



# **Baseline Study Report on Access to Justice and Gender Based Violence Against Elderly Women Alleged As Witches in Ghana**

A Research Project by the Commission on  
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## ACRONYMS

<b>ACHPR</b>	- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
<b>CAT</b>	- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
<b>CEDAW</b>	- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>CHRAJ</b>	- Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
<b>DOVVSU</b>	- Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
<b>FGD</b>	- Focus Group Discussion
<b>GES</b>	- Ghana Education Service
<b>GHS</b>	- Ghana Health Service
<b>GPS</b>	- Ghana Police Service
<b>ICCPR</b>	- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IDI</b>	- In-depth Interview
<b>MMDAs</b>	- Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies
<b>NCCE</b>	- National Commission for Civic Education
<b>SDGs</b>	- Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UDHR</b>	- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>USSD</b>	- Unstructured Supplementary Services Data
<b>VAW</b>	- Violence Against Women
<b>VAWG</b>	- Violence Against Women and Girls



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**Joseph Whittal**  
**Commissioner**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This exercise examined the factors contributing to the occurrence of violence against women accused of witchcraft; the occurrence of human rights abuses against alleged witches and; finally, the available institutional support framework on access to justice for women experiencing allegations of witchcraft. In addressing these objectives, the mixed-method approach of data gathering, and analysis was employed. In the survey research, a questionnaire was used to garner information from women alleged as witches in Gambaga and Gnani “witch camps” in North East and Northern regions respectively. The questionnaire was complemented with qualitative interviews. The unit of analysis for the qualitative interviews included alleged witches, caretakers/managers of the “witch camps”, and some community members. Aside from the in-depth interviews, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized. The data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS version 22 whilst the qualitative data were thematically analyzed.

The analyzed data revealed that most women alleged as witches were the very elderly, widowed, illiterate, and with poor socio-economic status. The basis of witchcraft allegations were dreams, sickness, and the death of a relative. The chief priest through ritual performance determined the guilt of an alleged witch. These alleged witches suffered physical, sexual, economic, and psychological violence. They were severely tortured after such labels were placed on them. The analyzed data further revealed some human rights abuses suffered by these alleged witches. These women did not have access to adequate food, health care, and shelter. Their bedding and living spaces were in deplorable states. Their freedom of movement was curtailed to a greater extent. They also suffered discrimination and stigmatization. The children of alleged witches had access to education but lacked the basic items to aid their learning. Access to legal and social justice was very problematic. The police or state agencies were less preferred by these women as means of accessing legal justice. This was found to be so due to the patriarchal-cultural worldviews of these women. These cultural beliefs are ingrained and served as a major socio-cultural hindrance to accessing justice. The camps were found to perform some minimal functions for the alleged witches, however, there was evidence of human rights violations. These findings undermine the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). The findings also show that Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 16 are yet to be fully attained, especially in rural areas.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made: there is a need for the Ghana Police Service to establish police visibility through the building of police report centers in communities where such allegations are rampant; there is the need for NCCE and CHRAJ to organize education campaigns as a way of de-internalizing repressive cultural values; the Government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Service must make a deliberate effort to invest in the education of children alleged as witches; as a matter of urgency, the parliament of Ghana is required to speed up the passage of the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill 2021 that aims at criminalizing the allegation of witchcraft as well as the rigorous enforcement of that legislation; the already existing reintegration structures and processes need to be invigorated and financially supported to aid the reintegration of alleged witches and; for proven breaches of human rights and access to justice, the CHRAJ should take the necessary steps toward ensuring that the camps are closed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is defined as harmful practices perpetrated against a person based on gender. GBV is informed by harmful socio-cultural norms and deeply rooted in abuse of power and gender inequality. The WHO (2019) reports that one in three women or 35% of women globally have either experienced violence or will experience violence in their lifetime. GBV manifests in economic, physical, sexual, and socio-cultural contexts. The issue of GBV is not only life-threatening but also a violation of human rights.

GBV is a global challenge, however, the situation in Africa is more problematic, even much for Sub-Saharan Africa (Nabaggala, Reddy & Manda, 2021). Studies have shown that violence against women soars up during pandemics (Rose, 2018; Andersson, Cockcroft, & Shea, 2008; Godbole & Mehendale, 2005). The same is found for the COVID-19 pandemic (Mittal & Singh, 2020). The breakdown of socio-cultural structures is considered attributable reasons (UNFPA, 2020). We dare to state that some of these socio-cultural structures are themselves the embodiment of violent practices. Violence against women (VAW) in Ghana is not uncommon. Statistics available suggest that 35-37% of women in Ghana experience intimate partner violence (Ghana Demographic Health, 2008). In a 2020 report by the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Greater Accra Region, 31.9% of women in Ghana have experienced violence. Studies have also shown that women in rural areas are more likely to experience violence than those in urban areas (Addo-Larter, 2019). The Domestic Violence Act (2007) (ACT 732) was/is designed as a response to violent activities in the home. The actors responsible for protecting women against violence are DOVVSU, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Legal Aid Commission.

In Ghana, like many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of witchcraft is deeply rooted in the culture, belief systems, and lifestyle of many people. This belief in

witchcraft has promoted fear and violence, most especially against aged women who have been accused or are suspected of witchcraft. These accused women are normally subjected to public ridicule, isolation, physical and verbal assault, banishment, stigmatization, etc. All these form part of human rights violations.

The belief in witchcraft cuts across cultures and religions as well as geographic spaces. In Ghana, North-East, Northern, and Savannah Regions are mapped areas where abuse of older women accused of witchcraft is prevalent. The Gambaga, Kukuo, Gnani, Bonyase, Nabuli and Kpatinga “witch camps” are places noted for habiting aged women accused of witchcraft in Northern Ghana. The Bonyase and Nabuli camps were closed in 2014 and 2019 respectively.

The alleged witches are normally accompanied by their children or other relatives. Unfortunately, the “witch camps” do not provide the right outlets for children to have access to education, health, and other socio-economic services. This impedes access to social and legal justice. In recent times, this issue has become topical again and requires serious empirical evaluation. Whilst scholars have paid attention to issues of GBV (see Addo-Larter, 2019; Mittal & Singh, 2020; Rose, 2018; Andersson, Cockcroft, & Shea, 2008; Godbole & Mehendale, 2005, etc.), little is known about GBV associated with aged women accused of witchcraft in Northern parts of Ghana.

The objectives of this report are to:

1. investigate key factors contributing to the occurrence of violence against women accused of witchcraft;
2. gather relevant data on the occurrence of human rights abuses against alleged witches to inform targeted response in curbing the menace and;
3. finally, map out available institutional support framework on access to justice for women experiencing allegations of witchcraft.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Gender and Gender-Based Violence

Gender is defined as the culturally and socially constructed expectations of being a female or male (Molin, 2018). Similarly, the Canadian Institute of Health Research (2020) explains gender as socially constructed roles of behaviours based on being a woman, a man, a girl, a boy, and people of diverse gender. This understanding of roles influences how people interact and perceive themselves, and thus their gender identity. It also influences how power and resources are distributed in society. The role expectations associated with gender identity determine what is appropriate for a man and a woman (Enarson & Pease, 2016). Bradshaw (2013) shared that the norms about gender are essential to how people understand themselves - their identity as well as how they relate with other people. Gendered norms are common at all levels of society, that is: interpersonal, institutional, structural, and systemic. The generalized attributes and images associated with the different genders form the basis of gender stereotypes. These stereotypes are generally unfavourable towards women and girls (Ariyabandu, 2009). These attributes are further entrenched by the patriarchal system (Enarson & Pease, 2016) with its manifesting norms of male dominance, imbalanced social structures, and the subordination of women.

Family, schooling, peer groups, and the mass media all play a role in gender socialization. Each agent supports gender roles by establishing and maintaining gender-specific normative expectations. Secondary agents, such as religion and the workplace, can also expose people. People are led to believe that they are responding naturally based on their gender rather than following a socially constructed role as a result of repeated exposure to these agents throughout time (Zhu & Chang, 2019). In the work of Bradshaw (2013), it is through the socialization processes of social interaction that gender roles are developed. This begins in early childhood and continues throughout one's life. The formation of these standards, as

noted by Bradshaw (ibid), is also influenced by broader social, economic, and political processes in societies. Due to this, gender norms are continually reconstructed and rebuilt across different cultures, societies, religions, and throughout history (Marinucci, 2010; Mishra, 2009; Enarson & Pease, 2016).

The predominant cross-cultural feature of gender inequality that remains one of the most serious human rights violations is GBV. GBV is when someone is victimized because of their gender. GBV affects both men and women, but women and girls represent the majority of victims. According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC, 2015), GBV is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., sex/gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental and emotional harm, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private”. GBV is a possible threat to everyone, however, as the literature reveals violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the most common type of GBV (Sohrabizadeh, 2016). The United Nations (1993) defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that result in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. Some common examples of VAW include intimate partner violence, rape, abuse, harassment, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced and early marriage, female genital mutilation, and trafficking (Wirtz et al., 2013). According to the EU for Fundamental Rights (2014) and the Eutostat (2015), 1 in 3 women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence, 1 in 2 women has experienced sexual harassment, 1 in 20 women has been raped, 1 in 5 women has experienced stalking, and 95% of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation in the EU are women. Despite these harrowing statistics, very few cases of VAW are reported due to the stigmatizing consequences.

Emerging data and stories from people on the front lines of COVID-19 suggest that all sorts of VAW have increased in nations affected by the pandemic. Many countries with a reporting system in place have reported increases of up to 25% (United Nations, 2020). The data from Africa shows high rates of VAW. In East Africa, the cases of GBV increased dramatically. Gender-based violence cases reported to the police or through GBV Toll-Free lines show an increase by 48% across the East African Community (EAC) partner States. In Southern Africa, according to official estimates, the South African Police Services (SAPS) received 2,320 accusations of gender-based violence during the first week of the level 5 lockdown, but only 148 related charges were filed. These figures reflect a 37% increase over the weekly average of GBV cases reported in South Africa in 2019. Furthermore, the command center for GBV in South Africa documented an increase in VAW incidents, with a total of 10,660 phone calls, 1503 unstructured supplementary services data (USSD), and 616 SMSs reported between March 27 and April 16 (Smith, 2020). The story is not different in West Africa, as Liberia recorded a 50% increase in GBV in the first half of 2020 (UNFPA, 2020). As already indicated, DOVVSU reported 31.9% of violent cases against women in 2020.

According to a recent multi-country study conducted in the Asian region, 25% to as much as 87% of men commit intimate violence against their partner (Fulu et al., 2013). Casey, Carlson, Bulls, and Yager (2016) share that GBV is largely motivated by unequal power relations, in which a perpetrator takes advantage of privileges to exert power over another person. Gender inequality has been identified as a common feature of most forms of GBV (Hamilton, 2014). Gender inequality at the systemic level has also aided in the pervasive validation and approval of GBV. Hence, abusers are most often not held responsible for their actions, making victims afraid to speak out and seek help (IASC, 2015). GBV, however, is caused by more than just unequal gender norms; gender identity, age, sexual orientation,

disability, religion, class, and ethnicity have all been identified to play a role in defining gender power imbalances (EIGE, 2017).

Theoretically, the ecological model has generally been used to explain the causes of VAW (Heise, 2011). The model identifies and groups the risk factors into community and societal levels as well as individual and relational levels. The individual-level examines biological factors and the personal history of a person. These factors encapsulate age, psychological disorders, upbringing, and experience of abuse. These factors shape violent behaviors. Personal relationships with peers, family and intimate partners also trigger violent behaviour. That is, association with violent peers and poor family situations may induce violent behaviour (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). The risk factors associated with VAW at the community level are lack of social support, unemployment, high population density, lack of information, and social isolation (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). The risk factors at the societal level have been identified as masculinity norms, rigid gender roles, lack of law enforcement and weak criminal justice system, poverty, conflict, and gender inequalities (Heise, Ellsberg & Goetemoeller, 1999). This model explains that it is the combination of these factors that cause people to induce violent behaviours. Hence, to mitigate VAW, all these factors will have to be taken into consideration (Krug et al., 2002).

## 2.2 GBV against Women alleged as Witches

The term witchcraft has been defined by many scholars, however, there is no generally accepted definition. The Encyclopedia Britannica attempts a definition of witchcraft as the invocation or exercise of alleged powers deemed to control events or people, characteristically magic or sorcery. Women have generally been associated with witchcraft even though some men have also been accused of it. The unsubstantiated allegations are due to a lack of formal education, steadfast superstitious and demonological beliefs. A woman may be alleged as a witch due to the incidents of death of someone or upon the prolonged

illness of her husband. It could also be about miscarriage or death of a cattle or the collapse of the husband's business (Action-Aid Ghana, 2012). The breakdown of socio-cultural structures is also considered attributable reason (UNFPA, 2020). Women alleged as witches are tortured, tied with a rope to a tree, banished, and fed with human or animal excreta. Whilst some are beaten or stoned to death others are killed through a purification ritual of drinking poisonous concoctions (Pierre, 2018). In some instances, family members of alleged witches are also tortured and banished. These family members are mostly the children of the alleged witch and other close relatives.

Mostly, women between the ages of 20 and above are vulnerable. In a study of 41 countries in Africa and Asia, older women and older widows were the most at risk (United Nations, 2014). The findings of Eboiyehi (2017) and Action-Aid Ghana (2012) also established the accusations of older women as witches in Nigeria and Ghana. These allegations of witchcraft stem from the following: women's rejection of sexual advances from men; women who are seen as greedy by others; and women who refuse to surrender their deceased husband's properties. Women who reject these sexual predators are made to pay a heavy fine whilst those holding on to their deceased husband's properties are forced to relinquish it. The perpetrators in the witchcraft violence consist of family members, local villagers, witch doctors, and the clergy or self-professed prophets/prophetess. Perpetrators of all forms of GBV are mostly men.

Ashforth (2015, p. 7) argues that in places where witchcraft and sorcerers are real, "the dangers they pose are real and present. In such places the primary concern is security: how to protect against witchcraft and other forms of violence". However, it is important to state that, the prevalence of accusations of witchcraft and sorcery and its associated violence can be economically and socially destabilizing as it undermines poverty alleviation and the

legitimacy of governments (van de Grijsparde et al., 2013). Deductively, VAW alleged as witches is a security threat.

### 2.3 Access to Justice and Human Rights: Women alleged as Witches

Human rights are rights that all people have, regardless of their gender, religion, race, language, nationality, ethnicity, or status (Yin et al., 2021). These fundamental human rights include access to justice. Access to justice is interpreted in the context of both Legal and social justice. Having access to legal justice does not necessarily entail social justice. Social justice encapsulates the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Access to justice, therefore, refers to rights entitlements such as a person having the right to adequate food, shelter, health, education, freedom of movement, association, freedom from torture, right to privacy, security, safety, etc. Access to justice ironically entails systems for accessing justice that is partial to the disadvantaged. The non-discrimination clause in Ghana's 1992 Constitution as it relates to Access to Justice should be viewed in light of this perspective.

The ideal of the directive principles of state policy is to be based on a secure and protected “social order founded on the ideals and principles of freedom, equality, justice, probity and accountability” (Article 37(1) of the 1992 Constitution). Article 35 (3) also provides that “the State shall promote just and reasonable access by all citizens to public facilities and services in accordance with law”. This behooves the state to ensure that all citizens have equal access to state-sponsored facilities (Atuguba et al., 2006).

Women accused of witchcraft often suffer physical, psychological, and emotional violence. The other consequences of witchcraft allegations are banishment, defamation of character, mental distress, and stigmatization. As a form of punishment for their alleged witchcraft behaviours, some are murdered through beatings, stoning, and other forms of trial by ordeal and other exorcisms (Pierre, 2018). Those who end up in “witch camps” hardly have access

to basic needs of life such as food, shelter, privacy, freedom of movement, freedom from torture, etc. This makes access to justice as a human right claim highly problematic.

The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) places a call for the dignity and equal rights of all members of the human family. As captured in the following provisions: all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (Article 1). It is also captured in Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966) that: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Like the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 17 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees respect for human dignity. Article 27(3) of the Constitution specifically guarantees equal rights to women, in respect of training and promotion without impediments. However, these alleged witches are tortured contrary to Article 5 of the UDHR and Article 7 of the ICCPR. The dignity and self-worth of these alleged witches are drained due to the treatment meted out to them by their perpetrators. All these violate their fundamental human rights guaranteed under international and national laws. The very act of isolating these women alleged as witches in supposed camps for their safety is and of itself a form of human rights violation. Not only that but also makes the effort of attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goal 16) very challenging.

## 2.4 Socio-cultural Constraints

Poverty reduces the levels of access to justice. Poor financing of justice institutions leads to the failure of the said institution to dispense justice. The impact of these failures is highly felt by the poor because of the lack of individual economic resources to deal with the systemic challenges. Also, when justice is denied, poor people are unable to enforce their social and economic rights. Poverty is not only a barrier to accessing legal justice but also

denies social justice at different levels. Poverty forms the basis of discrimination, stigmatization, and reduced access to literacy and information (Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law Report, 2014).

Individuals are empowered by literacy and education, which increases their ability to understand and demand the enforcement of their rights. The socio-cultural constraints of low literacy and education levels limit access to economic resources as well as the ability to understand and defend rights, resulting in a lack of access to justice (Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law Report, 2014).

The patriarchal system subordinates women. This system defines the role of men and women and places men as superior to women. The world view of women is placed within the context and control of men. Women hardly exercise their opinion due to the belief that their views can well be articulated by their husbands. In most cases, every move by the woman needs the approval of the man. This makes the women unable to access legal justice even when they are subjected to violent conduct. Whether abusive or not, the patriarchal structure influences power relations and serves as a barrier to accessing justice (Sikweyiya, 2020).

## 2.5 Institutional Support for Victims of GBV

Institutional support for witchcraft-related violence can be categorized into four: the State, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), religious organizations, and traditional authorities. The State's power of incorporating supernatural authorities in its dealings has been questioned (Geschiere, 2006). This has resulted in some scholarly investigations on the role and effectiveness of the courts in dealing with GBV against people accused of witchcraft (Mesaki, 2009; Ashforth, 2005; Diwan, 2004; Hund, 2004). According to Ashforth (2005), law enforcement officials feel insecure when faced with spiritual issues due to legal ambiguity. Roxburgh (2016) reveals that Ghana is not well equipped to address

beliefs in witchcraft and insecurity. Some State leaders who are expected to help in mitigating GBV against alleged witches are themselves involved in witchcraft practices. Hence, this undermines the efforts of legal protection.

The existence of “witch camps” has received public condemnation from government officials in Ghana. However, the government officials hardly address the violence associated with witchcraft allegations. The state normally raises issues of conflict between the need to respect cultural practices as well as the need to protect the rights of these accused witches. The State has downplayed witchcraft-related violence which occurs outside the witch camps (Roxburgh, 2016). According to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative (CHRAJ, 2013), cultural beliefs served as the most important barrier to addressing GBV against women alleged as witches. Whilst government officials also condemn witchcraft-related violence, their approaches to addressing the challenge differ. Reporting violence to the police and prosecuting the perpetrators as well as engaging the media and traditional authorities for education were mentioned as means of dealing with GBV.

NGOs have responded to witchcraft-related violence through support services. NGOs are noted to have worked in reducing beliefs in witchcraft through community advocacy and education (Dowuona-Hammond et al., 2020). ActionAid, HelpAge, and go Home Project are examples of NGOs that have worked in mitigating violence and providing support for women alleged as witches (ActionAid, 2012). Some of these NGOs have led these alleged witches to petition and stage a protest against government inactions (Roxburgh, 2016).

In collaboration with NGOs, churches have also played a role in reducing the fear of witchcraft beliefs. However, for some churches addressing witchcraft-related violence is the primary responsibility of the state. Contrasting this with the findings of Roxburgh (2016), the State is ill-equipped to address witchcraft-related violence. Like the NGOs, churches

also educate people on the need to avoid abuse of women alleged as witches. Traditional authorities are seen as posing a challenge to the work of churches. Despite this, traditional authorities are seen as important actors in addressing witchcraft-related violence as they appeal to witchcraft-related beliefs. In thinking of the reintegration of alleged witches, traditional authorities have a huge role to play (Roxburgh, *ibid*).

### 3. RESEARCH APPROACH

This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies. The unit of analysis comprised women alleged as witches and the managers/caretakers of the witch camps. Considering the objectives for the baseline survey, a questionnaire was used to solicit information from the alleged witches. A quota of 200 was assigned as the sample at the earlier stage of the project, however, after the questionnaire administration, the sorting phase reduced the number of questionnaires to 166. The sample was drawn from a population of about 260 alleged witches residing in the Gambaga and Gnaniwitch camps. The settlement for the Gambaga and Gnaniwitch camps was based on simple random sampling.

The questionnaire was complemented with the qualitative interviews of alleged witches and camp managers/caretakers. For the qualitative research, 2 alleged witches, 2 camp managers, and 2 community members were interviewed. Apart from the camp managers who were selected purposively, the other participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. Two Focus Group Discussions were organised.

The instrument for the quantitative research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of 4 sections, with closed and open-ended questions. The first section focused on demographics – age, education, religion, etc. The 2nd section focused on factors contributing to the occurrence of GBV against women alleged of witchcraft. The 3rd section focused on human rights abuses against alleged witches whilst the final section focused on institutional

support to facilitate access to justice. *The questionnaire has been attached to this report as Appendix A.*

In-depth Interview (IDI) and FGD guides were used for the qualitative interviews. The IDI guide was designed to have open-ended questions reflecting the themes in the objectives. *The IDI guide has been attached as Appendix B.* With the use of probing questions, participants had the opportunity to express themselves on the issues under study. *The Interview Guide for the Camp Managers is attached as Appendix C.* The FGD was composed of 10-15 people. The data from the qualitative interviews were used to complement the questionnaire data.

After data gathering, the questionnaire data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of the data were made using tables and graphs. With this, the factors responsible for GBV, human rights abuses, socio-cultural constraints, and institutional structures to facilitate justice were discussed. The qualitative interviews were analysed based on themes. It was used to give in-depth meaning to the quantitative data.

## 4.BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This study sought to investigate violence against women alleged as witches. The unit of analyses for the survey research were all women. The demographic characteristics of respondents are discussed below.

### Age of Respondents

The data from Table 1 indicates that a clear majority of 73.5% were females who are sixty years and above, 21.1% were between the ages of fifty-three to fifty-nine, whilst 5.4% were between the ages of thirty-nine to forty-five. This means that the majority of alleged witches were women above 60 years.

**Table 1: Age of the Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
39-45	9	5.4
53-59	35	21.1
60+122	73.5	
Total	166	100

The age groups of respondents were confirmed during the in-depth interview. A participant said:

Like me, most of the women accused of witchcraft are old. The majority of them are over 50 years.

Another participant added:

Those accused of witchcraft are mostly old women. Children and young adults face fewer accusations. But they still stand the possibility of such accusations as they grow. For me, age is a key factor. Look at the women in the camp (referring to the interviewer), how many of them are young? (Asking the interviewer). Some of these women who joined this camp less than 5 years ago are over 60 years old. May be, it's because we don't have the strength to work again.

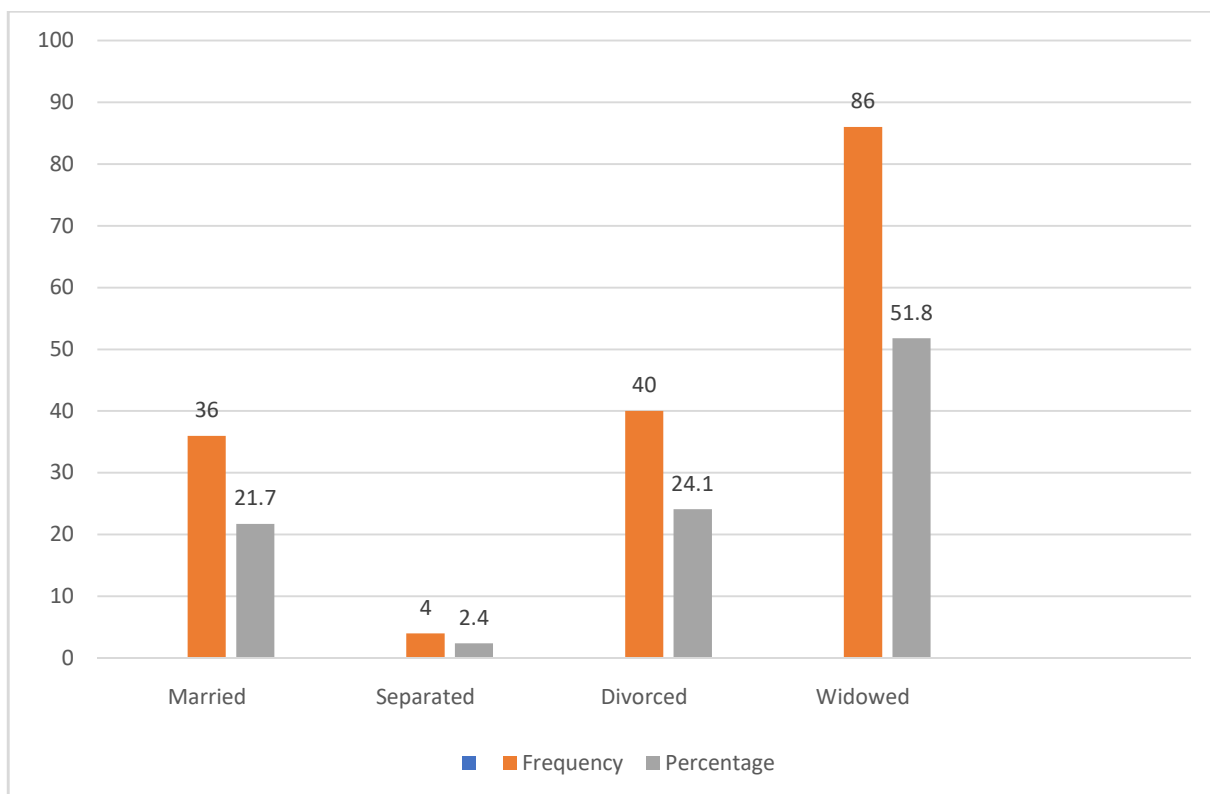
The data implies that women who are almost forty years and above stand the chance of being accused of witchcraft in some communities in Northern Ghana, most especially those above sixty years. This means that all girls and women are potential witches-in-the-making as they age. This finding is consistent with the work of the United Nations (2014), Eboiyehi (2017), and Action-Aid Ghana (2012) on the accusations of aged women as witches. The United Nations established this fact in its study of 41 countries in Africa and Asia. The association of age and femininity with witchcraft is a travesty and a stain on the Ghanaian cultural reverence for the elderly.

Drawing on the insight from the data and some Ghanaian cultural values, in economic terms, aging warrants care of the elderly by adult children and relatives. Hence, some relatives and children who are unwilling to care and feed their aged parents force them out by branding them as “witches”. Associated with this is that in some instances, the children or relatives stand to gain control of assets, especially farms and homes, owned by the elderly relative or parent.

The association of age with witchcraft is highly unfortunate. These are old women who deserve more care (health, feeding, bedding, and integration) from family and community members. However, they are rather trademarked as “evil” people who deserve to be punished and driven out of the community. Old age is more of a curse for these women than a blessing. Accusing a woman of being a witch is yet another way women, even in their old age, experience the pervasive force of patriarchal domination.

### Marital Status of Women Alleged as Witches

After asking the respondents about their ages, we went ahead to find out about their marital status. Figure 1 shows that 86 out of 166 respondents which represent 51.8% were widowed, 40 (24.1%) were divorced women, 36 (21.7%) were married women, whilst 4 (2.4%) were separated from their husbands.



**Figure 1: Marital Status of Respondents**

This was confirmed during the in-depth interview:

I was accused of witchcraft 2 years after the death of my husband. Knowing that I am a widow and had no one to fight for me that is why they (referring to the community) accused me.

Chiming in, during the FGD, a participant said:

Being a widow is like a crime in my community. Any bad thing is linked to you.

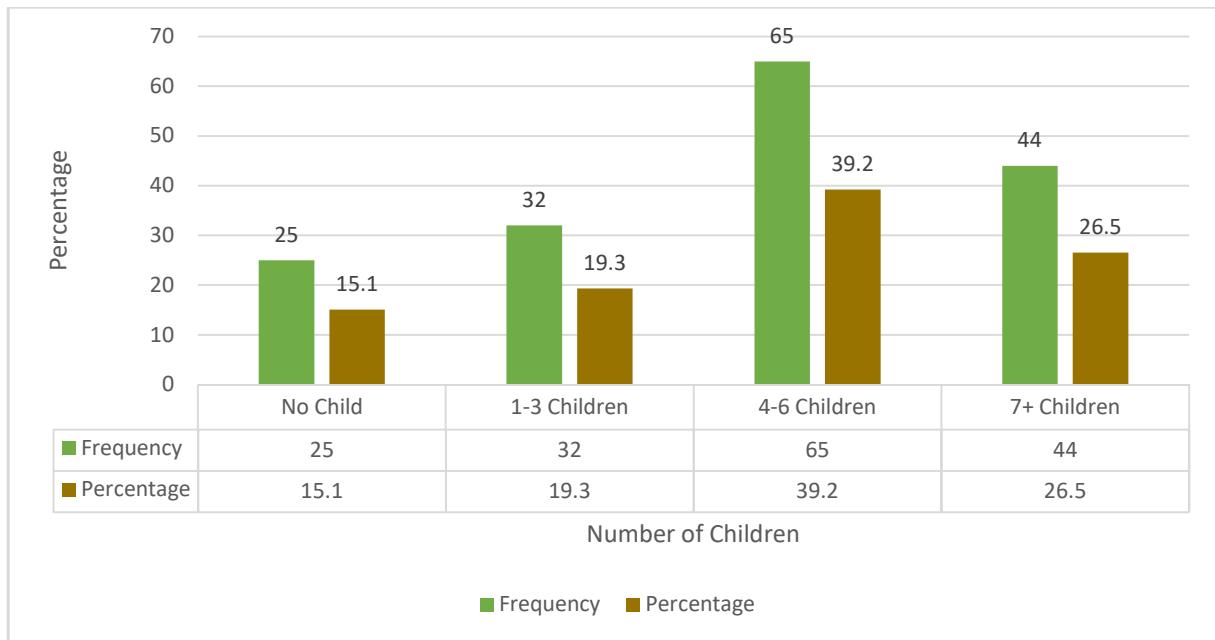
Another woman added:

It is not only about widows but divorced women as well. It is hard for a single woman to be accused. You only hear of it when that woman has refused a respected community member sex.

Both the survey and the qualitative data point to one thing: women who have lost their husbands either through death or divorce stand a greater chance of suffering witchcraft allegations and its associated violence than single women. The UN's report of 2014 on witchcraft allegations also points out the accusations of older widows as witches. Accusing a woman of being a witch is a retaliatory tool. Women who dare maintain bodily and sexual autonomy by resisting the sexual overtures of men risk being falsely accused as witches. This is the classic "Madonna-whore" trap. That is, a woman who remains sexually chaste, and resists the sexual overtures by men would be labelled a witch but will also be labelled a prostitute if she gives in sex.

### Number of Children of Women Alleged as Witches

As part of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, we sought to find out the number of children respondents had. Figure 2 shows that out of the 166 respondents, 39.2% had between 4-6 children, 44 (26.5%) had more than 7 children, 32 (19.3%) of the respondents had between 1-3 children, whilst 25 (15.1%) said they had no children. The data gathered shows that most of these women alleged as witches have more than four children. Interactions with a relative of the chief priest and the secretary of the Gnani camp revealed over 400 children were living in the camp.



**Figure 2: Number of Children of Respondents**

During the in-depth interview, it was revealed that some of these children stayed with their mothers in the witch camps, some lived in the villages of their mother's orientation, whilst others had also migrated to the south in search of greener pastures. The interview participants said as thus:

I have 2 children and 1 grandchild. They all live with me in this camp.

A participant added:

My children had to run away from the village where I was accused of witchcraft.

One of them stays in a nearby village whilst the others are currently living and working in the south.

Similarly, a participant indicated that:

My children do not live with me. They have moved from the village to Kumasi to work.

Another alleged witch said:

The children live with my husband in the village they accused me of witchcraft.

They are young and cannot take care of themselves.

Noteworthy from the data is that sometimes the entire family - closerelatives and children - are presumed guilty by association. To say the practice of witch hunts is devastating and disruptive to the social order in any community is an understatement. Apart from the killing of witches, the practice of separating children from their presumed witch mothers is the cruelest and most unusual practice. The adverse impacts of the separation on children are long-lasting.

In other words, being forced to flee from one community, home and kinsmen is one thing, but the forced separation of children from a mother due to witchcraft accusations is emotionally traumatic to any woman. In a society and culture where a woman's dignity is tied to the number of children sired, to be stripped of one's children is to be stripped of one's identity and reason for being.

Structurally, it appears communities of many witchcraft allegations are literally on the path to self-destruction. The forced outmigration of the young adults to the cities and the scapegoating of the most vulnerable members - the elderly, means such communities maylose part of their historical culture as well as a segment of their active population.

**Table 2: Religion of Respondents**

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Christian</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46.4</b>
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21.1</b>
<b>Traditionalist</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In respect of the religious affiliation of respondents, Table 2shows that 46.4% were Christians, 32.5% were traditionalists, whilst21.1% were Muslims. Further discussion on

these affiliations revealed that some respondents switched faith when they came to the witch camp. Predominantly were the traditionalists who became Christians. A participant said:

Before I came to this place (referring to the witch camp), I was a traditionalist. I worshipped the 'god' in the village. I am now a believer in Christ.

Despite the switch in faith, the second majority of respondents were those who still held on to their traditional beliefs and practices. These are women who shared the same faith as their community members and relatives in a democratic country. Loving one another forms part of the central teaching of this faith, yet the element of witchcraft allegations subdues this teaching. Perhaps, this religious faith and teaching form the basis of witchcraft ascriptions.

In investigating the educational background of respondents, Table 3 shows that 162 (97.6%) of respondents had no formal education whilst the least (2.4%) had primary education.

**Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents**

Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage
No Schooling (Formal Education)	162	97.6
Primary	4	2.4
Total	166	100.0

The data implies that women with no and low levels of education were more vulnerable to violence and witchcraft allegations. As shown, women who had attained secondary and above levels of education were unlikely to be associated with witchcraft. Similar to the findings of the National Commission for Civic Education (2010), more than 94% of women alleged as witches had no formal education whilst the very few had up to basic education.

These are women whose poor or no educational backgrounds afford them nothing other than their patriarchal world views. Their level of knowledge barely makes them recognize the extensiveness of the violence they are subjected to as well as the false consciousness they are made to live with.

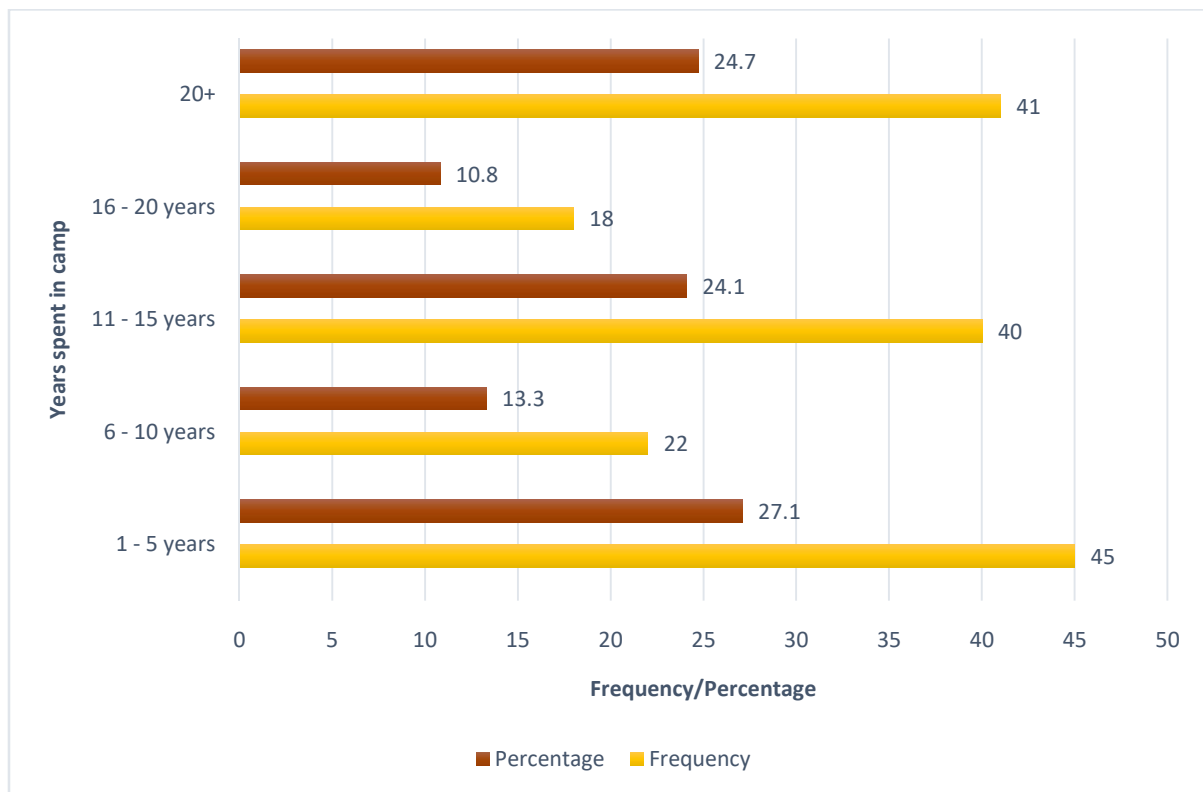
We also investigated the employment background of respondents. It was revealed that before these women came to settle in the camps, 133 (80.1%) of them were not engaged in any form of employment whilst 33 (19.9%) were farmers. The in-depth interviews revealed that some of these women helped their husbands on the farm. As said:

I was unemployed. I used to help my husband on his farm during the farming season. He pays me nothing after selling the produce.

As indicated, the majority of these respondents were not employed. This corresponded with their lack of employable skills. The survey research showed that 92.8% of these respondents had no employable skills whilst 7.2% had some form of employable skills.

This implies that the majority of these women were without any source of income. They rather depended on their husbands for daily survival. These are women who were not only poor but were also subjected to the economic exploitations of their husbands. Those who assisted their husbands were not even compensated for their labour. They were just alienated from the produce of the farm as well as the economic earnings that came after harvesting.

In respect of the number of years these women had spent in the witch camps, Figure 3 shows that 27.1% had spent between 1-5 years, 24.7% had spent more than 20 years, 24.1% had spent between 11-15 years, 13.3% had spent between 6-10 years, whilst 10.8% of these women had stayed in the camp between 16-20 years.



**Figure 3: The number of years spent in the alleged witch camp**

Amidst the efforts made by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) in closing down two camps in 2014 and 2019, the data points to the fact that the majority of these women alleged as witches have spent between 1-5 years in the camps. This means that accusations of witchcraft are still prevalent in most communities in the Northern regions of Ghana. It also confirms the continuous vulnerability of women in their communities. This also implies that the social control institutions (the police and other state agencies) mandated to promote law and order are perhaps too distanced, lacking local agencies, and thus, rarely reacted, or were ineffective in unleashing their enforcement powers.

From the demographic characteristics of these women alleged as witches, what is evident is that most of these women were the very elderly, widowed, illiterate (no schooling), impoverished (lacking sustained source of income), and without familial support. These violations could be termed as a weapon of power, a sexist device, and an oppressive

mechanism of females with poor socio-cultural statuses in patriarchal societies as postulated by Igwe(2013). These variables combined dispossess the women of their right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. It is as though these communities were constructed to dispossess women and to subordinate them to the patriarchal order.

## 5.FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) ALLEGED AS WITCHES

Before we delve into the main issues, we would first of all like to share how the respondents understood violence against women (VAW) from a general standpoint. The respondents understood VAW within the context of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The survey research reveals that 80.7% of respondents interpreted VAW as a man beating a woman, 10.3% explained it as a man using harsh words to make a woman feel bad whilst 9% interpreted it to mean a man forcefully having sex with a woman. A participant from the in-depth interview captured it as follows:

I understand it to mean when a man maltreats a woman by beating her or using a stick or any object to hit her. Sometimes, the words of the man can make you sick. You feel less of a human being. Also, having sex with a woman without her consent constitutes violence. ...I didn't know this until some people (referring to Non-Governmental Organizations) came to teach us. If I am to go by this, then my husband and family victimized me.

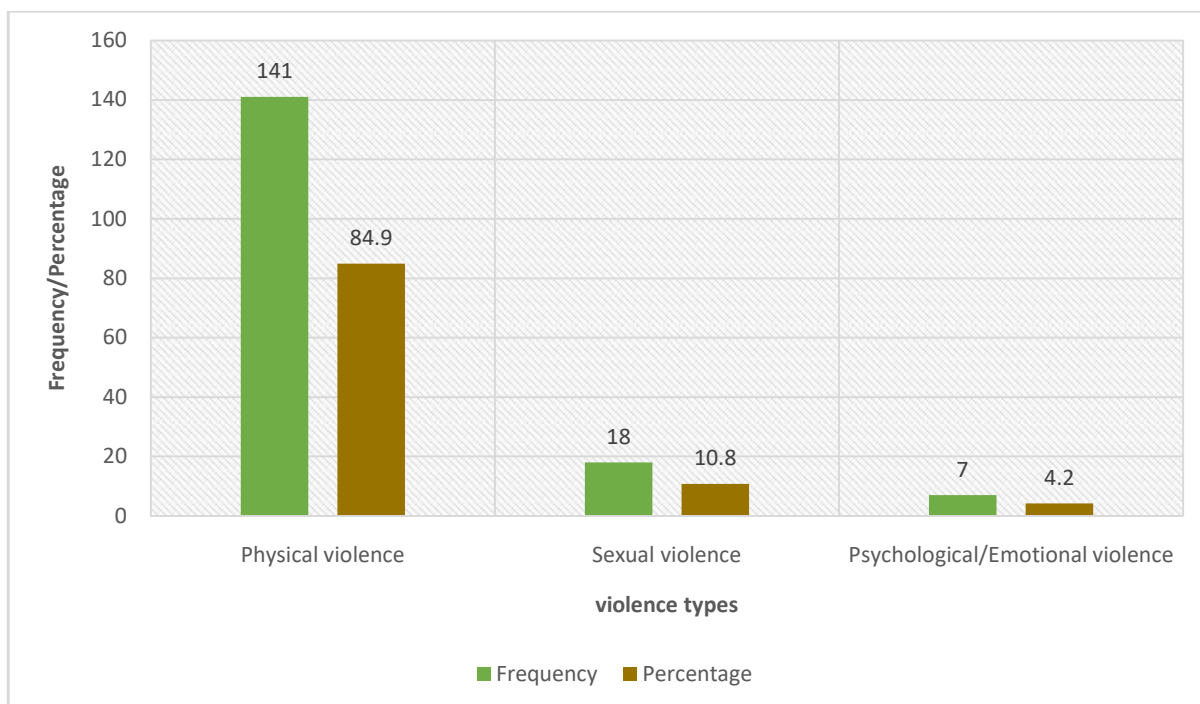
With the help of civil society organizations (CSOs), these women were gaining additional insights into the subject of violence. Like CHRAJ, this also reveals the crucial roles played by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the fight against oppressive gender conduct. The meaning of VAW expressed by respondents shares some characteristics with the United Nations (1993) definition of VAW. The UN captures it as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women

including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”. This shows that the CSOs working in connection with the “witch camps” are playing a crucial role in educating these alleged witches on gender-based violence.

With this understanding expressed by the respondents, we went ahead to ask whether they knew of other women who had suffered violence in their respective communities. The survey data showed that 93.4% of the respondents said they knew women who had been abused by their spouse whilst 6.6% said they had no knowledge of such. The survey results also showed that 89.8% of respondents were aware of some causes of violence against women in their communities whilst 10.2% said they were not aware.

The data implies that most of these women were aware of the violent behaviour suffered by other women in their respective communities. This shows the endemic nature of violent conducts women were subjected to. An alarming situation that requires urgent action.

The respondents revealed the types of violence observed in their communities. Figure 4 shows that 84.9% of the violence observed was physical violence, 10.8% were sexual, whilst 4.2% were psychological/emotional violence. This finding is consistent with their understanding of what constitutes violence. The data implies that physical violence was the most predominant violence in most communities. This entails burning, killing, punching, beating, maiming, kicking, and the use of objects to hit or inflict pain on a person.



**Figure 4: Types of violence observed in the communities**

These forms of violence documented in this study are not pole apart from that which were found by Wirtz et al. (2013), Owusu-Addo (2018), and Adjah (2016). The violence suffered by women ranged from intimate partner violence, rape, emotional and physical abuse, harassment, and other forms of sexual exploitation.

After questioning our respondents on the types of violence they observed, we asked them to indicate what they think caused violence against women. More than half (59%) of the respondents attributed the cause of violence against women to poverty or financial distress, 29 (17.8%) attributed it to when sex is denied by a spouse, whilst 16 (9.6%) credited the cause to the effect of alcohol or drug use. Again, 13 (7.8%) of the respondents ascribed violence against women to forced marriage whilst 10 (6%) said violence against women was caused by unfaithfulness (See Table 4).

**Table 4: Causes of Violence against Women**

Frequency	Percentage	
Poverty or financial distress	98	59
Force marriage	13	7.8
Unfaithfulness	106	
Effect of alcohol/drug	16	9.6
When sex is denied by a spouse	29	17.5
Total	166	100

Observing violence against other women is different from experiencing violence by oneself. As a result, the respondents were asked if they ever experienced violence in their marriage. The data shows that 148 (81.2%) of respondents had ever experienced violence in their marriage whilst 18 (10.8%) had not. This implies that the majority of women alleged as witches have experienced violence in their marriage. The computed statistic to determine whether the statistical relationship between poverty and violent behaviour showed that  $X^2$  is 6.322 with a  $p$ -value of .000 at an alpha level of .05 (See Table 5). This shows that there is a significant relationship between poverty/financial distress and violent behaviour. It implies that poverty is associated with violent behaviour.

**Table 5: Poverty and Violent Behaviour**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (1- sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	6.322	1	.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	4.126	1	.016		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	6.324	1	.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.012	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	4.943	1	.012		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	166				

- 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.34.
- Computed only for a 2x2 table

The Northern regions are part of the poorest regions in Ghana. It is easy to observe the stress caused by poverty on the faces of many, especially in the hinterlands. The stress faced by these men due to poverty triggers aggressive behaviours of which women suffer the consequences. These men exploit their wives in every way, to the extent that some even refuse to give “chop money” to maintain the household. According to the World Bank (2019) brief, Martin et al. (1999) and Xingjuan (1999), poverty, substance abuse, excessive alcohol intake, jealousy, and lack of education cause gender-based violence. They argued that when women lack the financial prowess to buy, they become dependent on their partners, hence tend to suffer economic abuse. The evidence of poverty in these communities shows that the attainment of zero poverty per the UN Sustainable Development Goal one (1) is far from reach.

From the interview, one can deduce that the patriarchal order pervades gender relations. Women who dare to question the exploitative behaviours of their spouses risk being beaten. The irony is that when the same abusive husbands are ill and infirm, they expect their wives to nurse them back to health.

In respect of the types of domestic violence experienced by the respondents, statistics gathered in Table 6 indicate that 115 (77.7%) of respondents were exposed to physical violence, 25 (16.9%) said they were exposed to sexual violence, whilst 8 (5.4%) revealed they were exposed to psychological/emotional violence. This means that the majority of respondents have been exposed to physical violence.

**Table 6: Types of Domestic Violence Exposed**

Frequency	Percentage	
Physical	115	77.7
Sexual	25	16.9
Psychological/Emotion	8	5.4
Total	148	100.0

For some of the women, it was a combination of these types of domestic violence. This was revealed during the in-depth interview. A participant summed it up as thus:

In my marriage, my husband and family subjected me to different forms of violence. Look, the least thing I did wrong attracted a slap from that man (referring to the former husband). After beating me, he does not allow me to sleep at night. He always forced me to have sex with him. There will be trouble for me if I resist.

The participant added:

The worst part is that some family members of the man (referring to the former husband) always insulted me that I am a barren woman. This made me cry all the time. It's a memory I don't like to recall.

The high rate of physical violence suffered by other women and the respondents fall within the context of a report written by Action Aid Ghana (2007). It was indicated in the said report that physical violence was predominant in Northern Ghana.

With this level of violence experienced by the respondents, it became necessary to understand the circumstances under which these women were subjected to violent attacks. Table 7 shows that 45.8% of the respondents said they experienced violence anytime there was misunderstanding or disagreement, 27.7% of the respondents said whenever sex was denied,

13.3% said whenever the husband was under the effect of alcohol, 11.4% said whenever the husband was under stress, whilst 1.8% said whenever meals were delayed.

**Table 7: Circumstances that lead to Violent Attack**

Frequency	Percentage	
Whenever there is a misunderstanding/disagreement	76	45.8
Whenever meals are delayed	31.8	
Whenever he is denied sex	46	27.7
When he is under stress	19	11.4
Whenever he is under the effect of alcohol	22	13.3
Total	166	100.0

After descriptively analyzing the data, we went ahead to compute for  $X^2$  to determine the relationship between misunderstanding and violent attack. The data shows that  $X^2$  is 8.176 with a  $p$ -value of .010 at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 8). This shows a significant relationship between misunderstanding and physical violence. Implying that misunderstanding between a husband and wife exposed the wife to a violent attack.

**Table 8: Misunderstanding and Violent Behaviour**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (1-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	8.176	1	.010		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	6.316	1	.011		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	7.230	1	.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.010	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	6.991	1	.012		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	76				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.23.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The same analysis was computed for sex denial and physical violence. The computed  $X^2$  is 5.121 with a  $p$ -value of .000 at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 9). This shows a significant relationship between the denial of sex and physical violence.

**Table 9: Sex Denial and Physical Violence**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (1- sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	5.121	1	.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	3.334	1	.016		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	4.211	1	.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.013	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	4.684	1	.012		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	46				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.14.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The circumstances of misunderstanding and denial of sex leading to violent attacks were confirmed by two participants. One of the participants said:

You dare not disagree with him. He will slap you in the face or use anything he finds to hit you.

The other participant added:

You know, it is more like a crime to deny your husband sex. There was a time I was sick so I resisted his advances. He gave me a blow on the bed. I wept that night till the following morning.

Hossain et al. (2021) and Silove (2017) shared that stressful experiences easily brought about misunderstandings between spouses that ended up in violent conduct. Bevens (2019) also implicitly pointed out the relationship between sex denial and violent behaviour.

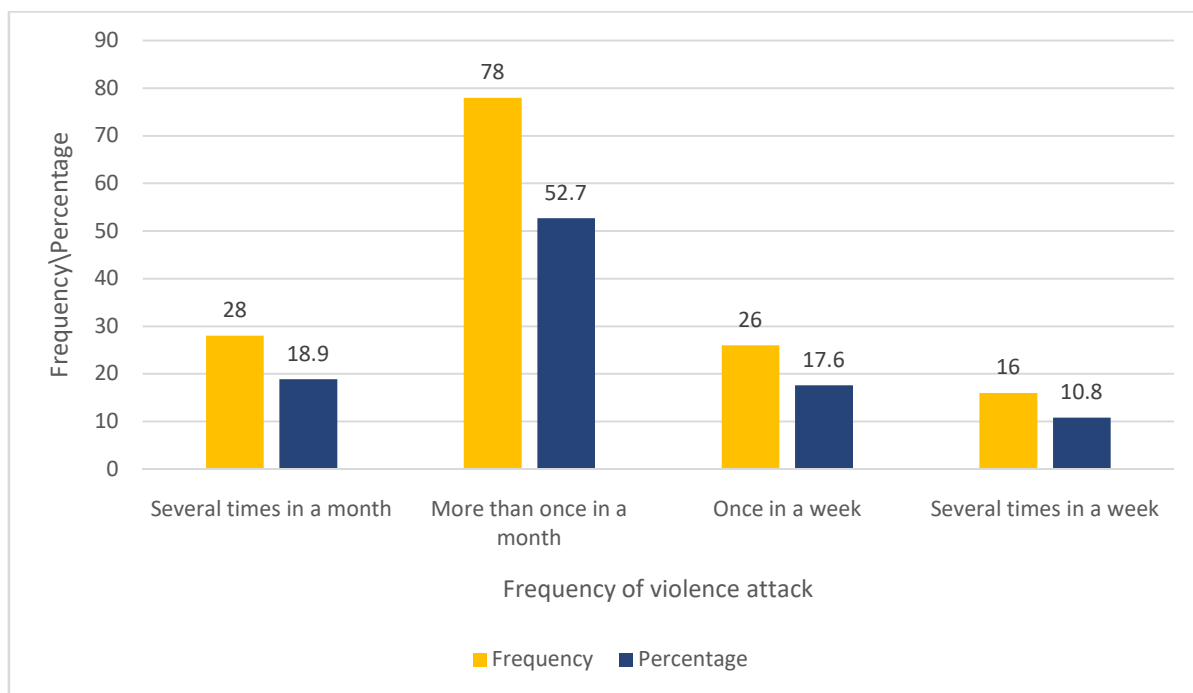
Probing the resultant consequences of misunderstanding, denial of sex, delay in serving meals, and when a spouse was under stress and effect of alcohol, Table 10 shows that 102 (68.9%) of the respondents said they were beaten by their spouse, 14.9% said they were refused housekeeping money, 12.2% said that they were not spoken to by their spouse, whilst 4% said they were sent back to their family or parents.

**Table 10:Consequences**

	Frequency	Percentage
Partner beats me	10268.9	
Refuses to provide housekeeping money	2214.9	
Does not speak to me	18	12.2
Sends me back to my parent/family	64.0	
Total	148100	

All these culminated in physical, emotional, and economic violence. In these patriarchal communities, aggressive masculine tendencies were seen as part of men asserting traditional power. In the context of the culture, women's agency is subverted. Many women are locked in such abusive relationships because through their socialization, they have internalized the belief that it is better to be in abusive marital relations than to live a life as an unmarried and childless woman. To this extent, these communities are in sorely need of civic education in healthy gender relations. The starting point should be in the elementary schools.

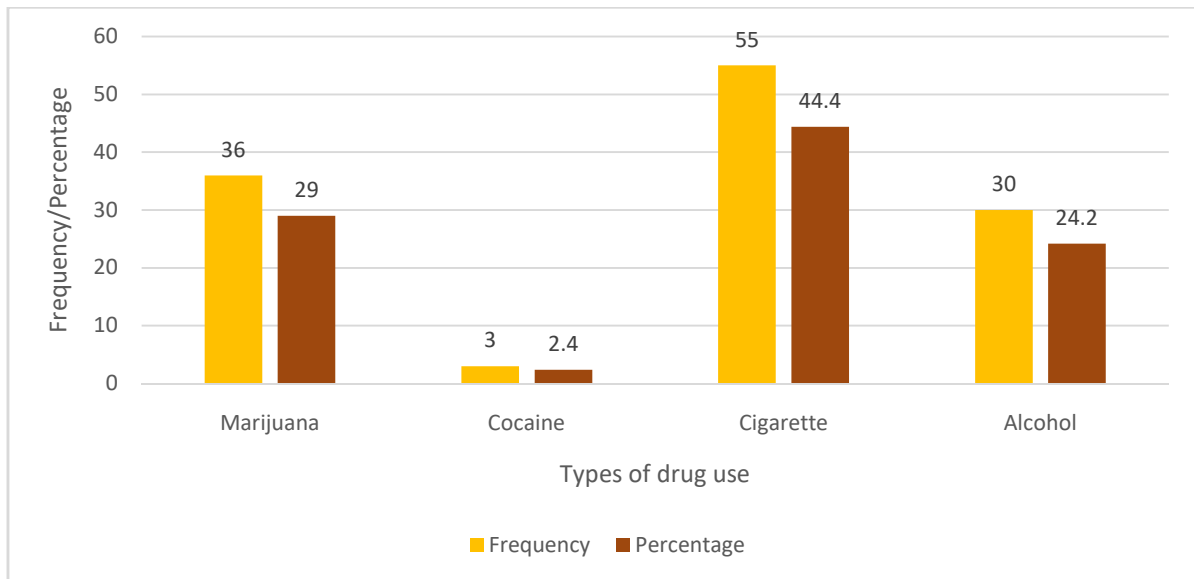
After establishing the evidence of violence, we went further to ask respondents about the frequency of such violent attacks. Figure 6 shows that 78 (52.7%) of the respondents said more than once in a month, 28 (18.9%) said several times in a month, 26 (17.6%) said once in a week, whilst 16 (10.8%) said several times in a week.



**Figure 5: Frequency of violent attack**

The respondents were asked if their spouses ever forced them to perform any sexual act. The data gathered shows that 141 (84.9%) of the respondents said no whilst 25 (15.1%) said yes. The data implies that even though some respondents were forced to perform sexual acts, they did not constitute the majority. Even though few, we were interested in knowing the kind of sexual acts these respondents were subjected to. It was revealed that 19 (76%) were forced to have anal sex whilst 6 (24%) were also forced to engage in oral sex.

In trying to understand what might have led to violent acts against these women, the respondents were asked if their spouses were on drugs. The data shows that 124 (74.7%) of the respondents were in the affirmative whilst 42 (25.3%) said their husbands were not into drugs. The respondents who said their husbands were into drugs did indicate the types of drugs as follows: 55 (44.4%) said cigarette, 36 (29%) said marijuana, 30 (24.2%) said alcohol, and 3 (2.4%) said cocaine (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Type of drugs**

In respect of the number of times the respondents suspected the use of drugs by their husband, Table 11 shows that 81 (65.4%) of the respondents shared that their spouses used alcohol/drugs every day, 37 (29.8%) said their husbands used drugs/alcohol 1-2 times a week, whilst 6 (4.8%) said that their husbands used alcohol/drugs 2-3 times a week. The data implies that the spouses of the respondents used drugs frequently.

**Table 11: Frequency of Alcohol and/or Drug use by Spouse**

Frequency	Percentage	
Everyday	81	65.4
2-3 times a week	6	4.8
1-2 times a week	37	29.8
Total	124	100.0

The study sought to understand if the use of drugs had an influence on violence meted out to the respondents. The survey data showed that 83 (66.9%) of the respondent said the use of drugs by their spouse influenced their violent attitudes whilst 41 (33.1%) said it did not influence their violent behavior. The data infers that the use of drugs/alcohol impacted violent behavior. Table 12 shows that the computed  $X^2$  statistic is 7.612 with a  $p$ -value of .010 at an

alpha level of .05. This shows that the relationship between drug/alcohol use and violent behaviour is significant. Implying that drug/alcohol use triggers violent behaviour against women.

**Table 12: Drug/Alcohol use does not lead to Violent Behaviour**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (1- sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	7.612	1	.010		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.631	1	.026		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	8.023	1	.008		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.014	.012
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.894	1	.011		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	124				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.45.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The effect of alcohol and drug usage on gender violence has been established by Gelles and Strauss (1979). Gelles and Strauss (ibid) found that men who get drunk exposed their partners to physical violence. Hamilton and Collins (1981), Cervantes (1992), and Phorano et al. (2005) also found a direct correlation between alcohol consumption/drug use and violent behaviour.

### 5.1 Witchcraft Allegations and Violent Behaviours

This section also deals with why the respondents were accused of witchcraft, and the actions meted out against them. The respondents were asked to indicate the basis upon which others were accused of witchcraft. The data shows that 71 (42.8%) of respondents said they were seen in dreams attempting to kill their accusers, 29 (17.5%) said a relative/husband was seriously sick, 24 (14.5%) said anytime they gave birth the child died, 23 (13.9%) said a relative died, 12 (7.2%) said they were labeled by the fetish priest as witches, 4 (2.4%) said their rivals died, whilst 3 (1.8%) said they inherited their husbands' properties (see Table 13). This shows that the majority of respondents were accused of witchcraft based on dreams.

**Table 13: Basis of Witchcraft Allegation**

	Frequency	Percentage
Any time I give birth the child dies	24	14.5
A relative died	23	13.9
I inherited my husband's property	3	1.8
A fetish priest labeled me as such	12	7.2
A relative/husband was seriously sick	29	17.5
My husband's wife died	4	2.4
They dreamt about me attempting to kill them	71	42.8
Total	166	100

These findings corroborate with that of Action-Aid Ghana (2012). The organization's report on witchcraft allegations in Ghana revealed that a woman may be alleged as a witch due to the incidents of death of someone, upon a prolonged illness of a husband, miscarriage or death of a cattle, and (or) the collapse of a husband's business.

The test statistic for dreams and witchcraft allegations shows that  $X^2 = 17.246$  with a  $p$ -value of .000 at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 14). This implies that the relationship between dream and witchcraft allegations is significant. The data implies that dreams are associated with witchcraft allegations.

**Table 14: DreamsandWitchcraft Allegations**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (2- sided)	Exact Significance (1- sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	17.246	1	.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	6.332	1	.028		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	9.112	1	.012		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.011	.010
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.994	1	.011		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	71				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.87.  
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The findings in the survey research were corroborated by the qualitative interviews. The participants said:

My rival said that I was about to kill her in a dream. She then accused me of witchcraft. Unfortunately, my husband supported her and I was reported to the chief of the town.

Another participant made a similar assertion during the FGD:

I was accused of witchcraft because my husband said I nearly killed him in a dream.

This was confirmed by the camp manager who said:

Someone was accused of witchcraft because she was seen in another person's dream. When I heard about this, we followed up to the village to speak with the chief but the chief refused to accept my explanations for dreams. I even asked the chief what if someone accuses him of the same issue. The chief got angry and I was nearly beaten by the youth in that community.

Whilst some participants talked about dreams, others also talked about sickness and death in the family. A participant said:

I was accused of witchcraft because my husband died. People pointed fingers at me saying I was responsible for his death.

It was revealed by another participant that:

...Anytime someone died prematurely it was attributed to me.

This finding associated with dreams as the basis of witchcraft allegations is similar to that of Pierre (2018), Miller (1986), and NCCE (2010). These research outputs showed that elderly women were accused of witchcraft because others claimed to have seen them in their dreams planning evil or attacking them.

Interpreting one's action in a dream as being a witch is quite stressful. The science of this understanding is hard to comprehend and dangerous for social solidarity and survival. How can a person's dream be the basis of witchcraft allegation? And why should women be the target? How can sicknesses caused by pathogens or viruses be attributed to witchcraft? This is a clear case of displacement and frustration.

Knowing the reasons for these accusations, it was important to find out how such allegations were established. The survey results showed that 152 (91.6%) of respondents said it was determined by the chief priest whilst 14 (8.4%) said they didn't know. The data suggest that a greater percentage of the sampled respondents were aware that it was the chief priest who used his spiritual power or knowledge to determine whether they were witches or not.

In an attempt to establish the role of the chief priest, it was said by the chief priest as thus:

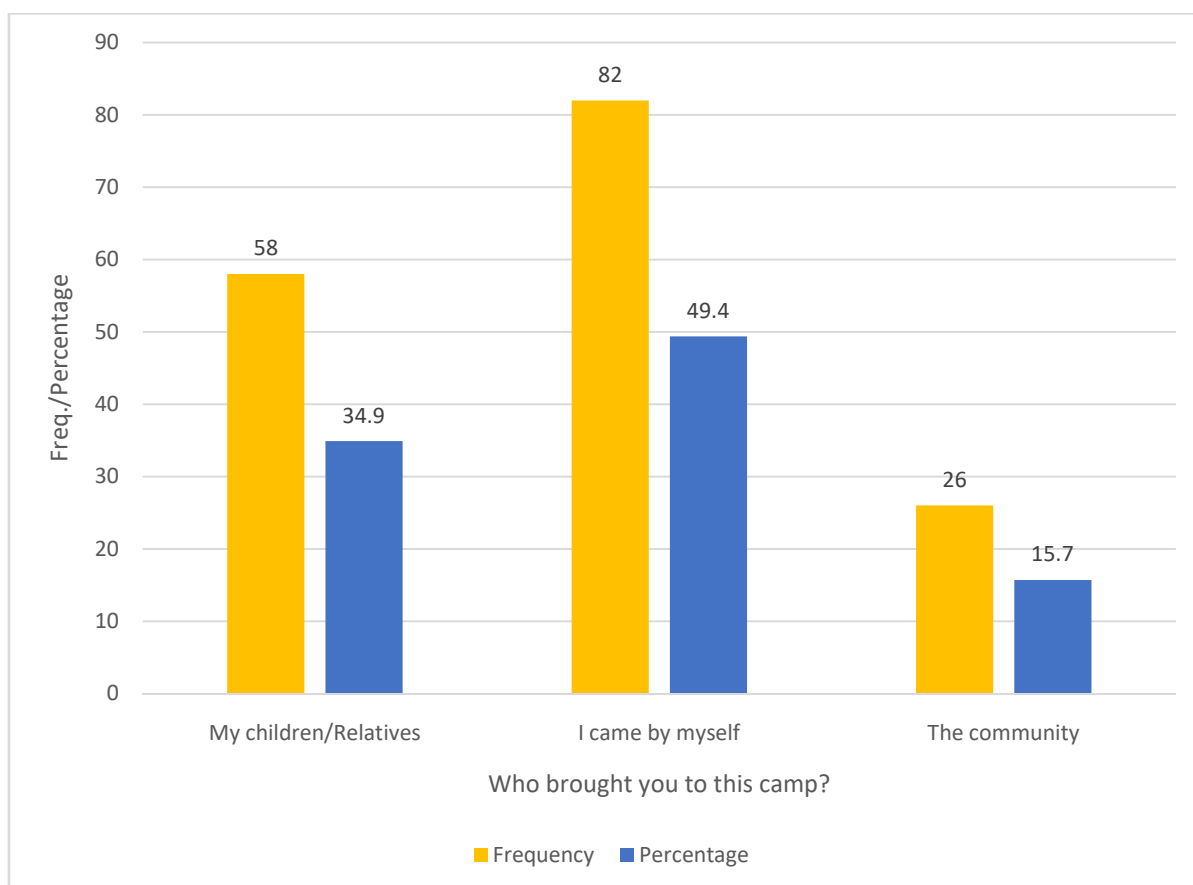
When people are accused of witchcraft they are brought here. I slaughter a fowl and allow it to die whilst we are all observing. The death position of the fowl, as decided by the accusers and the accused, determines whether the person is a witch or not.

We were also interested in what influenced the respondent's decision and the choice of camp. As a result, we asked them to explain why they came to their respective camps. The data from the sampled respondents showed that 131 (78.9%) said the camp was safe whilst 35 (21.1%) said the camp was the closest to them. For how they knew of the existence of such camps, 38.8% said they knew it from childhood, 34.3% said they had such knowledge from relatives, whilst 27.1% said they heard it on the radio. The respondents said they knew this camp from childhood, radio, and from relatives (See Table 15). From the data, only a small percentage heard about the camp from the radio. This means that the belief in witchcraft and its related activities were endemic in most societies in Northern Ghana.

**Table 15: Respondent's Source of Knowledge of the Camp**

Frequency	Percentage
From childhood	6438.8
I heard about it on radio	4527.1
I heard it from relatives	5734.3
Total	166100.0

Figure 7 shows how the respondents got to the camp. The data shows that 82 (49.4%) of the respondents came to the camp unaccompanied, 58 (34.9%) were brought to the camp by relatives, whilst 26 (15.7%) said it was the community members that brought them to the camp.



**Figure 7: Means of coming to the camp**

Concerning whose suggestion the respondents came to the camp, 73 (44%) said it was based on their children's recommendation, 64 (38.6%) said some community members, 21 (12.7%) said the chief, whilst 8 (4.8%) said the police suggested the witch camp (see Table 16).

**Table 16: At whose suggestion did you come to this camp?**

	Frequency	Percentage
Children/Relative	73	44.0
Some community member	64	38.6
The Police	8	4.8
The Chief	21	12.7
Total	166	100.0

The respondents were asked what happened to them after they were accused of witchcraft. The data shows that 79 (47.6%) were beaten up, 43.4% were cast out/banished from the

town, 9 (5.4%) said they were tied with a rope, whilst 6 (3.6%) said they were not beaten by anyone. The data shows that most of these women were physically abused by their accusers (see Table 17). Though in the minority, not all alleged witches were beaten.

**Table 17: Attacks meted out after Witchcraft Allegation**

	Frequency	Percentage
Beaten up	79	47.6
Tied with a rope	9	5.4
Cast out/Banished from the town	72	43.4
I was not beaten	6	3.6
Total	166	100.0

After the descriptive analysis, we aimed to compute the  $X^2$  statistic. Table 1 shows that the computed  $X^2$  statistic is 10.724 with a  $p$ -value of .000 at an alpha level of .05 (see Table 18). This shows that the relationship between witchcraft allegations and violent behaviour is significant.

**Table18: Witchcraft Accusations and Violent Behaviour**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (1-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	10.724	1	.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	6.331	1	.016		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	6.111	1	.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.012	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.613	1	.013		
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	166				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.54.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The violent acts meted out to alleged witches were confirmed by participants during the qualitative interview. A participant recounted her experience during the FGD:

After I was accused of witchcraft I was beaten very well. This has affected one of my eyes even today. That is why I am putting on this spectacle.

Another participant during the FGD added:

In my case, I was tied with a rope and asked to confess. I did not confess to anything because I was innocent. The people began to use sticks to hit me. My arm got broken. My farm was destroyed and my house burnt. After all these, I was banished from the town.

It was also alluded by a participant:

They drowned me in water but later pulled me out.

Being beaten, banished, or tied with a rope may seem comforting when you hear about how others are killed or lynched: According to one of the camp managers:

Those lucky are those who manage to escape to this place. Some alleged witches are brutalized and lynched. A woman was killed at Nalerigu.

The question is, who are those engaged in these violent acts? Through the in-depth interviews, a participant revealed:

The people engaged in the violence are those who accuse us of witchcraft. It could be your child, relative, or some community members. In my case, I was beaten up by my relatives and some members of the community. It was by the order of the chief.

The involvement of some chiefs in such violent acts was confirmed by one of the camp managers:

Some of the Chiefs support violence against women alleged as witches. I witnessed an incident where a chief instructed his subject to physically abuse an alleged witch.

The data shows that whilst some chiefs supported alleged witches by advising them to run to a witch camp for safety, others did the flip of it. The violence suffered by these alleged witches ranges from physical attack, destruction of properties, and even death. As found by Pierre (2018), Atreya (2021), and Adinkrah (2017), women alleged as witches were tortured, tied with a rope to a tree, banished, and fed with human or animal excreta. Pierre (2018) added that whilst some women were beaten or stoned to death others were killed through a purification ritual of drinking poisonous concoctions.

Primed by illiteracy, weak knowledge of the operations of state-society, guided by their traditional and religious beliefs about evil spells, and robbed by the out-migration of their youth (human resources), the urban bias of development, and lagging human capacity development, these communities resort to blaming their misfortunes on the most vulnerable among them; the elderly.

## 6. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Every human being in this world is entitled to basic rights and freedoms (Yin et al., 2021; Atuguba et al., 2006). These rights are to be enjoyed from birth to death. Access to justice forms part of these basic human rights, and it is defined as people having the opportunity to enjoy state-sponsored welfare, health, education, safety, privacy, legal services, etc. It falls within the realm of social justice – offering people the opportunity to use public services and goods. Like any other citizen, women alleged as witches have the right to access justice; social and legal. Access to justice and right claims form a crucial part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence, for Ghana to achieve these goals, the rights of these women and their access to justice must be taken seriously.

In this study, we went further to examine the rights of these women within the context of both social and legal justice. Our respondents were asked to indicate whether they had access to justice within the context of rights. The issues encapsulated the right to food, shelter, freedom of movement, equality of rights, non-discrimination, health, privacy, and justice. It was revealed from the questionnaire data as shown in Table 19 that 38 (22.9%) of respondents said they had access to adequate food in the camp while 128 (77.1%) said having adequate food was a challenge.

It was also revealed that 127 (76.5%) of the sampled respondents said they or their relatives had access to formal education in the camp whilst 39 (23.5%) did not. In respect of health care, 146 (88%) of the sampled respondents said they had access to health care when ill whilst 20 (12%) shared a dissenting opinion. All respondents agreed that they were allowed to practice their religion of choice. In the case of adequate shelter, 48 (28.9%) agreed in the affirmative whilst 118 (71.1%) shared an opposing view. Only a few (4.8%) respondents said they were sometimes tortured (infringement of body/psychological/emotional pain) in the camp whilst 158 (95.2%) of the respondents said no. In respect of inclusion and non-discrimination, 108 (65.1%) of the respondents said they feel discriminated against whilst 58 (34.9%) said otherwise. A clear majority of 127 (76.5%) of the respondents said they were stigmatized whilst 39 (23.5%) shared an opposing view. When the issue of privacy was raised, 83 (50%) of the respondents said they had their privacy whilst the other half said that was not the case. Enquiring about the freedom of movement of the respondents, 106 (63.9%) said their movements were curtailed whilst 60 (36.1%) said their movements were not curtailed. However, the majority (89.8%) of respondents indicated they could go to the market to buy food or meat whilst 10.2% responded in the opposite. Whilst respondents claimed they could go to the market, 94% of the same sampled respondents said they could not visit their relatives. This means their freedom of movement was limited to only the camp

and the immediate communities and not to the communities of the orientation of the respondents. Even though the majority of respondents said they could not visit their relatives, 32.5% said their relatives did visit them whilst 67.5% said their relatives had not visited them.

On the same issues of rights, the majority (98.2%) of the respondents said they had equal rights as those living outside and inside the camp whilst 1.8% said no. This must be taken in context as explained in the subsequent qualitative data. Though the majority of respondents felt they had equal rights as others, 30.1% said they felt treated less of a human whereas the majority (69.9%) opposed that statement. In terms of freedom of association, 161 (97%) out of the sampled 166 said they were able to associate with other alleged witches whilst 5 (3%) said they could not. A little above half (51.8%) of the respondents said that they did not have the liberty to do things the way they want.

For the safety and security of the respondents, 161(97%) said they felt safe in the camp while 5(3%) said they did not feel safe in the camp. Despite the camp serving as a safe haven for the majority of the respondents, 84.3% considered their living standards to be inadequate even as 15.7% said it was adequate.

**Table 19: Access to Justice: Human Rights-Based Approach**

Issue	Yes	No
Do you have access to adequate food?	38(22.9%)	128(77.1%)
Are you able to go to the local market to buy produce and meat?	149(89.8%)	17(10.2%)
Do you or your relatives have access to formal education in the camp?	127(76.5%)	39(23.5%)
Do you have access to health care when ill?	146(88%)	20(12%)
Are you allowed to practice your religion of choice?	166(100%)	
Do you consider this shelter adequate?	48(28.9%)	118(71.1%)
Were you tortured when alleged as a witch?	87(52.4%)	79(47.6%)
Are you sometimes tortured (infringement of body/psychological/emotional pain) in this camp?	8(4.8%)	158(95.2%)
Do you feel you have been discriminated against?	108(65.1%)	58(34.9%)

Do you feel you have been Stigmatized?	127(76.5%)	39(23.5%)
Do you have a sense of privacy in this camp?	83(50%)	83(50%)
Do you think your freedom of movement is curtailed?	106(63.9%)	60(36.1%)
Do you think you have equal rights as others outside and inside this camp?	163(98.2%)	3(1.8%)
Are you able to associate with other alleged witches?	161(97%)	5(3%)
Are you able to visit relatives?	10(6%)	156(94%)
Have you ever been visited by relatives since you came to this camp?	54(32.5%)	112(67.5%)
Do you think you have the liberty to do things the way you want?	80(48.2%)	86(51.8%)
Do you feel safe in this camp?	161(97%)	5(3%)
Do you think you are treated less of a human being?	50(30.1%)	116(69.9%)
Would you consider your standard of living adequate?	26(15.7%)	140(84.3%)

The questions captured in Table 21 were all framed in a null hypothesis manner. The  $X^2$  statistic was computed to establish whether the framed statements were statistically significant or not. Table 20 shows that, in respect of the right to food, the relationship was not significant. This means residing in the “witch camp” denied respondents their right to adequate food. The test statistic showed that women alleged as witches could not exercise their right to freedom of movement. The relationship was significant for the women to go to the market to buy food and meat. However, the relationship was not significant for alleged witches to visit family members in their place of accusation. This means their right to freedom of movement was not totally exercised.

The test statistic for the right to health and shelter showed that the relationship was significant for access to health care but not significant for adequate shelter. This implies that alleged witches enjoyed some rights in terms of access to health care but the same cannot be said of their rights to adequate shelter. In the case of torture, that is, when alleged as a witch, the test statistic showed a significant relationship. This means alleged witches were subjected to torture which was against their right to freedom from torture. However, whether they were tortured in the witch camp, the relationship was not significant. This suggests that alleged witches were not tortured in the camp.

For discrimination, stigmatization, and freedom of association, the test statistic showed that the relationship was significant for all. This means that alleged witches were stigmatized and discriminated against, but they were able to associate with other alleged witches. Their rights to freedom from discrimination and stigmatization were trampled upon but enjoyed that of association.

**Table 20: Witchcraft Allegation, Camp Residency, and Human Rights**

<i>Right to food</i>	Value	df=1	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (1-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	3.612		.5701		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.631		.026		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	8.023		.008		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.010	.012
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.894		.016		
<i>Freedom of movement</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	4.612		.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	3.316		.022		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	5.223		.028		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.012	.012
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.894		.011		
<i>Freedom of movement (access to the local market)</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	10.212		.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.316		.026		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	6.003		.008		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.014	.012
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	4.694		.011		
<i>Freedom of movement (Visitation)</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	2.612		.510		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	1.631		.066		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	2.023		.016		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.011	.014
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	1.894		.011		
<i>Right to Health</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	9.216		.000		

<b>Continuity Correction</b>	6.136		.024		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	7.320		.018		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.011	.022
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	6.948		.013		
<i>Right to Shelter</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	4.612		.610		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	2.341		.061		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	3.012		.003		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.023	.024
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	2.467		.011		
<i>Freedom from torture (when alleged as a witch)</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	13.110		.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	7.631		.022		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	8.111		.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.012	.014
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.777		.010		
<i>Freedom from torture (within the camp)</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	2.126		.663		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	1.146		.026		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	2.023		.008		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.026	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	1.240		.027		
<i>Discrimination</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	18.013		.021		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	5.123		.029		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	8.002		.010		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.011	.023
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.949		.021		
<i>Association</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	18.921		.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	6.663		.022		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	9.902		.002		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.013	.012
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.343		.011		

<i>Safety/security</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	3.263		.611		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	1.023		.022		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	2.423		.006		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.017	.016
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.894		.011		

a.  $n = 166$

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5.

The issue of inadequate food revealed in the quantitative research was confirmed during the in-depth interview. Participants had these to say:

Feeding is a major challenge here, especially during the dry season. Most of these women are old and cannot engage in any labour. Some do go to bed without food. However, when our attention is drawn, we support with the little we have. (Camp manager 1)

Despite adequate food being a challenge in the camp, some participants used different strategies to put food on the table. It was said by a participant:

I follow the chief for harvesting his crops. He then compensates me with some of the produce.

She added:

Some of the women do farm and sell their produce.

Civil society organizations do offer support:

Some churches and NGOs also help us by bringing food during Christmas and Easter. Some have made it a point to bring us food anytime we are in the dry season.

Like many respondents agreed that their children had access to education, this was not without challenges. A participant revealed during the FGD:

Though our children go to school, some of them have no slippers or shoes, uniforms, and bags. We are doing our best but if it gets to the point we cannot afford it, they will have no option other than to drop out.

It was also observed during the data collection process that the Gnani alleged witches camp had a primary school called YESU GEESII PRIMARY SCHOOL (see Figure 8). However, this school lacked the necessary human and other material resources. For example, the school had only two teachers teaching class one to class six. It was also observed that some of these pupils had no school uniform to wear not to talk of reading and exercise books.



**Figure 8: Gnani alleged witches camp primary school**

The issue of access to health was confirmed during the interview session. A participant said:

I can access the clinic at any time during the day. The camp manager, with the help of some NGOs, does renew our health insurance cards for us.

Even though the respondents in the survey research, as well as the interview, indicated that they had access to health care, the interview also revealed as shared by a participant during the FGD:

Accessing health care is always difficult because there is no health center in the camp. In case of any emergency, the chief will have to call for a motorbike to take us to the clinic.

This means that despite these alleged witches having access to health care it was not without challenges. In the survey research, the majority disagreed that they had adequate shelter. This was also confirmed during the in-depth interview as a participant said:

The house is not in good shape. The roof leaks anytime it rains.

Moving away from shelter to discrimination, it is one thing for women alleged as witches to be stigmatized and discriminated against whilst it is another for the camp managers to be stigmatized. The camp manager stated:

Nobody calls me by my name. I am referred to as a Witch Coordinator. Our accountant and monitoring and evaluation officer (M&E) are also referred to as such.

For freedom of movement, it was confirmed by a participant. She said:

I am able to move around. I go to the market to sell and also buy foodstuff. I go to Yendi as well.

However, most of these alleged witches were unable to visit their relatives for fear of being killed. They narrated as follows:

A woman was killed when she visited her family home.

Similarly, a participant added:

If you love your life then don't try to visit your relatives at the place you were accused of witchcraft. They will certainly hurt you...

Whilst these women could not visit their relatives, some had the honour of being visited by them. A participant said:

My husband does visit me. He hardly wants to leave here because he has no problem with me.

These women alleged as witches have a sense of equal right so long as they are in unfamiliar locales where they are not known to many people, but the same cannot be said about their villages or towns of origin.

Aged women alleged as witches suffer a wide range of violations of their human rights which includes access to justice. In this study we found the following rights to be violated: the right to health, education, food, shelter, movement, freedom from torture, discrimination, stigmatization, association, liberty, and safety. Pierre (2018) also found similar violations. Needless to say, the self-worth of these women has suffered significant damage. Against this backdrop, some international conventions meant to safeguard the rights of these women have been trampled upon. In the case of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), these articles have been breached as shown in Table 21 below.

**Table 21: CEDAW: Articles in breach**

CEDAW	ARTICLE DEFINITION
<p><b>Article 2</b></p> <p>Women alleged as witches suffered discrimination. At the moment, there is no legislation criminalizing the allegations of witchcraft.</p>	<p>States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:</p> <p>(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;</p> <p>(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;</p> <p>(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;</p> <p>(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;</p> <p>(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;</p> <p>(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;</p>
<p><b>Article 3</b></p> <p>The data show that women were subjugated to men. These alleged witches did not have the opportunity to enjoy their basic rights as</p>	<p>States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the</p>

enshrined in international covenants.	exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.
<b>Article 5</b>  These alleged witches were prejudiced and experienced customary practices that made them inferior to their husbands. Their worldview was informed by their cultural practices that reinforced the patriarchal domination. The upbringing of children in these camps was problematic. Access to quality education was a serious problem.	States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;  (b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.
<b>Article 10</b>  The background of these alleged witches revealed that the education of women is still a problem in most rural communities. These women had no access to adult literacy programmes.	States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:  (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;  (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, ...
<b>Article 11</b>  These women were exploited by their husbands. They worked on the farms with their husbands but did not receive any remuneration.	States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:  (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

	(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
<b>Article 12</b>  (These women lacked access to health care in the camps)	1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, ...
<b>Article 14</b>  These are women in rural areas yet suffering discrimination in all facets of their lives.	<p>1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.</p> <p>2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:</p> <p>(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;</p> <p>(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, ...;</p> <p>(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;</p> <p>(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.</p>
<b>Article 16</b>	1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage

Some of these women were forced in marriages. Family relations were poor for these women as well. Some were not allowed to inherit their husbands' properties. Doing so would attract the label of a witch.	<p>and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:</p> <p>(a) The same right to enter into marriage;</p> <p>(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;</p> <p>(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.</p>
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For the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), these articles are in breach as shown in Table 22.

**Table 22: UDHR: Articles in breach**

UDHR	ARTICLE DEFINITION
<p><b>Article 3</b></p> <p>These alleged witches lacked the liberty to do things the way they wanted. Their presence in the camps was a violation of their liberty.</p>	<p>Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.</p>
<p><b>Article 5</b></p> <p>These alleged witches were tortured. Some were tied with ropes whilst others were physically beaten to confess.</p>	<p>No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p>
<p><b>Article 7</b></p> <p>These women were subjected to discrimination and stigmatization. They were treated less of human beings, hence cannot be considered to enjoy equality before the law.</p>	<p>All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.</p>

<p><b>Article 8</b></p> <p>These women had the right but lacked the resources and knowledge to access these state agencies.</p>	<p>Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.</p>
<p><b>Article 12</b></p> <p>These women lacked privacy as shown in the data.</p>	<p>No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.</p>
<p><b>Article 13</b></p> <p>The freedom of movement of these alleged witches was severely hindered. They could not go to their original community of orientation.</p>	<p>(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.</p>
<p><b>Article 16</b></p> <p>The families of most of these alleged witches have been torn apart as a result of witchcraft allegations and the fear of accommodating the alleged.</p>	<p>(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.</p>
<p><b>Article 20</b></p> <p>These women could associate with other alleged witches but could not do so with others, especially in the communities they were accused of.</p>	<p>(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.</p> <p>(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.</p>
<p><b>Article 21</b></p> <p>These women did not have access to the court or police station. Even accessing a health facility was a challenge.</p>	<p>(2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.</p>
<p><b>Article 23</b></p>	<p>(3) Everyone who works has the right to just</p>

<p>These women were not entitled to any remuneration upon working with their husbands on their farms.</p>	<p>and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.</p>
<p><b>Article 25</b></p> <p>The standard of living was poor for these alleged witches. Housing, food, health, etc. presented major challenges.</p>	<p>(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.</p>
<p><b>Article 26</b></p> <p>Even though the children of these alleged witches had the right to education, however, the educational infrastructure available in these camps lacked the basic things for teaching and learning.</p>	<p>(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.</p> <p>(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.</p>

Table 23 shows the articles breached in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

**Table 23: CAT: Articles in breach**

CAT	ARTICLE DEFINITION
<b>Article 2</b>  The women were subjected to torture upon being alleged as witches.	1. Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction.  2. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.  3. An order from a superior officer or a public authority may not be invoked as a justification of torture.
<b>Article 16</b>  Ghana is doing well but the practice of torture persists.	1. Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article I

These violations also undermine the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Article 12 and 14 (1) of Ghana's constitution demand from all absolute respect to uphold the fundamental human rights and freedoms as enshrined in the supreme law of the land as well as ensure that the personal liberty of the individual is protected. Unfortunately, this is hardly the case for these women accused of witchcraft, making access to justice highly problematic. Not only that but

also makes the realization of the following Sustainable Development Goals (See Table 24) yet to be fully attained, especially in rural areas.

**Table 24: SDGs yet to be attained**

<b>SDG 1</b>	<b>No Poverty</b>	
<b>SDG 2</b>	Zero Hunger	Whilst in the camps, these women suffered from hunger due to lack of food.
<b>SDG 3</b>	Good Health and Well-being	These women hardly had access to good health facilities within the camp.
<b>SDG 4</b>	Quality Education	The education of these children was in crisis in these camps.
<b>SDG 5</b>	Gender Equality	Women were still subordinated to men.
<b>SDG 10</b>	Reduce Inequalities	The gap was still widened.
<b>SDG 16</b>	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	The justice institutions were distanced away from these women making it difficult for them to access.

## 7. AVAILABLE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FRAMEWORK ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The study also investigated the support structures available to respondents in case they suffer violence. First of all, the respondents were asked if they reported the violence meted out to them by their spouse to anyone or any agency. The data shows that 106 (63.9%) did not report the incident of violence to anyone or any agency whilst 60 (36.1%) said they reported to a state agency. For the very few who reported the incidence of violence, 46 (76.7%) said they reported the issue to the chief or elders, 10 (16.6%) said to relatives, whereas 4 (6.7%) said they reported the violence to the police (See Table 25).

**Table 25: Agency/Persons reported to**

	Frequency	Percentage
Police	4	6.7
Chief/elders	46	76.7
Family/Relatives	10	16.6
Total	60	100.0

Despite some few respondents reporting their cases to the police, the test statistic shows a not significant relationship. That is, respondents did to report any violent act against them to any state agency – police, court, etc. However, the relationship was significant for reporting violent acts to their chiefs (see Table 26).

**Table 26: Access to Justice**

<i>Access to justice (Chief – internal wranglings)</i>	Value	df=1	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (2-sided)	Exact Significance (1-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	8.854		.000		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	4.342		.024		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	6.174		.008		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.013	.011
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	5.091		.019		
<i>Access to justice (Police and court)</i>					
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	4.002		.710		
<b>Continuity Correction</b>	2.361		.022		
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	3.053		.011		
<b>Fisher's Exact Test</b>				.031	.016
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	2.914		.012		

As to why the respondents chose either the police, chief/elders, or relatives, the respondents who chose to report the violent act to the chief/elders said the chief controlled everything and could counsel them, those who reported the case to the police said the community members

feared them, whilst those who reported the case to relatives said it was only family members who could discuss their issues. During the FGD, a participant explained why she preferred to report to the chief:

The people listen to the chief than anyone. For us, the chief is our police and court.

Explaining why the participants preferred not to involve the police, one of the camp managers narrated:

Involving the police can be dangerous in such matters because the police use force instead of adopting a more preferred cultural strategy. Using the police could lead to silent or secret killings. Don't forget that there are no police stations in most of these towns.

For those who did not report the matter to the police, Table 27 shows 52.8% of the sampled respondents said they kept themselves indoors for some time, 28.3% said they did what their spouse asked them to do, 16.1% of the sampled respondents later apologized to their spouse, whereas 2.8% said they compensated their spouse with either their labour or money or livestock. The data implies that the majority of those who did not report kept silent about it and remained indoors.

**Table 27: Alternate Reactions to the Violence**

	Frequency	Percentage
I keep myself indoors for some time	56	52.8
I do what he wants me to do	30	28.3
I compensate him with my labor/money/livestock	3	2.8
I apologize to him	17	16.1
Total	106	100.0

This one-dimensional approach to addressing marital discord points to one fact; the infallibility of the husbands and total subordination of wives. In the absence or lack of access to a dependable justice system and policing, the shrine priest and the chief are in effect the agent of social control. The rational-legal state is so distant to these communities, to the extent that their fallbacks are the customary practices they have ever known.

## 8.ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Here, we sought to understand from respondents the cultural values associated with accepted family behaviours that impede access to justice. Table 28 shows that 84.9% of respondents agreed a good wife must obey the husband at all times while 15.1% disagreed. This cultural value of respecting the husband at all times limits how women express themselves even when violated. Row two shows that 83.7% of the respondents agreed to the statement that problems associated with the family should only be discussed with family members whilst 16.3% disagreed with that. The understanding that the man is the boss of the house also received 94.6% endorsement whilst 5.4% shared a dissenting view. Again, 90.4% of the respondents agreed that choosing a friend needs the approval of a husband whilst 9.6% disagreed. The statement that a wife should have sex with the husband even if she disagrees with him received a majority endorsement of 78.9% whilst 21.1% disagreed.

**Table 28: Socio-cultural Values**

Item	Agree	Disagree
A good wife must obey the husband at all times	141 (84.9%)	25 (15.1%)
Problems associated with the family should only be discussed with family members	139 (83.7%)	27 (16.3%)
The man is the boss of the house	157 (94.6%)	9 (5.4%)
Choosing a friend needs the approval of my husband	150 (90.4%)	16 (9.6%)
A wife should have sex with the husband even if she disagrees	131 (78.9%)	35 (21.1%)

This data demonstrates a clear social relation of power that relies on a crude form of oppression. The patriarchal culture is seen as one of the biggest barriers to accessing justice. Violence is interpreted as a confidential issue that only needs the family to address. Deductively, lack of education forms the basis of patriarchal dominance(Sikweyiya, 2020).

This also means that many women suffer different forms of violations yet accept it as normal based on their cultural interpretations of what is considered acceptable behaviours. All these, together with the alternate reactions of respondents (that is, what they do after refusing to report), constitute the socio-cultural constraints that determine whether a woman will access justice or not. It also shows a deeply entrenched patriarchal system that forbids women from

reporting their husbands to outsiders, not to talk of the police and court. Any attempt to act outside these values will attract communal reprisal.

## 9.RELEVANCE OF THE CAMP

The relevance of the alleged “witch camp” is already evident in the quantitative data. The respondents agreed to their safety in the camp, as well as not being discriminated against and stigmatized. The relevance was also established in the kinds of support (food, shelter, etc.) the respondents received. All these were supported during the in-depth interview. A participant stated:

The camp is the safest place to run to after being accused of witchcraft.

It was said by another participant:

Without this camp, some of us would have been lynched or died of hunger. The camp itself and the chief priest guarantee our safety.

Chiming in, a participant said during the FGD:

I am here because I want to live long. I don't want anyone to shorten my life.

Despite the camp is being seen as a safe haven, a participant admitted that it was not the best of places to stay:

Staying here without your family and some childhood friends can be emotionally draining. To say, the camp is not the best of places to stay, but I don't have any option.

It appears the camps are the lesser of two evils: criminal lynch mobs, and the austere safe compound. Hence, some of these alleged witches have resigned to their fate as outcasts in the camps.

The emotional challenges faced by these alleged witches are noted, however, there are some other problems facing the camps as hinted by the chief of the Gnani camp. The chief priest said:

We have access to a mechanized borehole water through the benevolence of Australian AID and Action-aid but the population in this camp outnumbers the quantity of water available. We have another well that is a little away from this place however it is not mechanized. This makes the aged women unable to draw water.

The borehole referred to by the chief priest was easily visible at the Gnani alleged witches camp. Figure 9 shows the structure that stores and supplies water to the tap.



**Figure 9: Borehole at Gnani alleged witch camp**

The challenges faced were also reiterated by the leader of the alleged witches camp:

Our houses have no access to electricity and water. Our toilet facilities, though improved, is not adequate.

The data implies that the camp serves an important function to these women alleged as witches. Without it, life will be dreary. Yet, it is without challenges.

With these revelations on the fear of these alleged witches returning to their original homes, our inquiry reveals the existence of a reintegration committee mandated to facilitate the reintegration process of these women alleged as witches. Unfortunately, the activities of this committee have been brought to a halt due to financial and logistical challenges.

## 10. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Most of these women are the very elderly, widowed, illiterate, and with poor socio-economic status.
- Most women suffered physical, sexual, and psychological violence.
- Poverty, misunderstanding, and denial of sex formed the basis of VAW.
- Women whose husbands were on drugs suffered more violent attacks.
- These violent attacks on women occurred more than once a month.
- Dreams, sickness, and death formed the main basis of witchcraft allegations.
- The chief priest through ritual performance determined the guilt of an alleged witch.
- Alleged witches were subjected to physical violence.
- Alleged witches did not have access to adequate food
- Though alleged witches had the right to freedom of movement, this right was limited to within the camp and nearby localities but not to their communities of orientation.
- Their right to health care was curtailed due to the lack of health facilities within the camp.

- The bedding and living spaces for these alleged witches were in deplorable states.
- After witchcraft allegations, alleged witches were subjected to torture.
- Alleged witches were not tortured whilst in the camp.
- Alleged witches suffered discrimination and stigmatization.
- Alleged witches were able to associate with other alleged witches and some community members near the camp.
- Children of alleged witches had access to education but lacked the basic items to aid their learning.
- Most of these women did not report the violent acts against them to anyone.
- Some of the chiefs were part of the violent mob.
- Alleged witches preferred reporting violence against them to the chiefs and relatives.
- The police or state agencies were less preferred by these women as means of accessing justice.
- Most of these women were boxed in their cultural worldview of the family.
- The camps were not ideal places for human habitation.
- Despite the campshaving challenges, they were the safest places for women alleged as witches.
- The reintegration committee was saddled with financial and logistical challenges.
- Though the camps served as a safe haven for the alleged witches, there was evidence of human rights violations and needed to be closed.

## 11.CONCLUSION

It is evident that one's socio-economic background (elderly, widowed, illiterate - no formal schooling) correlates with whether the person will be tagged as a witch or not. Such allegations are also entrenched in the patriarchal system that subjugates women. The world views of these women, which are also embedded in the patriarchal order, add to their woes.

These alleged witches suffered different forms of violence. These forms of violence ranged from physical attacks to sexual and emotional abuses. Hardly were most of these incidents reported to the responsible state agencies. Whilst some chiefs were preferred as social control agents others were as guilty as those who carried out the violent acts.

Whilst these women claim to enjoy certain rights, it was at the minimum level. The maximum enjoyment of such rights was at unfamiliar locations. That is, places where they are not known to people as alleged witches, but the same cannot be said about their own villages or towns of origin.

There are documented cases of women accused of being witches having their rights violated. These transgressions jeopardize international treaties on human rights and access to justice. Obviously from the data, the SDGs have yet to be fully realized, particularly in rural areas.

The camps may not represent the best of places with good housing facilities, however, at present it serves as a safe haven for alleged witches. A concerted political initiative, legislation and rigorous enforcement of the law, and punishing those violating the rights of others is warranted. Until then, the relevance of the camp cannot be understated.

## 12.RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Short-term recommendations*

- The Government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Service (GES) must make a deliberate effort to invest in the education of children alleged as witches.
- The Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) should establish payment schemes to encourage people to report cases of violence against women to the police.
- There is the need for Ghana Health Service (GHS) to make a deliberate effort to establish CHIP compounds to facilitate access to health care within the camps.
- The state agencies (GPS, CHRAJ, NCCE) should liaise with the chiefs to establish a reporting pattern to promote access to justice.

#### *Long-term recommendations*

- There is the need for the Ghana Police Service (GPS) to establish police visibility through the building of police report centers in communities where such allegations are rampant.
- There is the need for National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to organize education campaigns in communities where these allegations are rampant. This will serve as a desocialization tool – de-internalize repressive cultural values.
- The Government of Ghana through the GES must introduce and/or intensify civic education in healthy gender relations in basic schools.
- There is the need for a further study to unravel the full effects of the phenomenon of witchcraft on the children of women living in the witch camps.
- With the institution of a reintegration committee, there is the need for improved reintegration programmes as well as funding support to help reunite and resettle women alleged as witches in their original communities.

- As a matter of urgency, the parliament of Ghana is required to speed up the passage of the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill 2021 that aims at criminalizing the allegation of witchcraft as well as the rigorous enforcement of that legislation.
- For proven breaches of human rights and access to justice, the CHRAJ should take the necessary steps towards ensuring that the camps are closed.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Questionnaire

**Dear Respondent,** this study aims to investigate the key factors contributing to the occurrence of violence against women accused of witchcraft, gather relevant data on the occurrence of human rights abuses, finally map out available institutional support framework on access to justice for women and children experiencing or at risk of allegations of witchcraft and other forms of GBV.

Please, tick the appropriate box or provide the information in the spaces provided. Your responses will be treated as confidential and used only for research purposes. Your identity is not required. Hence, respond to the items as *truthfully* as possible.

#### Demographics

1. Sex
  - a) Male [   ]
  - b) Female [   ]
  
2. Age
  - a) 18 – 24 [   ]
  - b) 25 – 31 [   ]
  - c) 32 – 38 [   ]
  - d) 39 – 45 [   ]
  - e) 46 – 52 [   ]
  - f) 53 – 59 [   ]
  - g) 60+ [   ]
  
3. Marital Status
  - a) Married [   ]
  - b) Consensual Union/ Partners [   ]
  - c) Separated [   ]
  - d) Divorced [   ]
  - e) Widowed [   ]
  - f) Never married [   ]
  
4. Number of Children
  - a) No child [   ]
  - b) 1 – 3 children [   ]
  - c) 4 – 6 [   ]
  - d) 7+ [   ]

5. Religion
  - a) Christian
  - b) Muslim
  - c) Traditionalist
  - d) Other(s).....
6. Educational background
  - a) No Schooling (Formal Education) [   ]
  - b) Primary [   ]
  - c) JHS/JSS/Middle School [   ]
  - d) SHS [   ]
  - e) Vocational/Technical [   ]
  - f) Tertiary [   ]
7. Employment before the allegation of witchcraft.....
8. Any employable skill? .....
9. What year did you arrive at this camp? .....

#### **Family and Acceptable Behaviour**

10. A good wife must obey the husband at all times
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]
  - c. Don't know [   ]
11. Problems associated with the family should only be discussed with family members
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]
  - c. Don't know [   ]
12. The man is the boss of the house
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]
  - c. Don't know [   ]
13. Choosing a friend needs the approval of my husband
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]
  - c. Don't know [   ]
14. A wife should have sex with the husband even if she disagrees
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]
  - c. Don't know [   ]
15. Outsiders should not intervene when my husband is mistreating me
  - a. Agree [   ]
  - b. Disagree [   ]

c. Don't know [ ]

**Factors contributing to Violence Against Women (VAW)**

16. What does violence against women mean to you?

.....  
.....

17. Are you aware of any cause of violence against women in your community?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

18. Do you know any woman who is/has been abused by her spouse?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

19. What types of violence against women have you observed in your village/Town?

Physical [ ]

Sexual [ ]

Psychological/Emotional [ ]

Others (specify) .....

20. What do you think are some of the causes of violence against women? (Choose applicable responses)

Poverty or financial distress [ ]

Forced marriage [ ]

Unfaithfulness [ ]

Effect of Alcohol/drugs [ ]

When sex is denied by spouse [ ]

Others .....

21. Please choose the response(s) that applies to your relationship with your spouse?

He is/was jealous or angry if you talk /talked to other men [ ]

He frequently accuses/accused you of being unfaithful [ ]

He does/did not permit you to meet your female friends [ ]

He does/did not permit you to meet your male friends [ ]

Tries/tried to limit your contact with your family [ ]

He insists/insisted on knowing your whereabouts often [ ]

He does/did not trust you with money [ ]

22. Have you ever experienced any kind of violence in your marriage?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

If yes, complete questions 23-34

23. Which type of domestic violence were you exposed to?  
 Physical ☐  
 Sexual ☐  
 Psychological/Emotional ☐  
 Others (specify) .....
24. Under what circumstances were you subjected to violent attack?  
 Whenever there is a misunderstanding/disagreement ☐  
 Whenever meals are delayed ☐  
 Whenever he is under the effect of alcohol ☐  
 Whenever he is denied sex ☐  
 When he is under stress ☐  
 If other, please specify .....
25. What happens after any of the selected statements in Q22?  
 Partner beats me ☐  
 Refuses to provide housekeeping money ☐  
 Does not speak to me ☐  
 Sends me to my parents/family ☐  
 Others (specify).....
26. Did your spouse ever do any of the following things to you? **Push you, beat you up or throw things at you?**  
 Yes ☐  
 No ☐
27. If yes, how frequent?  
 Several times a week ☐  
 Once in a week ☐  
 Several times in a month ☐  
 Once in a month ☐  
 More than once a month ☐
28. Did your spouse force you to perform any sexual acts you did not want to do?  
 Yes ☐  
 No ☐
29. If yes, what kind of sexual act did he force you to do?  
 .....
30. If yes to question (26), how frequent?  
 Several times a week ☐  
 Once in a week ☐

Several times in a month [ ]

Once in a month [ ]

More than once a month [ ]

31. Is your husband into drugs and/or alcohol?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

32. If yes, what drug did you suspect he takes?

Marijuana

Cocaine

Cigarette

If other(s), please specify.....

33. How many times did your spouse use alcohol and/or drugs?

Every day [ ]

2-3 times a week [ ]

1-2 times a week [ ]

More than once in 2 weeks [ ]

Never [ ]

34. Did you experience violence any time your partner is on drugs?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

**Now, please try to remember the rumors or things you heard people say about why you might be a witch.**

35. Which of the following things did you hear people say?

Any time I give birth the child dies [ ]

A relative died [ ]

I inherited my husband's properties [ ]

A fetish priest labeled me as such [ ]

My husband's business collapsed [ ]

A relative/husband is seriously sick [ ]

My husband's wife died [ ]

If other(s), please specify .....

36. By what spiritual powers or knowledge did they conclude that you might be a witch?

.....  
.....

37. Why did you come to this camp?

.....  
.....

38. How did you know about this camp?

.....

39. Who brought you to this camp?

.....

40. At whose suggestion did you come to this camp?

.....

41. How were you treated after being accused of witchcraft? (Choose the applicable responses)

Beaten up [ ] By who?

.....

Tied with a rope [ ] By who?

.....

Cast out/Banished from the town [ ] By who?

.....

### Human rights abuses against alleged witches

42.

Issue	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
Do you have access to adequate food?				
Are you able to go to the local market to buy produce and meat?				
Do you or your relatives have access to formal education in the camp?				
Do you have access to health care when ill?				
Are you allowed to practice your religion of choice?				
Do you consider this shelter adequate?				
Were you tortured when alleged as a witch?				
Are you sometimes tortured				

<b>(infringement of body/psychological/emotional pain) in this camp?</b>				
<b>Do you feel you have been discriminated against?</b>				
<b>Do you feel you have been Stigmatized?</b>				
<b>Do you have a sense of privacy in this camp?</b>				
<b>Do you think your freedom of movement is curtailed?</b>				
<b>Do you think you have equal rights as others outside and inside this camp?</b>				
<b>Are you able to associate with other alleged witched?</b>				
<b>Are you able to visit relatives?</b>				
<b>Have you ever been visited by relatives since you came to this camp?</b>				
<b>Do you think you have the liberty to do things the way you want?</b>				
<b>Do you feel safe in this camp?</b>				
<b>Do you think you are treated less of a human being?</b>				
<b>Would you consider your standard of living adequate?</b>				

**Available institutional support framework on access to justice for women and children experiencing or at risk of allegations of witchcraft and other forms of GBV**

43. Do you report the violence meted out to you by your spouse to anyone/any agency?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

44. If yes, whom do you report to?

Police [ ]

Chief/elders [ ]

Family/Relatives [ ]

Friends [ ]

Church leaders [ ]  
Others (specify).....

45. Why the option in question 44? .....

46. If no to question (43), what do you do after the violent act?

I keep myself indoors for some time [ ]

I do what he wants me to do [ ]

I compensate him with my labour/money/livestock [ ]

I apologize to him [ ]

I refuse sex from my spouse [ ]

Others (specify).....

47. What do you do when you are sick in this camp?

.....

48. What do you do when someone tortures/infringes pain on your body?

.....

.....

49. How do children in this camp access formal education?

.....

50. How do children in this camp access health care?

.....

51. What other forms of support are available for you when you experience violence?

.....

52. Have you had some people other than your relatives come to visit you in this camp?

.....

53. What did they say to you?

.....

.....

54. What did they do for you?

.....

.....

55. What do you think should be done for you?

.....

.....

56. What are the cultural constraints that limit you in accessing justice?

.....  
.....

57. What do you think can be done to deal with these cultural/social constraints?

.....  
.....

## Appendix B - Interview Guide For Alleged Witches

### SECTION A: General information

Date: .....

Time commenced: .....

Interview location: .....

Language used: .....

Interview Code Number: .....

Interviewer: .....

Time ended: .....

### SECTION B: Demographic information

Gender.....

Age.....

Religious affiliation.....

Marital Status.....

Number of Children.....

Employment.....

### SECTION C: VAW, Human Rights abuses, and Institutional Support

1. Why are you in this place (witch camp)? Probe
2. On what basis were you accused of witchcraft? Probe
3. What do you think makes people accuse others of witchcraft? Probe
4. What happened to you when you were accused of witchcraft? Probe
5. What were the reactions of community members? Probe

6. How will you describe the situation in this camp? Bedding, feeding, health, education, etc. Probe (This should focus on right claims)
7. How has your family reacted to you since you were brought to this camp (have they come to visit, did they bring food, clothes, spend time with you)? Probe
8. What support do you receive in this camp? (NGOs, Religious organisations, the state, traditional authorities, a parliamentarian/politician, the Imam/clergy, etc. Probe
9. How would you describe the relevance of this camp? (Where would you rather be if you had the choice? Explain why?) Probe further to find out if they want to exit or remain in the camp.
10. In accessing justice, what are the socio-cultural constraints you encounter? Probe
11. Is there any question that you want to address that we did not ask you? What do you want all concerned people to know about your experience?

## Appendix C - Interview Guide For Camp Manager, Relatives Of Alleged Witches, And Community Members (Opinion Leaders)

### **SECTION A: General information**

Date: .....  
 Time commenced: .....  
 Interview location: .....  
 Language used: .....  
 Interview Code Number: .....  
 Interviewer: .....  
 Time ended: .....

### **SECTION B: Demographic information**

Gender.....  
 Age.....  
 Religious affiliation.....  
 Marital Status.....  
 Number of Children.....  
 Employment.....

### **SECTION C: VAW, Human Rights abuses, and Institutional Support**

1. What are some of the common (or shared) beliefs about witchcraft around here? Probe
2. How do people claim to know or evidence/indicators used to justify witchcraft? Probe
3. Share with us what is done to confirm if one is a witch or not. (Whose opinion/claim of witchcraft matter most—you may ask them to list a few)
4. What happens to alleged witches or wizards? Probe (Are they taken to witch camps? Are they beaten? What forms of violence do alleged witches and wizards experience? By who? What about family members? What is the point of the violence?)
5. In your view, how would you describe the actions of community members? Probe (Do they help save the alleged witch or do they participate in torturing the witch?)

6. What is your take/opinion on witch camps? Probe
7. How would you describe the situation in the camps? Bedding, feeding, health, education, etc. Probe (This should focus on right claims)
8. How has family members reacted to alleged witches residing in witch camps? Probe
9. What support do you think is available for these alleged witches? NGOs, Religious organisations, the state, traditional authorities, etc. Probe (Could you name some of the specific support you know of?)
10. Can you please tell us about some socio-cultural constraints faced by these women in accessing justice? Probe
11. Is there question that we did not ask but you want to address? Please do so and explain. Or, what else would you want concerned people to know about this situation in this part of Ghana?

## Images From Fieldwork



Shelter for Women alleged as witches at Gambaga ‘witch camp’



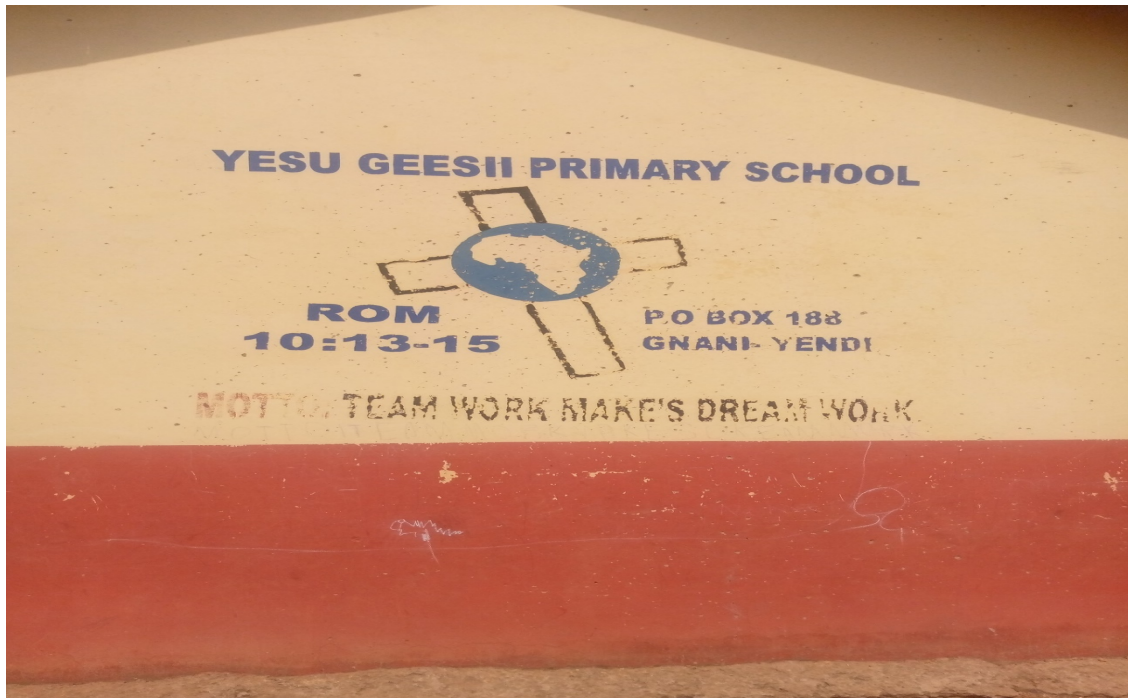
Shelter and standing pipe for women alleged as witches at Gambaga ‘witch camp’



An inscription advocating for the need to end violence against women alleged as witches at Gnani 'witch camp'



A mechanized borehole and water storage facility jointly built by Australia-Aid and Action-Aid for alleged witches at Gnani



The YESU GEESII Primary School at Gnani 'witch camp'



A toilet facility jointly built by Australia Aid and Action-aid for alleged witches at Gnani



Some alleged witches with one of the field researchers at Gambaga.



Alleged witches who participated in the Focus Group Discussion at Gnani



Alleged witches with some field researchers at Gambaga



A storage facility for seedlings at Gnani ‘witch camp’





A signpost showing a constructed merchandised borehole at Gnani 'witch camp'



Some interview participants at Gambaga alleged witch camp



Children and grandchildren of some alleged witches at Gambaga