The Effect of Witchcraft and Magic & Mystical Powers in the Social, Economic, Political and Spiritual Life of African Societies; A Critical Review.

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Abstract

Systematic reviews of ethnographic studies have established the presence of witchcraft beliefs in societies all over the world, with the first written record dating back to ancient Mesopotamia (Hutton, 2017). In many African societies, it is believed that witchcraft and other mystical powers cause unusual phenomenon like misfortune like accidents, wrangles, demise, domestic and public aggression, poverty, sickness and failure in life. The mystical powers are controlled by witches and wizards who possess powers which inhibit or influence the aforementioned phenomena. Belief and practice of witchcraft as this paper discusses has negatively impacted the social, economic, political and spiritual development in myriad African societies. The emanation and establishment of Christianity in Africa and other parts of the world by the western world seems not to provide lasting solutions over the belief. Mostly data collected unveils that some of those either suspected or caught in the practice are confessing Christians who are regular attendees of Saturday and Sunday church gatherings. Historically, missionaries convinced the Africans to join Christianity without first teaching them the causes of mystical happenings like death, accidents, loss of poverty, sickness and failure in the community (Chinua, 1958). Because of the Africans generosity, they dropped their social, -religious and cultural practices to join Christianity with a hope of practicing faithful Christianity which they thought could address their heart demands. This was because of the adequate teachings on factors and solutions to the aforementioned phenomenon. African Christians in spite of their commitment to Christianity still feel not secure in their personal, physical, health and property safety. This study utilized the social change theory developed by Lauren Fitzpatrick (1976). Social change is defined as a social process whereby the values, attitudes, or institutions of society become modified.
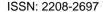
 Keywords: Witchcraft, sorcery, magic, spiritism, powers, religion, Christianity, African Societies.

1.0.   Introduction

The belief in mystical powers is still deeply rooted in many African societies, regardless of education, religion and social class of the people involved (Lembani, 2020). According to Africans its incidence is even increasing due to social stress and strain caused among others by the process of modernization in the society.

A witch "is an internal threat to community." Witches are usually insiders and harm those who are close to them. Although this is accurate in many settings, there are important exceptions such as inter-group witchcraft accusations found in Melanesia (Patterson, 1974). Furthermore, recent literature shows that across contemporary communities, potential set of suspected witches has been expanding as the processes of modernization and migration push the scope of daily interactions beyond the immediate circle of relatives and neighbors (Geschiere, 2013).

However, witchcraft has been a basic symbol and icon of evil all over the world especially in the African Societies, for instance among the Chewa people of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique (Lembani, 2020). The perception people hold on witchcraft or mystical powers makes them dread, loath and crave to eliminate from society those suspected or accused of it. Hayes (1995: 339-354) observed that between 1994 and 1996 hundreds of people were killed in the Northern Province of the Republic of South Africa after being accused of witchcraft. Adding to this view, Holmes (1974:40-43) states that the existence of beliefs and practices of witchcraft and sorcery were witnessed in Britain a thousand years after the Birth of Christ. The British authorities condemned these practices and persons who were accused of it were dismissed as social misfits from the society.

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According to Akama and Kadenyi (2006), the practice of belief and practice of witchcraft and other mystical powers in African societies have enormously and negatively impacted and affected social, economic, political and spiritual developments of the African people in the society. Any discussion on the twin themes of magic and witchcraft or mystical powers is cloaked in ignorance, prejudice and falsification. It is full of derogatory attitudes which belittles and despises the whole concept of mystical power (Mbiti, 1969:194). A second camp does treat the material seriously and notes the views, fears, uses, and manipulation of these mysterious phenomena. Mbiti adds that those who distort the concepts are either Europeans, or American popular writers, missionaries, or colonial administrators. Mystical power is known and practically experienced by nearly all Africans who have grown in a traditional environment. They will have witnessed magic, divination, sorcery, witchcraft or other mysterious phenomena. According to Bernard and Dickson (2014), belief in mystical powers is found throughout Africa. Indeed, it is part and parcel of African traditional religion. It is a power that is real, distinct from hypnotism, conjuring tricks, obvious cheating, manipulation of hidden means of communication or the result of psychological conditions. There is no African society which does not hold belief in mystical powers of one type or another. Witchcraft is a complex belief and its existence must be taken for granted. People do not die of any natural causes: Every death is caused by witchcraft (Fwanyanga Mulikita, quoted in Simoko 1975).

2.0.   Demystification of "Witchcraft," "Magic" and "Mystical Powers."

According to Lembani (2020) in congruence with Geschiere, (2013), a witch "works within a tradition." Witches do not just randomly come and go. They acquire their malignant supernatural powers through heredity or special training, and these mechanisms are typically well-known to community members. A witch "is evil." Witches are loathed and feared and quite intimidating. Their acts are believed to be triggered by hostile feelings such as envy, pride & spite, hatred, and greed. A witch "can be resisted." Strategies for doing so include the use of benevolent counter-magic, or spiritual power, convincing the witch to remove and dispel the curse, and persecution. Relatedly, most societies have specialists, or "witch doctors," whose job is to identify and counteract witches in the society.
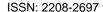
Basically, witchcraft beliefs produce two kinds of fear: the fear of bewitchment and the fear of witchcraft accusations. Both fears can be severe: bewitchment may result in great misfortune, according to believers, whereas an accusation of witchcraft may entail severe sanctions, from destruction of property to ostracism and killing. These witchcraft related fears force people to regulate their behavior in order to avoid both angering a witch and being labeled as one. Some of the direct consequences involve mutual suspicion, mistrust, anxiety, aversion to individual wealth accumulation, reduced social mobility, low incentives for entrepreneurship, risk taking, and economic self-advancement in general. The same fears and forces also generate an overall tendency towards conformity and preservation of status quo (Hutton, 2017).

Evans-Pritchard (1937) famously made a distinction between "witches," possessing an innate ability to cause supernatural harm, and "sorcerers," acquiring their powers through learning, although this dichotomy has been largely abandoned (Hutton, 2017).

There is also variation in the typical gender and age of accused witches: although in many societies' men and women of any age can be suspected of witchcraft, sometimes there is bias towards either men or, more commonly, women. In some cases, elderly women run the highest risk of being accused, while in others, children are often the victims. Other dimensions of heterogeneity include the nuances of rituals and preferred tools used by witches, their inclination for acting alone or in groups, the process of dealing with suspected witches, typical social or family relations between the accusers and accused, the powers possessed by witch doctors, and so on. In addition, it has been widely acknowledged that witchcraft beliefs are fluid and adapt in response to societal changes (Schram, 2010). Although these fine details are undoubtedly helpful in better understanding the local context in any given community, the following discussion is largely independent of them.

However, witchcraft is part of human reality and imagination in almost all cultures of the world. Although many modern scholars and citizens are skeptical about its existence, a study in all cultures shows that all cultures have always had the concept of witchcraft as part of their reality. It is the definition of the terms that perhaps seem to generate diverse schools of thought on the subject. Some scholars describe witchcraft as different from sorcery, magic, psychic, divination and traditional healers; while others seem to include all the above or a combination of some part of witchcraft (Ruickbie, 2004; Ariadne, 2005). Hence, "witches' belief in deity ranging widely, from impersonal creative forces at one extreme to actual personalities taking a part in the individual's life at the other; the range of belief systems expressed ran the gamut from atheism to pantheism" (Ruickbie, 2004).

Lembani (2020) posited that a study into literature on witchcraft (umfiti) shows that its definition has historically evolved over the years. Scholars have argued that in the ancient times, witchcraft was part of human life and

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survival. For example, "in the mythological imagination of the Northern Europeans, East of Midgard was their very how 'Birthplace of All Sorceries,' the home of the great and most feared Witch, Anger bode. Encircled by impassable mountains and trackless forests, the peoples of Northern Europe held Witchcraft dear, both as the font of wisdom and the scapegoat of disaster" (Ruickbie, 2004). This perception seems to have been lost due to the rise of various religious perspectives, including Christianity and Islam, which prohibit the practice and consultation of witchcraft because it is deemed to be evil (Deut. 18:10-1; Quran 113:4). The growing negative perceptions towards witches and the fear of them in society historically generated decisions towards banning their craft, trails and persecutions and even extermination of anyone suspected to be a witch (Ruickbie, 2004). This was especially prominent in the mediaeval period. "It was not until the very end of the medieval period (ca. 1500) that a definition emerged of the witch as a person in league with the devil . . . In the period from 1000-1500 concepts of the witch ranged from that of benevolent healer to feared sorcerer or sorceress" (http://www2.kenyon.edu/projects/margin/witch.htm). By the end of the period witch accusations escalated, leading to persecution of those who were or suspected to practice the vice (Ruickbie, 2004; Buckland, 1986).

Additionally, Lembani (2020) contends that witchcraft (Ufiti) is a mystery in many societies of the world today with some denying it exists while most belief in its existence and are influenced by it to a large extent. In many education institutions, especially high schools, witchcraft is mostly blamed for students' hysteric behavior, sudden drop in school attendance, poor performance and other real or imagined behavior such as hearing of invisible compulsive voices, appearances or actions of supernatural beings that cause students to faint and/or convulse, speak strangely under the influence of supernatural powers and hallucinate, among other weird behaviors (Bernard and Dickson, 2014). These episodes are reportedly resolved by involvement of demon exorcists, spiritual intercessors (Clergymen) and even stronger "witchdoctors" and other "higher" supernatural powers to negate the effects of witchcraft and other mystical powers. In some institutions, these episodes are recurrent after a period of suppression and apparent demise of the practice, the resurgence of witchcraft has been slow but sure.

According to Lembani (2020) defined witchcraft as a state of being in possession of harmful paraphernalia to harm others using evil and demonic spirits which are contrary to the Word of God. Witchcraft is satanic. It is a practice that makes one to suffer physically, mentally, socially, psychologically and other academicians defined witchcraft as the use of spirits to dictate or control the living.

Furthermore, Lembani (2020) in consonant with Ruickbie (2004), after the persecutions: The European witch-hunts were over, but witchcraft and the idea of witchcraft would never die out. It existed. In the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, witchcraft was re-examined, re-interpreted and ultimately, re-invented. To the ancient people, witchcraft was largely viewed as maleficent magic and some attributed it to satanism. To the Christians witchcraft was a Satanic conspiracy to corrupt the souls of good people. But now, to the scientific rationalist, was something else entirely: it was the Old Religion. (pp. 22-23) Modern witchcraft in the West is vibrant because it is considered an old religion of the pagan world of Europe whose study is warranted (Ruickbie, 2004). Today there are even academies and resources offering higher training in witchcraft for those who want to know about or to practice witchcraft (Buckland, 1986). But this has been revamped with new understandings of the "craft".

The founding of the modern witchcraft movement is associated with Gerald Gardner who began and later teamed up with the occult-curious Doreen Vaiente to popularize the "Modern Witchcraft Religion of Wicca (which) is portrayed by its practitioners as a religion of invention with individual creativity at its core" (Ruickbie, 2004, p. 28). The resurgence of the craft has attracted the attention of many including governments. For instance, the "United States Government (USG) spends over 70 million dollars on psychic research per year" (Ariadne, 2005). In Africa, the subject of witchcraft is a constant feature of daily human life. Like in the Jewish and many African societies, witchcraft is acknowledged but not encouraged in the society because according to Lembani (2020) stated that whitcraft is evil and it is against the tenets, norms and values of Christianity and it deters any form of development in the society. In some countries, witchcraft accusations have brought much suffering to those perceived to be perpetrators, and sadly including children (Rasmussen, 2008). However, many scholars and professionals are even afraid to investigate the phenomena for fear of being attacked by witches. For instance, in Kenya, it is the journalists who have been bold enough to investigate this phenomenon, but with reports of unexplained camera failure in some situations. For example, some television stations have broadcasted interviews with self-proclaimed witchdoctors or some reported to have crash-landed during their routine operations (Lembani, 2020). According to Lembani (2020), in one situation in Katete District of Eastern Province of Zambia, a witch by the name "Maluba" exhibited prestige and happiness for being a wizard and demonstrated how he gathered his tools of the craft for operations during magical practices in the community in the night.

According to Rasmussen (2008) in Kenya, the journalist revealed that Ann Mutheu proudly expounded that she was successful in bewitching those who steal others' property with the effect that the culprits experienced strange stomach ailments or other consequences until they give back what they have stolen or until they report to her that they had returned stolen goods (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0O. This is therefore, in consonant with

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Lembani (2020) that witchcraft or magic is also considered as a deterrent measure to unacceptable behavior and practices such as theft.

In another situation, the journalists posed as clients and went through some rituals (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j1vYhS9zNA). There are several documentaries on YouTube that indicate the existence of witchcraft, witch accusations and imaginations. There are known witches who are constantly consulted by people with various physical, psychological and socio-economic maladies. These have diverse effects on people in the society.

However, According to Lembani (2020) in agreement with MacFarlane (1975), many scholars and educational practitioners are skeptical about witchcraft and other mystical powers. This could be because they have been traditionally trained in the application of the positivistic "conventional scientific method" and have to empirically test validity, reliability and credibility of data. However, in the process of scrutiny and due to the apparent conflict of science and faith propagated by their sometimes agnostic and atheistic professors, the existence of witchcraft is denied and wished away as superstition. This has been the case even though empirical studies are known not to prove any cause-effects relationships. Progressively, the application of desk studies has provided opportunity for thorough investigation into the witchcraft phenomenon in African societies.

According to Teklemariam, and Nyenze's (2002) study showed that in schools in Kenya, "witchcraft continues to dominate the minds of many teachers and students especially during moments of crisis when they are looking for the answers to vexing issues. They go back to traditional way of explaining misfortunes when current scientific technology, religions and medicine do not seem to provide the answers." Kiremu (2009) found existence of witchcraft beliefs and self-confessed witches among Christians in the Chuka of Meru, Kenya. Mwalwa (2001) found that some few church members, among the Kamba people, still consulted witches when they were faced with crises. Mbondo (2006) found the practice of witchcraft among the Akamba Christians rampant: At least (80%) of Christians admitted frequent and constant consultation to traditional specialists in the communities.
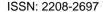
3.0.   The Dynamic Nature of Witchcraft (Ufiti) (Mystical Powers) in African Societies.

The vital core of Central African religion is constituted by the dynamic complex of spiritism, magic, witchcraft, and taboo (Hudson, 2020). A closer examination of these distinct but related concepts within a wider context of the manifestation of good and evil in society may help to clarify their various interactions .and the particular way in which the crucial, but somewhat ambiguous, notion of witchcraft fits into the total picture. The communally-oriented "person" (munthu, i.e., male or female) must relate to an all-encompassing cosmos of forces which governs the entire scope of existence from before birth to well beyond the grave (Rwiza, 2001). These individual stands together with fellow clan members more or less (depending on social status) at the center of this kinetic system in a state of continual flux with respect to several available sources of power, both beneficial and detrimental. One's goal is to try to maintain and even to enhance one's own quality of life (which includes such personalized notions as ""well-being" and "life-force' in what is generally perceived as a potentially hostile environment.

The four major concentrations of potency having the capacity to improve or impair one's physical, emotional, social, or spiritual condition in the world are (1) spiritism, (2) taboo, (3) witchcraft, and (4) magic. Spiritism refers to the activity of the ancestors, helpful as well as harmful, known and unknown, who act as intermediaries for a transcendent, but generally benevolent, God. Taboo, on the other hand, is believed to operate more or less automatically on individuals in response to specific violations of the code of culture or the order of nature (Schreiter, 2001). Witchcraft relates to an inherent psychic power which is supposed to be possessed by certain persons who utilize it to satisfy their own ends, but in the process destabilize or even destroy the community by disrupting normal social relations. Magic, like taboo, is morally "neutral," that is, it may be employed for either good or evil purposes. Its effects are triggered by means of the intentional manipulation of concrete symbolism, either analogous or associative, on the part of ritual specialists.

In an African setting, however, it is always misleading to remain at an abstract level of description and evaluation. Power is invariably personalized in terms of certain primary agents that are normally associated with its use, whether for benevolent or malevolent ends. The forcefield of interacting potencies outlined above must therefore be related to the respective social roles with which they are connected in the typical, conflict-generating activities of everyday life.

Notwithstanding, the sorcerer (Mfiti wanyanga — 'witch of the horn') is the primary agent or controller of evil magic in society, whether imitative (based on similarity) or contagious (based on conventional association). This individual, usually a male, differs from the witch in that he has deliberately chosen and consciously acquired his iniquitous occupation. He typically utilizes objects and actions believed to have a symbolic power ("black" magic) in order to enrich himself or to harm designated individuals in the community, either for personal reasons (e.g.,

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greed, hatred, envy, jealousy) or on behalf of others so motivated against their enemies or rivals. Such damaging spells are affected through ritualized verbal and nonverbal action in a variety of ways depending on the particular result desired and the circumstances surrounding the intended victim.

There are several generic types of magical substance, or "medicine" (Mankhwala) available, each of which is activated by a specific set of instructions and technique: for example, Odyetsa— "which is fed" (inserted in one's food or drink); ochera "which ensnares" (hidden at a place where the victim is sure to step, such as along a line drawn across a path); oponyera—"which is cast" (applied by throwing, or uttering, it into the air which will mystically carry the curse into contact with its victim); and oyendera—"which travels" (i.e., by means of a small natural surrogate, usually some pest, like the mosquito or rat, but also via lightning).

The more mysterious (usually) female counterpart of the sorcerer, or wizard, is the witch (Mfiti). Due to her disgusting characteristics and behavior, this individual is regarded as the epitome of wickedness in African society, particularly within the matrilineage (Lembani, 2020). No person or thing on earth is more detested, hated, and feared. She is viewed as being the underlying cause of most accidents, sickness, and especially death within the African family. Whereas the sorcerer depends on magic to do his dirty deeds, the witch possesses the innate psychic capacity to deprive others of their life-force directly. This she is believed to do out of physical need, namely, to sustain her own corrupted life and the perverted superhuman powers that she controls. The attributes and activities of the witch often merge with those of the sorcerer, however, especially in the confused sociological settings and uncertain situational circumstances of the modern age. In these cases, it is only the dynamics of the total context which can specify, if need be, the particular antisocial role that applies in a given instance.

The ancestral spirits (mizimu) are regarded as an incorporeal extension of the family who remain in close contact with the living. Although they function as revered guardians of the community, they are also frequently implicated, usually by divination but also through dreams, as being the cause of certain misfortunes that befall someone. Such cases are regarded either as chastisements intended to preserve the moral code and customs of the past, or as punishments, imposed against those who forget or disregard the expected responsibilities over against their fellow family members (those related by blood or by marriage), both present as well as departed, especially at the time of a death in the clan. Aggrieved spirits (ziwanda) represent a special category of ancestral shade which seek to exact vengeance on people (or their relatives) who committed some terrible offense, including murder, against them in life. Such unhappy spirits can be captured by sorcerers and then directed to carry out their evil purposes. There is no particular role or agency attached to the injurious manifestation of taboo transgressions. But those adversely affected may be termed "violators" (opalamula milandu, literally, "people who provoke a judicial case" (against tradition) (Harries, 2007). Such individuals either deliberately (i.e., disregarding the known harmful consequences of their impious actions), heedlessly (e.g., in a fit of rage or jealousy), or accidentally (i.e., in ignorance) transgress one of basic prohibitions of society. This type of offender may be punished directly and immediately with death, but more often an indirect judgment occurs whereby a close friend or family member is struck with a fatal illness such as epilepsy (traditionally) or AIDS (a common contemporary interpretation, i.e., befalling someone related to a person who engages in homosexual behavior). The punitive force of taboo is impersonal, though it is often associated with the overall moral jurisdiction of the ancestral spirits. Its supernatural power is automatically unleashed, as it were, by the prohibited behavior of the human violator (Hudson, 2017). One more important personage needs to be added to the cast of characters which occupy center stage in the drama of life and death in the traditional Chewa community, namely, the medicine-man or as he is more commonly, if rather misleadingly, known, the "witch doctor" (Also known as; sing'anga in Chewa language). Thus, the medicine-man carries out his vital profession on behalf of others (Lembani, 2020). Like the sorcerer, he knows how to manipulate the forces of natural symbolism, but he is generally considered to employ these for the benefit of society (i.e., "white" magic). He diagnoses their ills and provides a variety of medicines that are intended to harness the inherent power of natural (including human) substances on behalf of his clients (Douglas,1999) .Such medicines in the form of charms, amulets, potions, and salves are designed either to defend people, as mentioned above, or to promote their general well-being and welfare in life (e.g., fertility, health, wealth, job promotion, and other forms of prosperity and success).

In this world there is no essential distinction between what the latter might term the "natural" and the "supernatural," the "personal" and the "impersonal," or the "religious" and the "secular". A human being is the focal point of this anthropocentric, experience-oriented universe. But a person is only rarely considered alone as an individual; rather, he or she is normally viewed as being an integral part of a clan of related people. The vital mediatorial role of the "medicine-man" is suggested by his placement within the immediately surrounding sphere (Dovlo, 2007). Outside of this, but in immediate contact with it, are found the chief powers that influence human existence for good or evil—those either controlled by the spirits, sorcerers, and witches or unleashed by the violators of ancient taboos. On the periphery then stands a rather remote deity, the so called "High God," who is the ultimate source of all life and power, but whose actual direct involvement in the affairs of human beings is

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minimal. The boundaries that separate these different forces, which are centripetally inclined, all except for that of the outer, rather inert, divine being, are not fixed. Instead they are characterized by fuzzy edges and indistinct borders of demarcation (Stocking, 2004). This is depicted by the narrow lines that suggest the inevitability of unlimited interaction between and among the various levels. The result is paradoxically a decided affinity with the distinct sources and agents of potency to which people are ontologically related and yet at the same time a definite aversion for the ever-present threat of adversity and affliction which these same powers can occasion in their lives.

Moreover, Brantely (1978:20-28) and Green (2000:170-178) assert that witchcraft is one of the most potent and dreaded superstitions in Africa. Most Africans as these scholars argue believe witches can act to influence, intervene and alter the course of human life for good or ill, which simply implies that it positively and negatively affects socio-economic development. Africans accept witchcraft as a mode of explanation, of perception and interpretation of their problems, events, nature and reality even when reason and common sense suggest otherwise. They believe witches can cause poverty, diseases, accidents, business failures, famine, earthquake, infertility and childbirth difficulties. Mazrui (1993:32-38) argues that most people in Africa attribute any extraordinary, mysterious or inexplicable event, manifestation or phenomenon to witchery and wizardry. In some African communities there is even a talk about positive and negative witchcraft.

The belief is that positive witchcraft is used to do good-cure diseases or solve problems, and negative witchcraft is used to do evil. Mbiti (1969:80-85) and Mbula (1975:60) observe that Africans believe witches and wizards are spirits but that they carry out their nefarious activities as human beings, animals or insects. The belief is that witches and wizards transform into humans, animals and insects to perpetrate their evil machinations. Ranger (1980:45) adds that in countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, witches are identified mostly with women or infants. In Nigeria, all nocturnal insects and animals especially birds are suspected to be witches or wizards. In Gambia or Senegal, witches are associated with the bird (owl) and children are advised to kill it wherever they see it. Witches are believed to operate mainly in the night. They allegedly organize nocturnal meetings in the seas, oceans and forests where they feast on human blood, flesh or fetuses. The general belief among African communities as Parkin (1970) and Tinga (1998) argue is that witches and wizards always convene to plan evil. They gather to plot how to inflict harm or undermine the progress of people especially their family members. As a result of this, Hinger (1998) states that throughout Africa witchcraft accusation in families is common. People blame their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, uncles and aunties, grandfathers and grandmothers for any evil or misfortune that befalls them even the ones they caused for themselves. Abungu (1975) observe that while witch hunting is a thing of the past in most parts of Europe and the entire western world, in Africa, it is still an ongoing activity. Witch attacks, persecution and killings still take place on the continent. Incidentally, most of the victims are women and children. Recently there have been several reported cases of witch attack and killing in different parts of the continent. Nthamburi (1991) says that one of the most intriguing aspects of the belief in witchcraft is witch confession- the claim that witches and wizards sometimes openly admit to have indulged in occult activities. Believers in witchcraft often cite and use- this as a justification for witch attack and persecution. For instance, in 1998 in Lagos, Nigeria, Ranger (1978) observe that a middle-aged woman was stoned and later burnt to death after she allegedly confessed to have indulged in witchcraft activities. The woman reportedly confessed to have killed ten people including her own kids as well as being responsible for the repatriation of her brother from Europe. Mbula (1975) states that, in some cultures in Nigeria, witch confession is believed to be therapeutic. Among the Okpameri people in Southern Nigeria witch confession is believed to be curative. So those suffering prolonged and complicated ailments are urged to confess and be healed'. Also, in Pentecostal churches as Nthamburi (1991) argues witch confession is perceived as a process of spiritual rebirth and recreation.

Meyer (1992) declared, "If you are a devil, you are a witch and, if you are a witch, you are a devil."

3.1.   "Witchcraft" and "Sorcery": Is there a Distinction?

 Any description of the principal characteristics of umfiti in a Central African setting must begin with a careful definition of the subject (Lembani, 2020). Here one faces the usual problem of terminology in the literature, a variation in usage that masks a difficulty which pertains to the underlying concepts involved. Some writers designate the entire corpus of antisocial phenomena under discussion by the term sorcery (e.g., Marwick 1965); others group all such malevolent activities under witchcraft (e.g., Zvarevashi 1970); and several scholars follow Evans- Pritchard in clearly differentiating between witchcraft and sorcery with respect to the community which they are investigating (e.g., Harwood 1970). The question is: Are one or two distinct types of social deviance involved and what difference does it make? This matter is of considerable importance because our use of specialized terminology naturally affects the way in which the relevant notions are perceived, interpreted, and presented to others, whether members of the same cultural group or foreigners. Furthermore, our comprehension of the religious belief system, that is, how it is constituted and operates, both in the more traditional rural

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community and also in a modern urban environment, is bound to be affected by the accuracy of the basic terminology employed, or more precisely, by our understanding of the local terms that are used to describe these phenomena. The so-called "classical" distinction between witchcraft and sorcery was enunciated by Evans Pritchard (1937) in his ground-breaking study of the Azande people of South-Eastern Sudan & North-Western Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

To summarize, witchcraft refers to an internal, psychic power which is usually inherited and often unconsciously employed by its practitioner (Stocking, 2004). Sorcery, on the other hand, involves the motivated and deliberate use of the external power derived from magical rites, instruments, and substances by specialists who have consciously learned this black art. Since the time of Evans-Pritchard's original research, a number of scholars investigating similar phenomena in other ethnic groups of Africa and elsewhere (e.g., Stephen 1987) have supported his differentiation. But there have also been quite a few who have dissented for one reason or another. Marwick (1965), for example, discusses at some length his reasons for not maintaining the difference, based on the fact that "evidence shows that Chewa usage of the term Mfiti (sic., i.e., mfiti) is ambiguous." Sometimes it is a generic term to cover both the types of mystical evildoer that they recognize; and sometimes, when they qualify it with yeni-yeni ("real," plural, zeni-zeni), it is a specific term for those mystical evil-doers who are driven by addiction rather than [a] passing, and not necessarily characteristic, hatred or malice (Marwick 1965:82).

It would seem from the preceding quotation, however, that an underlying distinction is indeed operative in the minds of the people, and that this discrimination is more than being simply a matter of the generic-specific level of linguistic usage. As Marwick observes: Although Cewa habitually speak of all mystical evil-doers (and poisoners, too) as Mfiti, they sometimes, if questioned about the motives of sorcerers (i.e., Marwick's term), distinguish between two types. Firstly, there is the mphelanjilu ("killer-for-malice"), the person who, untrained and unskilled in the art of sorcery and motivated chiefly by hatred, begs or buys destructive magic or poison and kills his enemy; and secondly, the Mfiti yeniyeni ("real mfiti") who has been one from childhood, and who is 9 driven by "meat hunger" (nkhuli), and whose characteristic activity is "digging up people" (kufukula anthu) (Marwick 1965:79). Marwick further bases his choice for sorcery rather than witchcraft as a generic gloss for ufiti on the following evidence: because there is no trace in Chewa doctrine of the idea that ufiti is anything but socially (as opposed to biologically) inherited; and because there is every indication in both doctrine and case material that the average Mfiti is believed to be a deliberate evil-doer (1965:82).

Additionally, there are many, however, who would disagree with the strictness of these two limitations. As one informant from Malawi commented, "Some people learn witchcraft from other people, while others are either born with it, or they assimilate it from their parents." But even if social inheritance is the norm for one category of mfiti, the qualification that such a nature can indeed be passed on from parents to child(ren) might argue for use of the alternative designation witchcraft as distinct from sorcery, for the latter is always learned or acquired much later in life. Marwick's criterion of "deliberate evildoing" is not quite so categorical either. Some Chewa people speak about the "flesh-eating" witch as if she were almost driven to action by a physiological necessity, for example, in the words of one seminary student (personal communication): This type of witchcraft is being done mainly by old people who spend many months without eating meat. In this way it is easy for them to find meat, though it is human meat (Shamala, 2008). One has to eat in order to live! There are other examples in traditional or modern narrative, both fictitious tales and accounts that are allegedly true, which tell about this most detestable type of mfiti, namely, the kind that depends for its very existence on a mystical sort of cannibalism— yet which is sometimes practiced without a person even realizing it. Thus, in the minds of most Chewa (and this would apply to many other Central African peoples as well), there appear to be two major categories of mfiti. This is a very flexible distinction, however, and one which is not always maintained lexically. The problem with attempting to organize a sociological analysis according to an indigenous (emic), largely oral classification is its tendency toward fluidity and fuzziness. The categories frequently vary from person to person, being based on both formal and functional criteria, and so does the terminology that is employed to refer to different constituents of the system. If there is no longer any functional purpose in society for maintaining the difference, then it is natural for a blurring of concepts and usage to occur. There is also the factor of local variation within each community which results from the disparate social, cultural, political, religious, and ecological backgrounds that form the contemporary context out of which the practice of ufiti arises and according to which it should always be perceived, defined, and evaluated. It is possible that the differentiation between the sorcerer and the witch was more sharply drawn by matrilineal Central African peoples in the past.

As far as the Chewa people are concerned, some of the original lines of demarcation may have been dropped, while the term mfiti has increased in complexity to function on several semantic levels. Such changes probably occurred as part of the general modification which has taken place in traditional religious beliefs as well as in linguistic usage since the onset of the colonial age and the ensuing period of rapid social and cultural change, including the direct and indirect influence of Christian teaching. Nevertheless, it is useful to maintain the two

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separate categories as points of sociological orientation, for this distinction continues to have a significant basis in the dynamics of interpersonal and kinship relationships, especially in times of uncertainty, crisis, and conflict.

Furthermore, there does seem to be a considerable common awareness of the difference, whether or not it happens to be reflected explicitly in popular speech. The distinctive terminology also helps the cultural outsider to remain cognizant of the wide range of behavioral abnormalities that are masked, at least partially, by the many, frequently ambiguous references to ufiti—witchcraft or sorcery in contemporary formal or informal discourse on the subject.

4.0.   Spectacle of "Witchcraft," "Sorcery" and "Magic" in African Societies

This may be communicated through words, especially from a senior to a junior in age, social status or position in the office. As an example, the words of a parent to children carry a lot of power, either for causing good fortune, curses, success, peace or sorrows. According to Lembani (2020) in congruence with Bernard and Dickson (2014) stated that formal curses and blessings are extremely potent. People travel long distances to receive formal blessings, and conversely, they take extra care to avoid formal curses. Mystical power may cause people to walk on fire, lie on thorns or nails, send curses or harm including death from a distance. Practitioners can also change into animals, spit on snakes and cause them to split open and die or stupefy thieves so that they are caught red-handed. They can convert inanimate objects into biologically active living creatures, or enable experts to delve deep to reveal hidden information, or reveal the future, or detect thieves and other culprits. This is why they wear charms, take medicines or get them rubbed into their bodies (Rwiza, 2001). They use experts such as diviners, or medicine men, to counteract the evil effects of this power, or obtain power charged objects containing the same power. Some people pay fortunes to get this power (Lembani, 2020). The power affects everyone, whether directly or indirectly, for good or for harm, by the beliefs and activities connected with this power. On the positive side, mystical power is for curative, productive or preventive purposes. It is for this reason that Africans wear, carry or keep charms, amulets, and other objects on their bodies, in their fields or homesteads. Medicine men or diviners are the manufacturers, dealers, and distributors of these articles of medicine and power. According to Lembani (2020) in tandem with Dovlo (2007), opined on the negative side, mystical power can eat away the health and souls of their victims, attack people, cause misfortune and make life uncomfortable. Practitioners of these mystical powers are witches, wizards, sorcerers, evil magicians, or people with an evil eye, employing their power for antisocial and harmful acidities.

4.1. Magic, Sorcery and Witchcraft; Good magic which is also known as; Benevolent Magic or White Magic is accepted and esteemed, used mainly by specialists such as medicine men, diviners and rainmakers in the African societies (Mareen, 2006). These practitioners use their knowledge or tap into this power for the benefit of their community. Examples of beneficial use of magic power include, the treatment of diseases, counteracting misfortune, neutralizing or destroying evil power or witchcraft itself. Mystical power may be transmitted through charms, amulets, medical portions, rags, feathers, figurines, special incantations, or cuttings on the body. This power can be used to protect homesteads, families, fields, cattle, and other property (Bernard and Dickson, 2014). The visible signs of usage of protection against evil magic include, a forked pole in the middle of a compound, a potsherd on the roof of a house, lines of ashes strewn across the gate or homestead, a horn sticking out of the ground, an old gourd on a tree, coils round the neck, waist, or wrist, hair shaved off except for a few locks while some may be knotted.

All of these visible signs are a pointer to people's belief in mystical power. Some of these powers are protective; others are intended to bring good health, fortune, and prosperity. The power of good is believed to be directly supplied by God or it may be given through the spirits, the living dead or form part of the invisible force of nature. Some people spend a great deal of wealth and effort to obtain magical protection and prosperity. Among those who tap these magical powers for good or provide this protective gear are medicine men, diviners and rainmakers (Wendland, 1987). They claim that their mystical power comes from God. They acquire this through prayer to God or through intermediary of the living dead and spirits. Spiritual power is usually channeled through physical means.

Evil Magic; This involves belief in and or practice of tapping and using this power to harm human beings and their property and it is also called Malevolent Magic or Black Magic (Lembani, 2020). In such cases sorcery is at work. Belief here is largely based on fear suspicion, jealous, ignorance or false accusation. Hair, nails, cloths, or other articles can be used by enemies to produce evil magic. Hair or nails may be burned or otherwise used in a harmful way. When used maliciously, such mystical power is termed black magic, evil magic or sorcery. According to Mbiti (1969: 201) sorcery involves use of poisonous ingredients in the food or drink of the intended victim. Sorcery is clearly antisocial employment of mystical power. Sorcerers are greatly feared and hated. They can send flies, lions, snakes, or other animals to attack enemies or send diseases against them. They can do this by spitting or directing spittle with secret incantations to go and harm someone else. They may even dig up graves to remove human flesh or bone to increase their powers or use them to attack their targets. Others provoke spirits
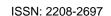
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to attack or harm others. Van Wyk (2004:1211) observes that sorcerers practice their evil by daytime, are mostly men, cannot leave their bodies, and do not kill or harm randomly. They kill or harm for a specific purpose. Unlike witches, a sorcerer can stop being one. However, both witches and sorcerers can perform natural magic or thaumaturgy (evil or black magic, casting spells, incantations) Africans believe that all ills, misfortunes, sicknesses, accidents, tragedies, sorrows, dangers, unhappy mysteries, etc., are caused by mystical powers employed by sorcerers, witches or wizards. Accidents, cases of barrenness, misfortunes or other unpleasant experiences are considered mystical experiences of a deeply religious nature.

Mbithi (1969:201) rightly observes that in the African worldview, nothing happens by chance. Everything is caused by some other person in a direct way or through mystical forces. Envious or malevolent individuals will be blamed for any misfortune, sickness, accidents or other forms of suffering. Women are often blamed for evil experiences. Mbiti (1969:202) adds that the people employed to carry out evil schemes are sorcerers, evil magicians, witches, medicine men, or diviners. They are thought to send out flies, bats, or other animals, spirits, or magical objects. But they could employ other means- e.g. use of „evil eye" and evil medicine in the path of victim, planting of magical objects in the home or fields of their victims (Maree, 2006). They could also send death from a distance, or change into animals in order to attack their victims. Equally they could place harmful medicine where victims are likely to come into contact with it. Since these evil objects could be dispersed everywhere, there is no place that can be completely safe – and the slightest misfortune is usually blamed on misuse of these mystical powers. In order for people to be freed from these malevolent forces which are everywhere, they resort to protection from medicine men and diviners (Hudson, 2017). The specialists provide charms, amulets, medicines, or other protective articles placed in secluded places in the house or in the fields etc. The protective gear may visible or invisible, secret or open, and is characteristic of all traditional societies to help people secure a feeling of safety, protection and assurance. According to Lembani (2020), diviners and medicine men are employed to perform ritual cleansing of households or people who have been victims of malevolent attacks. Practitioners of evil magic were severely punished by their communities through stoning, beating, paying hefty fines, or death.

According to Maree (2006), Malevolent Magic or Black Magic is basically the use of supernatural forces to purposefully harm people which is synonymous to Evil Magic. The malevolent use of magic is known as witchcraft or sorcery. The practicing thereof is usually seen as a crime against society. It is difficult to distinguish between witches and sorcerers in African societies because terminologically a sharp distinction is not always drawn between the two concepts. On the contrary, there is what is called Benevolent Magic which is also known as; White Magic, which is the use of supernatural forces to the benefit of people. Ritual leaders such as medicine-men, herbalists and diviners make use of benevolent magic, for instance, they prepare medicines which they have strengthened in a magical way. This magical medicine can be used to bring about healing, ensure success in certain actions and to provide protection against malevolent magic and other forms of misfortunes.

Witchcraft; According to Lembani (2020) in congruence with Maree (2006), witches were people with an inherent power by means of which they can abandon their bodies at night to meet with others (witches) or to suck or eat away the life of their victims at night. Although, the stories of their mystical powers and exploits are difficult to substantiate. In a broad sense witchcraft describes all sorts of evil employment of mystical power (evil magic), generally in a secret fashion. In African societies, the distinction between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, and „evil eye" is quite thin and academic. In a more popular sense, the term witchcraft is used to designate the harmful employment of mystical power in all of its manifestations (Mbiti, 1969). Witchcraft in all of its appellations is part of the religious corpus of beliefs in African traditional religions.

Briefly stated: Africans are aware of a mystical power in the universe; this power ultimately comes from God but is inherent in or comes from or through physical objects or spiritual beings; the universe is dynamic, living and powerful. Access to this power is hierarchical- it issues from God through the spirits and living dead to some human beings; communities experience this power as useful and therefore helpful, acceptable or neutral, or harmful and evil. According to Magesa (1997) witchcraft or uchawi, as it is known in Swahili, is a generic term applied to a malevolent witch, sorcerer or anyone considered to have more power than that of the average person. The sorcerer unlike the witch does not kill at random. The sorcerer harms for a specific end. He does not do so with the full knowledge of his evil intentions. As an individual working alone, the sorcerer can if he wills get out of sorcery. Magesa observes that this issue is a moral issue. Sorcery is more predictable than witchcraft and is thus more amenable to protection. There are protective medicines against sorcery. Magesa (1997) consents with Mbiti (1969) that witchcraft is a mysterious power that resides in human beings. That it permeates all areas of life and is an ever-present reality in people's political, social, and economic organizations. It affects both communal and personal life. Witchcraft, Magesa (1997:167) adds, is intimately bound and influences law and the understanding of morality and ethics. As stated before, the African worldview holds that anything wrong or bad both in society and in the world originates in witchcraft and it is influenced by the mystical powers. This is the

case whether it is illness, hardship, or misfortune. Since witches are regarded as opponents to the natural order of harmonious community life, any inexplicable mishap or tragedy which defies natural or religious explanation is attributed to witchcraft (Petrus and Bogopa, 2007). All human beings, Magesa (1997) claims, have the ability to tap this power, meaning that each human is a potential witch. This power is latent in the majority but can become active. There are no rites, ceremonies, incantations or invocations accompanying the practice. It is simply projected from the mind of the witch onto the target. The power of the witchcraft is thought to reside in various organs of the body especially the blood, hair, liver (Magesa, 1997: 168). He adds that witches are not conscious of their power. Individuals who are unusually old, beautiful, or ugly, red-eyed, sometimes physically deformed, excessively successful or extremely poor are often considered witches. These are people who exhibit extremes of character traits - the very rich, the very poor, those who are very popular or surly.

Witchcraft is usually inherited but can also be bought or acquired (Lembani, 2020). It is cloaked in secrecy and associated with loathsome behavior and revolting actions that break all accepted norms of behavior in society. Some of these loathsome acts include handling excrement, urine, or vomit, moving around naked, engaging in sexual intercourse with spirits or animals. They commit incest and cause other people to do the same, or to have incestuous dreams. They reject kinship ties and may kill and eat flesh of close relatives or others. Magesa (1997) concurs with Mbiti that witches are able to turn themselves into animals like hyenas, owls, or other nocturnal creatures or into spirit bodies to attend spirit assemblies or to accomplish their evil errands. Similarly, Van Wyk (2004) notes that witches have power to free their spirits from their bodies at night and to turn themselves into nocturnal animals like hyenas, baboons, owls, lightening bird, and cats in order to harm their enemies. Their craving for human flesh makes them frequent graveyards. Sometimes they are thought to eat or suck the life force or soul /spirit of their victims. People who are bewitched often have their bodies wasting away because of this activity. Witchcraft, Van Wyk (2004) notes, is also associated with necrophagy and cannibalism. Like Magesa, he adds that witches may be unaware of their actions. Lembani (2020), Van Wyk (2004) agrees with Magesa (1997) that witchcraft is inherited, and that witches often harbor desires that are contrary to African social values like helpfulness, solidarity. He also notes that witchcraft is a metaphor for the mystery of human evil.

Jomo Kenyatta in his book, Facing Mt. Kenya (1965) exhibits magic to be extremely pervasive among the Kikuyu people. Honestly, it appears that magic is a way of life in the society. Some magic was for power & defensive purposes, some for enhancing economic activities like hunting, business and agriculture, and others for healing and health; some is used to increase attractiveness and enhance the love life, to acquire influence and power, and yet others for spiritual cleansing.

Additionally, Lembani (2020) discovered that mystical powers and witchcraft phenomenon can also be understood through folklore theories. Folklore encompasses the customs, knowledge systems, games, beliefs, practices, literature, performing and nonperforming arts, which include dance music, theatre, drama, painting, sculpture, making of crafts with several materials, festivals among others. The process of transmission of knowledge contained in all the aspects of folklore mentioned above through sustenance, reshaping, renewal, creation of variants has been a continuous phenomenon since the human civilization appeared on this earth. (Gupta, 2015). Specifically, the anthropological arm that explains cultures and cultural dynamics. Specifically, the theory of functionalism, which deems culture as a living organism which has capacity to reproduce, grow and die, through its organs, explains why people believe in what they do. In the bio-cultural theory: Malinowski suggested that individuals have physiological needs (reproduction, food, shelter) and that social institutions exist to meet these needs. There are also culturally derived needs and four basic "instrumental needs" (economics, social control, education, and political organization), that require institutional devices. Each institution has personnel, a charter, a set of norms or rules, activities, material apparatus (technology), and a function. Malinowski argued that uniform psychological responses are correlates of physiological needs (Porth, Neutzling & Edwards, n. d.). As already discussed earlier in this paper, the witchcraft phenomena have been in existence in many primal societies throughout history. Its continuity may be explained by the human need for self- perpetuation as they seek to protect themselves of harm and possible extinction. The need to protect themselves from what seems to be mystical life circumstances is seen to be only addressable through mystic approaches. According to Malinowski, as quoted by Maree (2006) and Hudson, 2017);

1. "Culture is essentially an instrumental apparatus by which man is put in a position to better cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him in his environment in the course of the satisfaction of his needs.

2. It is a system of objects, activities, and attitudes in which every part exists as a means to an end.

3. It is an integral in which the various elements are interdependent.

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4. Such activities, attitudes and objects are organized around important and vital tasks into institutions such as family, the clan, the local community, the tribe, and the organized teams of economic cooperation, political, legal, and educational activity.

5. From the dynamic point of view, that is, as regards the type of activity, culture can be analyzed into a number of aspects such as education, social control, economics, systems of knowledge, belief, and morality, and also modes of creative and artistic expression". (1944, p. 150). The above elements explain why the witchcraft phenomenon is perpetuated from generation to generation. Even where societies have prohibited the practice of witchcraft and punished perpetrators, the vise continued secretly (1 Sam. 28: 3-25) and resurges with a different outfit, such as the religion of Wicca mentioned earlier in this paper. The need for humanity to understand the invisible forces that affect them positively or negatively cannot be ignored. These forces continue to propel the institutions of spirituality/religion, and the creative arts, among others. Hence, witchcraft, real or imagined, will continue to be a force in society and needs to be clearly investigated, understood and addressed.

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4.2. Perceptions on "Witchcraft" in the African Societies; Witchcraft belief in Africa is expressed in different forms, according to region, religion, or ethnic affiliation. Hence, there are also some essential common grounds. Thus, witchcraft belief as such is in general not gender-specific (contrary to the practice of its persecution). Moreover, all over Africa the belief in mystical powers or forces is very common at different individual levels of education and various religious confessions. Since the jihad of the pre-colonial (19th century) Shonghai empire, for example, Moslem rulers of the Nigerian emirates, have skillfully employed witchcraft beliefs for their own vested interests (cf. Kuhnert, 1983). The same is true for Christian traditional leaders in Yorubaland (cf. Awolalu 1979:81-84). By the end of colonial rule, fundamentalist Christian churches and sects, came to the fore which, eager to respond to a popular demand, integrated into their conception of the universe the very same traditional elements condemned by European missionaries as "pagan" (e.g. Pentecostal-Church, Rosarian, and various independent African churches like the Kimbanguists of DRC).

Most of them claim to provide most effective protection against witchcraft to its followers. For this very reason these fundamentalist Christian churches enjoy today a considerable attraction (cf. Meyer,1992, about the combat of Pentecostal groups against adzetwo (witches) in south-east Ghana). High representatives of established Christian churches, such as the bishops of Lagos and Kinshasa, believe in witchcraft too. According to the latter, this belief is shared by about 80% of all Africans. Last not least, even African scholars and decision-makers in economy and society, educated in a renowned Western university, strongly share witchcraft beliefs - according to occasion, more or less openly (cf. Kuhnert 1983; Kadya Tall 1995).

According to the study conducted Mbogo (2017) and Lembani (2020) in high schools, disclosed that students and teachers seemed to be in congruence that witchcraft is usually directed to someone by close relatives and neighbors who may have ongoing interpersonal conflicts and the two student interviewees in form four class attested and disclosed an attempt of witchcraft on them by close relatives and a neighbor who were very envious of their brilliant performance in school. They reported that these witchcraft attempts were done while students were in their primary schools. They felt their poor performance in primary school's final exams was attributed to witchcraft. Both students explained that before their performance began to deteriorate, they were bright students. Some reported that both men and women can be witches in the society. They can identify the ability of a child in that early age and so engaged to spoil them while they (children) are not aware. Some students explained that mature people just wanted to settle their differences through envy and revenge using children who were very innocent. One lamented, "I did nothing wrong to deserve this." Teachers also gave instances of reported relational problems between students and some relatives that were purported to have bewitched the students.

5.0.   Effects of Witchcraft, Magic & Sorcery in societies

The effects of witchcraft, magic and sorcery have been debatable with some claiming an existence of good witches/witchcraft etc., and others reporting of bad or evil witches/witchcraft (Lembani, 2020). Those perceived to be good are termed witchdoctors, because they practice what is known as White Magic, usually socially accepted as those who offer treatment for people experiencing problems associated to witchcraft. The notion of "good" witchcraft emanates from phenomena where those who think they are bewitched and suffering seek the

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help of witchdoctors who are able to undo the "spells" of the witch. Hence, witches apparently operate different ranks or levels, each level requiring different sets of skills and paraphernalia (Ariadne, 2005). Those considered to "heal" are usually termed witchdoctors. Some people argue that witchdoctors are not witches, while others are of the opinion that they are witches of a higher rank and therefore are able to reverse the effects of spells cast by lower ranking witches. Ariadne (2005), a self-proclaimed witch and trainer of witches, insinuates that witches can choose whether to be good or evil and advises her trainees not to use their "magic power" to cast evil spells (p. 7). Magick (sic.) is the energy thought fueled by your emotions. When you focus everything, you are to a specific goal or outcome – Magic energy has the power to make it so. Your spirit, mind, belief, and focus can control these hidden energies. Every person, with the right mental and spiritual tools has the ability to use Magic energy to get the results they want in life. (2005, p. 8).

Besides, Magesa holds that witchcraft has a central place in the moral structure of African religion. That witchcraft is the enemy of life- acting as it does against harmony, good order, neighborliness or good company. It is antithetical to cooperation and sharing, propriety and equitableness, honesty and transparency. In other words, witchcraft is against all that holds the community together- the solidarity and the unity of society, the fine balance between the living and the dead, order and survival in the universe. Witches are people who cannot control their impulses (Wilson, 1992), who have insatiable desires and hatreds, are often unsociable, selfish or arrogant. Good order requires that people act openly and in daylight, identify with kith and kin, who respect taboos, and behave in a normal and moral fashion. This helps to suppress negative emotions like envy, hatred, anger, lust etc. Fear of being labelled a witch is a powerful deterrent against immoral antisocial behavior, thus enforcing conformity to societal morals and values. This is perhaps why strange people with abnormalities, sterility, or bodily deformities are often considered witches - red eyes, ugly feet, queer or malicious behaviour, and extreme success.

Witchcraft was not tolerated in any African society. Persons convicted of witchcraft faced grave consequences. Some communities speared them to death, others shot them with poisoned arrows, killed them by stoning them, beating them to death or strangling them, burning them alive, or banishment (Mbiti, 1969: Magesa, 1997: 172; Kenyatta, 1965: 288-289). Magesa argues that African beliefs in witchcraft have a deep theological significance (a theoretical function), in that it attempts to answer the question why bad things happen in the world. Why one man is bitten by a snake and not another? Why it rains in one man's field and not in his neighbor's? Why do wicked people prosper? Etc. Belief in witchcraft is thus an attempt to explain the inexplicable and to control the uncontrollable. Van Wyk (2004) has attempted to relate witchcraft to „original sin" due to the fact that it may be practiced unwittingly (overwhelming people like emotions of anger, hatred, lust, jealousy). The basis of this thinking is that there is no such a thing as coincidence in life. All events have a cause. Witchcraft is the way Africans explain the ultimate cause of things. A negative consequence of witchcraft is that someone -the witch- has to be blamed for causing the misfortune and whether rightly or falsely accused, this person's life is at stake.

The two different perceptions of kinds of witches imply two polarized notions of its effects. Some opine that witchcraft has positive effects for those who have interacted with it (Ruickbie, 2004; Buckland, 1986). This might be grouped in two categories: 1. the witches themselves who benefit economically from their practice and 2. the "healing seekers" who might experience some relief of their real or perceived suffering. One positive effect is seen to include participation in personal and social responsibility. In the modern witch movement, witches can market their art and establish their craft as business, must participate in social action and hence are gaining popularity.

Effects of Witchcraft; According to Mbogo (2017), phobia was perhaps one of the most frequently reported effect of witchcraft in high schools. Due to witchcraft experiences, accusations and imaginations, both students and teachers agreed that many lived in fear. According to the study conducted by Lembani (2020) in high schools, one respondent claimed that it was not safe for him to travel to their homeland especially during holidays for fear of being bewitched. He claimed that envious neighbors could plan to harm him and his family because they are prosperous. He claimed that villagers at one point attempted to kill their mother because of claim that she was a witch (Mbogo, 2017). This was also affirmed by a School Head-Teacher who reported that a good number of her students do not go to their homes for fear of witchcraft. Instead, their parents had arranged for them to live with relatives or guardians – usually in urban areas. Phobia was reported to be more evidenced during examination times and during competitive sports. Instances of pupils' fainting during these seasons were blamed on witchcraft, magic and other mystical powers.

Isolationism and Relational Problems; Pupils who reported being affected by witchcraft in boarding schools experienced isolation either by desertion by colleagues or by separating themselves. Two respondents claimed that sometimes in school they felt like they did not want to associate with anybody (Lembani, 2020). They also claimed that their relationships with parents deteriorated because of powers they could not withstand in the society. Respondents also complained of eye problems such as shedding tears during examinations, eyes turning brown and swelling. Some pupils affirmed that they encountered frustrations and pressure from family members who did

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not understand their predicaments and even teachers who beat them mercilessly for their failure in performance (Mbogo, 2017). This continued to affect them relationally as they faced rejection. It also continued to negatively affect their performance in other areas of life such as self-esteem and academic performance.

School Drop-out; Both teachers and students affirmed that those who reported being bewitched could eventually drop out of school. Dropping out of schools can be an outcome of poor academic performance, ill-health or rejection or a combination of several factors. Respondents indicated that some of their colleagues affected by witchcraft had eventually dropped out of school. According to Lembani, (2020) in consonant with Mbogo, (2017), one teacher expounded how a boy child, ritually recruited by a witch relative to be a wizard, left school before completion. He explained that it was due to interference from spirits that would command him to engage in witchcraft-related activities at night and he would be too tired to go to school. He eventually had to abandon school altogether.

Mbogo (2017) said that one teacher explained, "I know a woman who bewitched a high school boy, who had impregnated her daughter. I know the boy. When he was asked to marry the girl, he refused and said he wanted to continue with school. The woman told him he will not enjoy the schooling after destroying her daughter. A few months after the boy reported to school, he became mad and had to drop out of school. To date, he just goes around the town collecting papers". The above cases were perceived to be evidence that witchcraft exists and has some effect on students and teachers.

According to the studies conducted by Lembani (2020), students in high schools reported that depression, suicidal thoughts and actual suicide was common among their colleagues who reported being haunted by witches. Depression may be a secondary symptom of witchcraft effects and is likely to result from stigmatization of those suspected to be associated or affected by witchcraft (Akama, 2006). Eventually, depression may lead to suicidal thoughts or actual suicide.

Violence and Crime; According to the studies conducted by Ndetei (2004), two teachers explained that some of the students who reported being affected by witchcraft were also sometimes caught involved in violence & crime. This was witnessed in cases of students' unrest which sometimes resulted in destruction of property and harm to students - e.g. Kyanguli Secondary School (Ndetei, 2004). One student explained how a girl who admitted to be involved in the practice of witchcraft, through grandmother's influence, mobilized students to burn a teacher by burning the administration block where the teacher was. However, this was not actualized as one fearful student leaked the information to the teacher and the girl was expelled from school.

However, according to Buckland (1986), today, across America, it is not at all unusual to find open Wiccan festivals and seminars taking place in such unlikely places as family campgrounds and motels such as the Holiday Inn. Witches appear on television and radio talk shows; they are written up in local and national newspapers and magazines. Witchcraft courses are given in colleges. Even in the Armed Forces, Wicca is recognized as a valid religion--Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 165-13 "Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups. A Handbook for Chaplains" includes instructions as to the religious rights of Witches right alongside those of Islamic groups, Sikh groups, Christian Heritage, Indian Heritage, Japanese and Jewish groups. (p. 8) As such, witchcraft movement is gaining of popularity. Another benefit is seen be in the area of spirituality. In addition to the social aspect of the practice, witchcraft is progressively being seen an alternative means of spiritual expression. According Buckland (1986), Witches and witchcraft are no longer what they were thought to be. Gone are the pacts with the Devil, the evil imp familiars and the toe-curling curses. In their place we find a vital religion practicing spirituality equality and seeking the improvement of the world. Witchcraft changes (and improves) the lives of those it touches. Christianity in the West is in crisis. With increasing access to alternative forms of knowledge Christianity is no longer the only road to salvation. With the spread of free-market capitalism into every aspect of our lies, we are now even free to choose what spiritual path we will follow. And people are choosing Witchcraft. (pp. 52-3) The above benefits have arguably been used to legalize the practice as part of human rights in some countries. However, for the most part, witchcraft, is perceived to have negative outcomes.

5.1.Effects of witchcraft, magic & Mystical powers; Other negative effects of witchcraft and other mystical powers have been reported to range from physical, socio-economic, political, psychological and spiritual (Petrus, 2016; Thomas, 2012; Teklemariam and Nyenze, 2002; Kesamang and Taiwo, 2010). Gender Issues One of most cost effects emanates from witchcraft accusations, where the vulnerable in society, particularly older women are suspected to be witches. The growth of the movement seems to have an increasing number of women to the extent that witchcraft and witchcraft accusations have been associated with females (Thomas, 2012; Rasmussen, 2008). However, …magic was not the preserve of women in the ancient world, but in the tales of the heroes, politicians, warriors who preferred the drawn sword to the wand [and] the magic users they encountered were almost always women - an arrangement greatly enjoyed by the Odysseus, through the ruin of Jason. Nor was magic the preserve of the goddesses: Hermes was the greatest magician amongst the Olympians. Yes, it is a goddess who has become
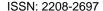
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most closely associated with Witchcraft (Ruickbie, 2004). The polarization of perceptions on witchcraft as vise practiced by women has led to ostracizing some, persecution and related consequences of rejection such as poor self-esteem, depression, illness and even death.

A study was conducted to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions on witchcraft and its effects on formal education in Mwingi District, in Kenya among on a sample of 123 from 26 public schools. The researchers showed that the major types of witchcraft practiced in the district were white witchcraft, black witchcraft, "Majini" and devil worship, among others. The study also revealed that, among students, witchcraft practices caused school dropout, indiscipline, poor concentration in class hence poor performance and sicknesses (Teklemariam & Nyenze, 2002). Another study by Kesamang and Taiwo (2010) revealed that in Botswana, where mythology included the maneuvers of witches, "Setswana mythology has a telling effect, to a large extent, on the thought processes of the average Botswana Junior Secondary School student. This resulted in significant negative relationships between the students' socio-cultural background and their attitudes towards school science on one hand and their achievement in school science on the other hand" (p. 919). Studies within school settings are scanty and more are needed.

Economic; The economic function of witchcraft is related to a basic presupposition of a central African world-view, and this concerns the ultimate circumscription of the earth's goods and supplies in terms of both quantity and quality. As might be expected, witchcraft tends to thrive in a physical and psychological environment which is perceived to be (if it is not actually) characterized by deprivation and consequently restricted with regard to the amount of the various basic resources that are potentially available in the world (principle of "limited good" (Wendland 2005:88- 92). Therefore, if some person or group seems, for no apparent reason (which is, of course, a highly subjective matter), either to have too much or to come up short in terms of life's essentials, then the explanation must inevitably be sought in the exercise of black magic by sorcerers or in the wicked machinations of witches.

Correspondingly, any extraordinary achievement, whether in the social, political, economic, or even physical sphere, can only be accomplished at the expense of others, if not materially, then certainly spiritually in terms of their life-force. Thus, one person's apparent success is invariably gained to the detriment of someone else in the immediate vicinity. The area of special concern in this regard is that of his own lineage, where the principles of communalism and equality are supposed to operate for the benefit of all. It is especially suspicious, therefore, if one member appears to enjoy a relatively high level of prosperity while the rest of the clan is continually struggling to remain above the poverty line. In such situations, it is almost inevitable that accusations as well as fears of sorcery (primarily, but also that of witchcraft) enter the picture to act as an implicit socioeconomic leveling device. This may come about in several ways. It does not take long before the rumor begins to circulate that the wealthy individual must be achieving his gains due to his practice of ufiti. Hard work, good soil, business acumen, agricultural insight, common sense—let alone luck—have nothing to do with it. An additional degree of mystical knowledge and potency has to be the explanation, and this can only be obtained through the self-oriented manipulation of magic.

Thus, sooner or later he is likely to be charged, whether directly or via divination (kuombeza), with sorcery. Various outcomes are possible depending on how much power he is thought to have at his disposal. Even if he is able to withstand the accusations, he will conclude, whether rightly or wrongly, that others will certainly be applying counter-magic against him—if they have not done so already. "To attract admiration is to risk attracting envy…envious people can do harm to one's person or crops through magic" (Lieban 1967:144-146). Consequently, a vicious and ever-widening circle of doubt and mistrust develops, producing an atmosphere that can only discourage individual initiative and the pursuit of excellence in the opposing interest of promoting a basic parity in the possession and control of the physical resources of the environment. It is thus up to the prosperous to share their goods, and the personal ideal of generosity, when practiced by the rich, is more often than not motivated by a pressing fear of sorcery (cf. Wilson 1951:308; Lienhardt 1951). If the opportunities for personal and corporate advancement are thus limited in scope, a similar outlook would naturally apply with respect to the options for dealing with ostensible inequalities, including those which pertain to illness, accident, or even death. Time and again the answer to such "economic" disparity (i.e., relating to "wealth" or prosperity of any type) turns out to be connected in some way to witchcraft /sorcery, and the only solution is to seek release or redress through the agency of the traditional practitioner (sing'anga) who specializes in such cases. With the majority of people still controlled to a greater or lesser extent by such a rigid and confining outlook on life, it is not surprising to find that despite the sometimes-dramatic increase in worldly possessions and educational opportunities that many have experienced in recent years, the incidence of witchcraft has not decreased at all, either in rural or urban areas. If anything, as economic conditions become more uncertain, the culture more confronted with change, society more complex, and life more competitive in nature, the witches and sorcerers keep multiplying faster than ever, cleverly adapting their manner as well as their methods to the modern age.

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Political; In addition to its role in the crucial economic sphere of African culture, witchcraft & sorcery often plays an important part also in the political power structure of society, especially in chieftaincy, traditional leadership among others (Lembani, 2020). On the corporate level, accusations of witchcraft & sorcery may lead to ruptures and fissions in the lineage, especially where two or more subgroups are in competition with one another for leadership or domination. This often results, then, in an actual splitting up of the village, where one disgruntled segment moves off en masse to establish a settlement elsewhere, normally in the same vicinity (Mair 1969:210-211; Marwick 1965:284-285). In a community where it is culturally inappropriate display publicly any interpersonal conflict, such as through debates, duels, or judicial proceedings, witchcraft doctrine offers a means for externalizing this politically motivated rivalry and for justifying any consequent social breaks that do occur (Douglas 1970:114). Turning to the individual level of manifestation, just as in the case of the wealthy man, so also the person who holds a position of prominence in the community like His Royal Highness—or even the nation at large like the President— may rightly feel himself threatened by jealous rivals who also aspire to that office, such as minister of parliament, district or party official, chief, headman, or clan ritual leader. He must therefore have the means to protect himself from the attacks of sorcerers, and in such a situation a derived power (i.e., charms, amulets, magic, etc. supplied by another) is naturally much less satisfactory in terms of personal safety than to control that power oneself, that is, to act as one's own witch doctor. Second, the various leaders of society (e.g., chief, headman) and the clan (e.g., mwinimbumba, "owner of the matrilineage") must also have sufficient magical force at their disposal to protect all those who are under their care, both from the witches that lurk within the group as well as those that threaten it from without.

Consequently, they often seek the power of sorcery in order to defend their own security and interests, as well as those of the group which they are responsible for. Ironically, a village that lacks sorcerers in its midst is considered to be weak (a socialized adaptation of the principle of inoculation) and thus can easily fall prey to the invading mfiti of other areas. Similarly, any respected leader should also have the corresponding power to punish any who are discovered to have committed such an offense—to "fight fire with fire," as it were. If the chief, for example, does not personally possess this magical strength, then it is up to him to provide for his people by summoning the necessary specialists to his aid, whether legitimate (e.g., the witch-finder) or illegitimate (e.g., a contra-sorcerer). Obviously, the dividing line between the beneficial (group-oriented) and the harmful (self-focused) use of magic is frequently difficult to distinguish. A leader may, for example, decide to employ the former merely out of selfish interests, to keep himself at the top and to enforce his own unpopular decisions on the community. As Nadel (1935:447) described the situation among the Nupe (of Nigeria): "The organization of anti-witchcraft magic became a political weapon by means of which the king exercised a special spiritual as well as economic power over the country." Thus, all of the functions outlined above in one way or another manifest that paradox of power which witchcraft necessarily generates within society, even under the best of circumstances. The continual threat of a surprise attack requires the constant endeavor to put into effect supernatural counter-measures to ensure both individual and group security. Such self-defensive efforts, on the other hand, only serve to reinforce people's beliefs in the potency of their opponents' resources and their own vulnerability in a dynamic world that is filled with misfortune occasioned by human malice (Geschiere, 1997). For many, then, a serious internal insecurity bordering on paranoia develops, one which obviously contradicts or at least calls into question, the overt gregariousness and hospitality that characterize Bantu culture in the African context.

Interpersonal; The typical witchcraft cycle of provocation and response provides an outlet for the repressed feelings of hostility and aggression that result from the various dissensions generated by competition over land, property (inheritance), wives or husbands, political office, and so on. It is a socially accepted (not necessarily acceptable) device for externalizing such conflicts and for dealing with them in a way that is at least understandable, even if strongly censured, in the cultural context concerned. As Kluckhohn (1944) in agreement with (Rwiza, 2001) observed, "Every society restricts and channels the expression of hostility." Such a "safety-valve" (re)action would obviously be more necessary in situations where the general level of frustration and anxiety among the population were heightened due to widespread cultural change, social instability, economic distress, environmental calamity, or political repression. Some form of tension management is also needed where interpersonal kinship relationships are involved, such as within the Chewa matrilineage, for there are no other socially approved means of overtly expressing the pent-up anger, resentment, jealousy, and grudges that inevitably arise in comparatively small, face-to-face, non-stratified, and homogeneous communities of near relatives. It would simply be too shameful, for example, for one member of the family to bring an accusation against another at the chief's local court or to engage in physical combat to settle personal differences (Gershman, 2014). Even loud, verbal manifestations of vexation are frowned upon, although they frequently do occur. The only apparent recourse, then, is to turn to the realm of the invisible and anti-personal magic to provide both a cause (natural—malice/jealousy; mystical—appetite for flesh) and an effect (i.e., misfortune) for such feelings of disharmony and contention. There is a certain scapegoat mentality operating here, for it is deemed better for a few persons, often misfits themselves, to bear the guilt and blame for social problems rather than to allow the society as a whole to be torn apart by open strife and warfare (Malinowski). In this regard, the accusation of witchcraft/ sorcery acts to

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focus the implicit ambiguous or latent anxieties troubling the community upon a particular individual, the mfiti, so that they may be dealt with overtly in a concrete way and hence dissipated, or at least partially defused. This personal concentration of punishment is a primary response to what some analysts have termed the "collectivization of guilt" (Ma Mpolo, 1985), which is a symptomatic corporate defense mechanism (similar in many respects to the social psychology of dreams) that often operates in closed, communal settings.

According to this principle of collective culpability, the guilt and shame of one member of the clan is borne by all of the others, the elders in particular (Ma Mpolo 1990:40). The danger of this tendency to exteriorize or socialize guilt is that the individual concerned does not accept personal responsibility for wrongdoing, even if it is real. However, the advantage of handling serious interpersonal problems in this manner, particularly in more recent times, is that vengeance in cases of wrongdoing may be exacted magically rather than physically, thus preserving the essential fabric of social relations (Adeney, 1974). In older days, the only way to preserve the group from the effects of witchcraft was to eliminate the witch.

 However, since colonial and subsequent laws have banned such capital punishment, including ordeals intended to reveal the witches and sorcerers of an entire village, greater efforts are now made, at least overtly, to purify and rehabilitate offenders and hence to renew interpersonal harmony within the affected social unit. Thus, a diagnosed attack on one person has communal implications, and it is up to the leaders of the family or clan to find a solution that will not only restore the health of the victim of witchcraft, but also re-establish the unity and well-being of the social group.
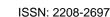
6.0.   Perceived Merits of Witchcraft in African Society

Witchcraft is a powerful deterrent factor against evil intentions like stealing, incest and murder in the African Societies (Lembani, 2020). It also has an educational function in that it keeps the norms and values of society alive (Brain, 1982). Witchcraft teaches a powerful lesson that non-conformity is dangerous. It thus acts as a strong force for social cohesion in myriad communities. What this says is that one should not depart from accepted norms, for any departure could bring isolation and eventual destruction, not only of the individual nonconformist, but also of society may ensue.

7.0.   Christian Response to Witchcraft in the societies

The Christian response to witchcraft and witchcraft accusations has varied at different periods and in different places in the society. Hayes (1995:345) notes that in Africa, beliefs in witchcraft and its practices are found among those who claim to have adopted Christianity and even those inclined to their indigenous religion. This is because despite Africans accepting Christianity, they still believe that there is mystical power governing the universe. Mbiti (1969:34) adds that Christians in Africa believe in witchcraft because Christianity seems not to meet their immediate social, religious, and cultural dilemmas. Africans regard witchcraft as the supposed power of a person to harm others by occult or supernatural means. A witch among the Africans as Akama (2006:17) observes does not choose to become a witch and the supposed harm does not necessarily arise from malice or intent. A sorcerer may use incantations, rituals and various substances in order to do harm while a witch does not. According to Rwiza (2001), most Africans believe that the power of witchcraft is mysterious, hidden and available to spirits and certain human beings who can manipulate it to their whims. Like in most African communities, among the West Africans it is believed that someone becomes a witch in any of the three ways. First, is through inheritance, the Ga people in Ghana observed by Adegbola (1983), believed that witchcraft is passed on from parents to their children, in other ways, it is intergenerational. Children thus became witches without their knowledge although they wait its practice until they attain puberty stage. Secondly, the Africans believe that witchcraft as a substance can be picked or bought from specialized people. Finally, they believe that witchcraft can be adopted or bought from other communities. Families believed to own witchcrafts are feared to an extent that affects social relations. This in turn affects development of all forms.

According to Lembani (2020), the Bantu communities in Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania among other African Countries hold a belief that the African knowledge of the power of magic helps them to find cause of misfortunes, troubles, detects thieves and those who harm others. They engage in magic with purpose of safeguarding life or to be feared so that property and personal property is protected. They also believe that the witchcraft power is resident in plants and animals and is manifested through spoken words or mediated through specialists. Belief and practice of witchcraft among the Abagusii of western Kenya for instance is similar to Gehman's (1990:82) explanation that belief in witchcraft is highly recognized by people in high government offices, rich urban dwellers and highly educated people most of who are sometimes Christians.

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Christianity was brought to Africa through the missionaries who were purposed to Christianize the people (Nyabwari, 2010). The Africans were loyal and accepted Christianity with its teachings. The missionary church established its mission stations in Africa with hopes that they would transform the lives of Africans. Those who accepted Christianity and were formally witches were asked to renounce their former beliefs and be fully committed to Christianity (Holmes, 1974). Their artifacts were burnt and others destroyed as soon as one confessed and promised to follow the newly found religion. The church gained popularity in Africa and attracted all people to it. Most of those who remained in the church tried to fulfill their traditional beliefs and practices whenever they felt that Christianity was not addressing their social, religious and cultural demands. The largest numbers of Africans according to this study belong to missionary churches which spearheaded preaching against witchcraft (Awolalu, 1979). Ironically, beliefs in witchcraft are widely embraced among the African Christians. Some of them keep human dry bones, snakes and birds in their rooftops in their houses with a view to retain powers in witchcraft. Others have charms in their clothes and marks on private parts of their bodies. These people nevertheless attend church services and others even participate in critical church activities. Despite spread of Christianity in Africa, many Christians still believe in the power of witchcraft. This is contrary to the Christian teachings offered in the churches.

Lembani (2020) in agreement with Tempels (1959) stated that Africans belief in the supreme value of life which is in tandem with the Christianity values. They further observe that the Africans central focus for existence is to acquire life, strength in life and protect his property. This prompted the action prevent misfortune. In traditional days and even in the era of Christianity prayer and rituals are made with a view of preventing life threatening happenings. Africans were asked by Christian missionaries to abandon magical practices which were described as being contrary to the will of God. (Forte, 1960) discusses broadly on witchcraft. He provides an elaborate distinction between witchcraft and religion. However, he does not differentiate the witchcraft practiced by various communities. Magic and witchcraft are based on people's belief systems. Forte (1960) failed to show how the beliefs and practices were affected by Christianity. Africans feel and hate witchcraft, sorcery, magic and other mystical powers of darkness, therefore take stern measures to curb their activities. Missionary churches and governments claim that their aim is to deliver Africans from the fear of witchcraft (Chinua, 1958). Parrinder (1963) provides a list of the activities that both Christianity and most educated people think are counted or associated with witchcraft and other mystical powers in the African societies. He fails, to tell whether Christianity is adequate in dealing with the same in the eyes of Africans.

According to Mbiti (1969) focuses on two kinds of magical practitioners that is the medicine men whose worth is beneficial and sorcerer. He shows that a medicine man medicines powers and calling from the divine/ancestral spirit – calling is through dreams, visions or strong feelings. Mbiti does not indicate whether these two complement each other or not. Mutungi (1997) and Neivs (1979) discussed misconceptions surrounding witchcraft ills and beliefs. They showed for instance that people ran away from their homes and work places for fear of getting bewitched. Most Africans agree that one can acquire mysterious or mystical power from the spiritual world either to heal, protect or hurt others. But Lembani (2020) argues that It is not clear whether Christians also use these powers or not, however, more empirical and action research would be required for further inquiry. Walligo et al (1986) discussed the relationship between culture and world view. For Walligo (1986), culture is based on the people's worldview. It is the belief in witchcraft, curses, sorcery, magic and the practice of consulting medicine people. Based on this view therefore, it is hard for some elements of culture to be changed by external influences such as Christianity.

8.0.   Recommendations:

The researchers on witchcraft should collaborate with the universities of learning and community members when conducting research to allow for collective ownership of the rich knowledge gained from the communities.

There is need to establish a degree program in all the African Universities on witchcraft which formally should be known as; Intangible Cultural Heritage which seemingly and supposedly can be underpinned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The course is supposed to comprise practices such as; witchcraft, Social Behavior i.e. music, Traditional Knowledge, Instruments, Artefacts and Rituals among others. The program will help in understanding and demystification of witchcraft and other mystical powers engulfing the society.
The universities and community members collaborate in fostering change. Government line ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations should work in partnership with people who are in dire need of knowledge and skills. All stakeholders in development should participate actively in improving their lives.

Some African societies are bereft of this significant indigenous knowledge and skills required for their daily survival. They survive by chance in some cases. Usually, this indigenous knowledge is provided to community

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people in the society when things get out of hand or in the event that someone is found wanting as regards matters of mystical powers.

The Christianity religion must be engaged in research on witchcraft and African Development to understand the positive belief that witchcraft can bring positive results in the society such as; to cure diseases or solve problems, and also to understand that it can negatively be used to do evil. As Mbiti (1969) and Mbula (1975) observed that Africans believe witches and wizards are spirits, but that they carry out their nefarious activities as human beings, animals or insects among others.

9.0.   Conclusion:

Over millennia, witchcraft beliefs provided both an answer to the existential question of why unfortunate events happen to people and a guide to dealing with their alleged source. As shown by Evans-Pritchard (1937) in the textbook case of the Azande, believers view witchcraft as the ultimate explanation of a misfortune, which does not contradict their understanding of its natural proximate cause. Death, disease, accidents, and crop failure have been the typical misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, with a more complete and up to-date list also including generic business problems, joblessness, infertility, marital issues, exploitation, and even enslavement among others.

Although witchcraft, magic and other mystical powers are understood to mean different things to different people in the society, there are characteristics that are common. Witchcraft: is connected to the supernatural; explains situations that are societal outliers and mystical; is practiced at different levels of hierarchy in power and impact; has overall negative effects on human beings; can be counterattacked through higher hierarchy of witchcraft or through other supernatural means.

A part from witches who seem to be the beneficiaries of the "craft", society seems to have overall negative effects; even those who claim to be "healed" live haunted by fear for those had bewitched them. Society therefore continues to be hampered by dysfunctional relationships and mistrust thrives. Such communities cannot flourish. In schools, students suffer negative effects of witchcraft such as phobia, isolationism, school drop-out, physical illnesses, hallucinations, violence and crime and poor academic performance. Educational administrators, leaders and curriculum developers must therefore work together to address the witchcraft phenomena. This should be done in a way to empower students to learn to relate with others, and to address salient matters in a healthy manner. They should also be trained to identify how to address their own challenges without blaming it on others. In addition to guidance and counseling for psychological issues, students should be trained on how to handle spiritual matters amicably. It is important to also help teachers address issues of witchcraft because they too, as members of the society, suffer the consequences of witchcraft, real or imagined. Hence, chaplaincy departments can be used in addressing spiritual matters for the whole school. When such Christian leaders of integrity exorcise demons or heal afflicted persons, unlike in witchcraft, there is no fee involved, not night/secret consultations, and the outcome is freedom. Continued freedom of the recipient should culminate in the improvement of interpersonal relationships through continuous exercise of Christian disciplines. Forgiving wrongdoers and striving to live harmoniously with each other as God's people created in God's image becomes a priority. The fruit of Christian living should thus be evidenced in the world. On the contrary, the effects of witchcraft "relieve" does not address relational problems and the ultimate effect is continued fear, mistrust and sometimes despair. It is therefore unfortunate to see that Christian immaturity continues to affect Christian believers, subjecting them to beliefs and fear of witchcraft. Christ calls Christian believers to mature in faith in order to be offer solutions to the world, even on matters of effects related to witchcraft (1 Cor. 3: 1-4; Heb. 10: 12-4).

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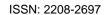
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