... the Runyoro local word for swelling.
32. Orufu..... the Runyoro local word for death.
33. Omuraguzi..... the Runyoro local word for a diviner.
34. Omusezi the Runyoro local word for Night dancer.
35. Kisanja the Runyoro local word for dry banana leaves.
36. Okusera or Okuligita the runyoro local word for the act of night dancing.
37. Ensimbi..... the Runyoro local word for money or cowrie shells.
38. Ensande..... the local word for Juice that is got from bananas.
39. Empirima..... the Runyoro local word for a knife.
40. Esefuliya.....the Runyoro local word for a saucepan.
41. Ebigenge..... the Runyoro local word for leprosy.
42. Embugubugu.....the Runyoro local word for bats.
43. Okuragura..... the act of divination.

Appendix 5: A LETTER INTRODUCING THE CANDIDATE TO THE FIELD



P.O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO
KAMPALA-UGANDA
Tel: 041 - 288896/285001
Fax: 041 - 220464,222643
E-Mail rs@kyu.ac.ug

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

13th October 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

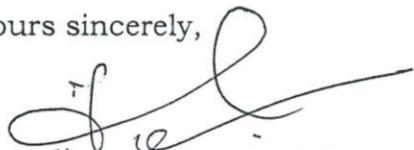
RE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The bearer of this letter: **ATUHAIRWE RICHARD, 19/U/GMAR/19005/PD** is a student of Kyambogo University pursuing a Master's Programme.

He/She is conducting a research which is part of the requirements for the fulfillment of the award.

You are therefore requested to assist him/her with data collection.

Yours sincerely,



Assoc. Prof. Robert Kuloba Wabyanga
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT