



NORWEGIAN  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**THE TRAGEDY OF ELDER ABUSE AND WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS: A  
CHALLENGE TO CHURCH'S MISSION IN THE ELCT, ELVD SUKUMALAND,  
TANZANIA**

**MARY STAISSON MARIKI**

**SUPERVISOR  
PROFESSOR MARION GRAU**

*This Master's Thesis is carried out as a part of the education at  
MF Norwegian School of Theology and is therefore approved as a part of this education.*

MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2017, Spring  
AVH5010, Master's Thesis (60ECTS)

Master in Theology

(36,868 word count)

## DEDICATION

To my lovely family who shared life with me in a world of many colors and to all church ministers in Tanzania.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“O God, from my youth thou hast taught me, and I still proclaim thy wondrous deeds.

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,

Till I proclaim thy might to all the generations to come Thy power”

Psalms 71:17-18

I most sincerely thank the Almighty God to whom my strength is renewed and my way is guided all through to this achievement.

Special thanks to MF School of Mission and Theology for granting me this scholarship and all of their support during my studies. I’m humbled to the Norwegian Royal Government for funding my studies in two years. Also my gratitude is extended to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Northern Diocese for their support and Tumaini University Makumira for bridging my studies further.

A very special word of thanks is offered to my supervisor Prof. Marion Grau who guided and advised me so dearly until this final mark of my work. Her passionate heart and patience, knowledge and skills in guiding me from my skeleton drafts to this good look and readable work are incredible. May God bless you!

I’m also indebted to Sist. Aud Nottveit, Malfrid Norum, and Rev. Tabi Julius Izza who helped me in proofreading my thesis. Your love and support is incredible. May God bless you!

My heartfelt thanks goes to my lovely family, my father Staison Mariki and my mom Elly who encouraged me and help me to live my dreams until I made it this far. Thanks to my fiancé who has always been there for me and showed love and support, and our relatives for their constant prayers and support.

Sincere thanks to Rev. Dr. Angela Olotu, Rev. Habakuki Lwendo, Regional attorney Hon. Gadiel Mariki and Hon. Emily Kiria, Rev. Mimii, Rev. Julia and all parish pastors and informants in Mwanza, Geita and Simiyu who assisted me during my field work.

The map of Lake Zone regions in Tanzania



## ABBREVIATIONS

ELCT- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

ELCA- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

ELVD- East of Lake Victoria Diocese

JAMA- Journal of America Medical Association

LHRC- Legal and Human Rights Centre

LWF- Lutheran World Federation

Lev- Leviticus

NGO- Non-Government Organization

RSV- Revised Standard Version

VIPAA- Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, East of the Lake Victoria Diocese's mission work addresses the challenge of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations. Furthermore this study looks at the strategies and their implementation in regard to elder abuse, in the form of killings and witchcraft related in Sukumaland. The study wants to alert the Lutheran church, government and the community in general to join together and put more effort in the fight against elder abuse.

This study uses a qualitative approach for relevant data collection and accessibility to the correct information by hearing, talking and discussing direct with the informants. Data collection about elder abuse, its factors, how elder abuse is done in Sukumaland, how it became a challenge to ELCT and the response of the Lutheran church, were done through interviews with the church leaders, affected families, government leaders and other community members. The materials in this study are thematically analyzed and more of the discussion in chapter four, five and six which I concludes and give recommendations.

I found that the Lutheran Church in Sukumaland, does not only help to encounter the occurrence of elder abuse (and often killings of the elderly) but also have played a negative part unknowingly. The preaching and testimonies about the existence of witches have made people believe that those who are accused of being witches are enemies of society, and hence church teachings contributed to elder mistreatment in the form of killings that continue in certain places in Sukumaland. Also the church has been self-limited that many people from outside the church got no access to services like diakonia. This study calls the church to make self-assessment of its teachings and services, also the government to put more effort in fighting elder abuse.

# Contents

- DEDICATION..... i
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... ii
- ABBREVIATIONS..... iv
- ABSTRACT..... v
- CHAPTER ONE..... 1
- 1.1 Introduction..... 1
- 1.2 Chapter arrangement and development..... 3
- 1.3 Background of the problem..... 3
- 1.4 Statement of the problem..... 5
- 1.5 Aim of the study..... 6
- 1.6 Research questions..... 6
- 1.7 Objectives/purpose of the study..... 7
- 1.8 Significance of the study..... 7
- 1.9 Scope..... 8
- CHAPTER TWO..... 9
- 2.0 Methodology Chapter..... 9
- 2.1 Methodological approach and sources..... 9
- 2.2 Qualitative Research Method..... 10
- 2.3 Inductive theory..... 10
- 2.4 Interview method..... 11
- 2.5 Interview Process..... 11
- 2.6 Analysis of the material..... 12
- 2.7 Ethical considerations..... 12
- 2.8 Theoretical framework..... 12
- 2.9 Selection of the Informants..... 13
- 2.2.1 Interview guide..... 14
- 2.2.2 Work plan..... 15
- 2.2.3 Problems encountered..... 16
- 3.0 CHAPTER THREE..... 18
- 3.1 Introduction..... 18
- 3.2.2 Historical background of Sukuma..... 18

3.2.3 Cultural life and Social life.....	19
3.2.4 Religious life.....	20
3.2.5 The Sukuma myth of origin.....	21
3.2.6 Conclusion.....	22
CHAPTER FOUR.....	23
4.0 ELDER ABUSE IN SUKUMALAND.....	23
Introduction.....	23
4.2 Reasons/factors for elder abuse (killings) in Sukumaland.....	25
Witchcraft belief.....	25
Poverty.....	30
Family problems/conflicts.....	31
Envy.....	33
Illiteracy.....	34
Traditional and cultural beliefs.....	34
Role played by witchdoctors, traditional healers and soothsayers.....	36
Unemployment.....	37
Gender based issues.....	38
4.3 Human rights concern.....	39
4.4 Witchcraft Act.....	40
4.5 How elder abuse is done in Sukumaland.....	42
4.6 Elder abuse (killings): The challenge to the ELCT, church in Sukumaland.....	43
4.7 The general effects of elder abuse in Sukumaland.....	50
Conclusion.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE.....	53
5.0 THE RESPONSE OF THE ELCT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....	53
Introduction.....	53
5.1 Response of the church leadership.....	53
5.2 Analysis and discussion of the findings.....	61
Introduction.....	61
Description and analysis of.....	61
(A) Approaches by the church.....	61
(B) Response and suggestions made by the Informants in addressing the issue of elderly mistreatment.....	67
Conclusion.....	72



CHAPTER SIX.....	73
6.0 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	73
Introduction.....	73
6.2 Sociological recommendations.....	81
6.3 Economic recommendations.....	82
6.4 Community groups.....	86
Published books.....	89
Journals and articles.....	92
Electronic sources.....	92
APPENDIX.....	94

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Introduction

The Lutheran church in Sukumaland have been challenged by the problem of the elder abuse, that the message of love which they preach, the message of God's love to the world and love to one another, why are the killings still happening? If God is all-powerful, why doesn't he calm the situation of unrest and evil deeds? These questions can probably be a sign of confusion and despair. Tanzania have different denominations with unique characters that identifies them, but they cooperate together in different spiritual and social matters. This study is specifically dealing with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). My focus will be in East Diocese of Lake Victoria in Sukumaland, and concentrate in one particular form of elder abuse which is physical abuse (killings), that recent have been happening.

Golub has defined elder abuse as "Mistreatment of an older adult that threatens his or her health or safety" (Golub 2011:568). There are various ways in which elderly people may feel mistreated within different contexts and conditions like in public health centers. Old people can feel that are treated in unsatisfactory ways likely because of their social class or economic class. They can probably have the same feeling in some of the public transports which in Tanzania especially rural areas is the main means of transport. It is important to clarify the understanding of elder abuse as noted by Golub,

Types of elder abuse are neglect, financial or material mistreatment and psychological mistreatment. Neglecting elderly people in their needs like physical or medical care, discrimination based on disability is the form of abuse. Psychological mistreatment includes threat, harm or verbal abuse. Material or financial mistreatment includes exploitation, conflicts regarding wills and inheritance and many other forms (Golub 2011:68).

These categories bring broader range of how elder abuse may seem. In this thesis psychological mistreatment (others have named it as physical abuse) is considered as one kind of elder abuse that is in the form of killings, while conflicts regarding inheritance are among the reasons for elder abuse.

The response of the Lutheran church to the problem of elder abuse and witchcraft allegations, Berkouwer admits that is grounded from the form which the church claims to take. He says, "The more the church claims to be, the more the question arises as to how obvious the statements made about the church really are" (Berkouwer 1976:7).

This suggests that, the church's claims of been a place for the marginalized, humiliated and shield should be practically done not only from the claims but also from what it meant to be (church's mission on earth). Needham added, "The primarily goal of the existence of the church on earth is to forsake for its mission and not otherwise" (Needham 1987:52). The church has been working within communities where others are mistreated, threatened to be killed and others are already killed. These events challenge the understanding of the meaning of the gift of life that God has given us. Accusations to the elderly of being witches happen to both older men and women in Sukumaland in most of rural areas. Witchcraft has become a problem in Sukumaland and people are searching for whatever possible solution and the source of their problems as noted by Behringer, "In the search for uncertainties of life and why's, man is struggling with possible and impossibilities, fight with laws of nature in transcending them" (Behringer 2004:7). The Lutheran church in Sukumaland has been working within these societies, amongst the people who are stranded, and physically and mentally affected by what have been happening (killings).

All these challenge the work of mission by the Lutheran church as not only concerned with spiritual growth of people but also people's general life, working together to maintain peace and harmony in the community. Challenges are inevitable when trying to accomplish church's missional work to the world, the mission that originated from God Himself (*Missio Dei*). Mission can be understood as being sent. Mathew 28 prove this when Jesus sent His disciples to the world to proclaim the Word of God, (Bosch 1991:5). Kirk added that, "Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life, and the whole human life is life in mission" (Kirk 1999: 31). As long as the call by God is a call to service then our whole life is life in mission, is the life of serving. The church is involved in the study not only as an institution but also as a Christian caring community. It is in touch with God and the world as Needham argues, "The church cannot exist in isolation from the world and remain the people of God" (Needham 1987:36). It should act as a transforming fellowship within the community. The church is the vessel to carry God's mission on earth, it is called and sent to the world. The term church has been understood in different ways, through its symbols, its identity and elements. Costas has presented his understanding of church;

"The church is an agent of the Holy Spirit and the great executor of God's mission, with the image of God's people (1Peter 2:9-10), body of Christ. It means the Christ's work in the world it is in His hands and fee, His mouth and voice" (Costas 1974:8&23-26).

Pannenberg explained the understanding of the church as “The symbol and instrument of human unity” (Pannenberg 1977:21). From my perspective, the church can also mean me and you (believers) who believe in Jesus Christ, is the communion of the believers who are sisters and brothers in Christ, sharing happiness and sadness, and helping each other in different ways and needs.

## 1.2 Chapter arrangement and development

Chapter one gives a general introduction of the problem of the elder abuse (killings) in Sukumaland, context of the study and its limits. Chapter two presents a methodology part of the study and how data were collected, the analysis of the material and applied theories. Chapter three introduces Sukuma people historically, their social and cultural life that helps to understand the link between the study (elder abuse) and Sukuma background.

Chapter four is contented with elder abuse in the form of killings in Sukumaland, what are the people saying, how older people are perceived, that lead us to know why are they mistreated in the form of being killed. Chapter four also will takes us deep into understanding the connection and relation between the given reasons for the elderly mistreatment, how the real situation is and the understanding of the Sukuma attitudes towards old people. Chapter five presents and analyzes the response by the Lutheran church in Tanzania specifically the targeted area (Sukumaland), what steps have been taken by the Lutheran church in Sukumaland, how big the tragedy of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations have been a hindrance to the Lutheran’s church mission work and their suggestions to the next step of struggling with the problem of elderly mistreatment.

Chapter six gives general conclusion and recommendations for tackling the problem of elder abuse (killings) in Sukumaland. Chapter six is mainly presenting possible suggestions which adds up to what have been done as an effort to stop mistreating old people/killings them.

## 1.3 Background of the problem

Tanzania is an East African country estimated to be populated with 52 million people, it is noted to be one of the highest birth rate country in the world. More than 44. 8% of the populations are people under the age of 15 years, 52% age between 15-64 and 3.1% over the age of 64. Sukuma is a big tribe which takes a big number of Tanzanian populations than any other tribes. It covers 16% of the whole population which is equal to 5.5 million people according to 2012 census report. Tanzania has around 120 tribes with different cultures and

religious beliefs mainly Christians and Muslims. Although the government does not collect data for religious identification, religious leaders have presented that 50% of the country population are Christians while the other 50% are Muslims. According to 2010 pew forum survey, Christians covers 60%, Muslims 36% while the remained 4% percentage goes to other religions and beliefs like Hindu and traditional religion. (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2012).

Tanzanian tribes have different cultures which identifies them from another. Cultural practices from one tribe may differ from the other and sometimes can be misinterpreted or not being totally understood by others. In association with traditions and norms, the struggle to fit to its social context has resulted to claims and accusations for some people been responsible to disasters which have been happening in the societies. Events like lack of rain for a long period of time, diseases and other related issues have been associated to witchcraft. This has been rooted in traditional beliefs of African world which Healey& Sybertz argued, “It includes complex interaction between God, mysterious powers, the spirit world and ancestors” (Healey& Sybertz 1997:292). Middleton& Winter added,

Many of the African societies believe most of the misfortunes, however small are due to witchcraft. Most illness, miscarriages, sterility, difficult child births, poor crops, sickly livestock and poultry, bad luck in hunting and sometimes lack of rain are caused by witches. Witches are believed to be aware of their witchcraft acts and are able to bewitch any person except their fellow witches who have more power than theirs, (Middleton& Winter 1978:63-64)

Mbiti states that, “All cultures possess some traditional and historical things that sometimes are nonsense in their outdated form” (Mbiti 1991:24). These traditional and historical things are what Behringer have termed as “Lack of alternative ways of explaining misfortunes and lack of concept contingency” (Behringer 2004:7). The “lack” of suitable ways and forms of explanation in strange occurrence of events in the societies resulted to categorization of some events as witchcraft. It implies that, witchcraft is contextually and socially constructed term that can have different meanings according to the context. Thus depict Keith Thomas’ argument, “Our understanding of witchcraft has thus become bound up with our view on the process of acculturation or as it is sometimes named ‘the reform of the popular culture’” (Thomas 1971:21).

Besides religious faith, people tend to search for solutions to their problems through different ways, in example from the diviners, medicine men and traditional healers. Recently, this has contradicted people when deciding upon right ways to solve their problems according to what

have been happening in some regions in Tanzania. Old people are been killed accused of being witches in Sukumaland. The United Nations acknowledges that “Globally, old people face poverty, discrimination, abuse, and even death, in part as a result of attitudes toward old age” (Spielman 2012:55)

Sukuma has been mentioned among ethnic groups which have deep faith in traditional beliefs and looking for help and solution of theirs problems from witch doctors (positive name for the diviners or healers as opposed to witch, sorcerer or wizard who uses magic in an evil way) (Healey & Sybertz 1997:292). These beliefs have contributed to the ongoing situation of elder abuse in Sukumaland as described in chapter four.

#### 1.4 Statement of the problem

2010/2011 World Bank report, presented that Tanzania has an estimation number of 2,507,568 elderly people aged 60 and above. This account for 5.6% of its population (World Bank Report, 2012). With the growing number of elders population, the challenge of taking care of them and provide for their wellbeing is big. Lange in his presentation of the topic ‘The dignity of the old: Towards a Global Ethic of Ageing, he made an argument on the same point;

As the number of elderly grows, their economic, social and cultural well-being is at risk, especially in developing countries. We have to consider, therefore, whether public theology can be of any help in supporting and guarantee the role of the elderly as full participants in a global society. We must ask how the moral and spiritual sources of the Christian tradition can inspire the world on what it means to live a worthy human life at an old age (Lange 2009:211).

The fact is that majority of old people live in rural areas. The challenge is to provide them with all necessities. In their age the struggle they are making to overcome the life situation (farming, cattle rearing), biologically their physical appearance develops changes like wrinkles. These changes of the old’s appearance have kept them in a suspect condition of being witches. This was confessed by one informant,

(...) “Some of them have become a threat to little kids, when they see them they run away or cry just because of their look, having too much wrinkles and red eyes”, said M (Interview with M, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Behringer maintains that “Intensive witch-beliefs are in no way confined to rural areas or the uneducated people” (Behringer 2004:14). This has been true for many of the reported cases of witch accusations and killings are from rural areas. The increase in the number of old people, together with the challenges they face, brings about the requirements for both national

(government) and international levels to address the needs and rights of this vulnerable segment of the population within the society (Human Rights Report 2014:187).

New approaches to face the everyday challenges which are arising in our societies are needed especially for the current situation in Sukumaland where aged people are killed, and accused of been witches. Although there are some African societies which still honor old people, others have turned the honor into disrespect and disgrace. In Tanzania elderly people are still respected as they are believed to have great wisdom in warning and educating, although in some regions elderly mistreatment in the form of killings has been happening as described in detail in chapter four and five. The perception of aging and old people has slowly changed from wise ones to witches. Apart from different reports given about the killing of albinos in Sukumaland Tanzania, lately arose the belief of witchcraft, and abusing old people by killing them as suspects to witches. The causative factors are mentioned as aspire to wealth, family conflicts, livestock and land conflicts. This has been a big challenge to the aged and their surrounding community including the church and its mission work.

The study will focus on the approaches and plans made by the church and how those plans are implemented to overcome this challenge of elderly mistreatment and witchcraft accusations. Analysis and discussion on how the plans are carried out will be included together with government and non-government organizations responses, leaders and community at whole. Informants proposed approaches will be credited to this study too and presented in detail.

### 1.5 Aim of the study

This study aims at investigating on the church's mission work as challenged by the tragedy of witchcraft and mistreatment of the elderly people in Sukumaland, seeking on what and how to meet the challenges, the approaches and implementations of the planned strategies by the church to encounter the problem. The church has been taken as the tool to carry out the message of hope, justice and voices of the voiceless as it have an accessibility to meet many people in a short time through different services which are offered.

This study will be part of the voices to join hands to the fight against elder abuse especially on the current situation in Sukumaland where there are so many reported cases.

### 1.6 Research questions

This study is guided by the main question

- How does the Tragedy of Witchcraft and Elder Abuse has challenged the church's mission?

To explore and understand the question, these questions are important to understand;

- What are the causative factors and the impacts of elder abuse /killings to the church and society?
- What is the connection between witchcraft and elderly killings in Sukumaland?
- What are the cultural and theological perspectives of witchcraft as understood by the church and the Sukuma people in relation to elderly people?
- What is the response of the church to the challenge of elderly killings in its mission work?
- How big the problem of elderly killings is and who are mostly affected people in terms of gender?
- What are the strategies/plans made by the church/government to eradicate the problem?

### 1.7 Objectives/purpose of the study

The following are the objectives of the study;

1. To examine why elder abuse (killings) is very open and increasing in Sukumaland where God's love should prevail?
2. To explore the meaning of life and the value of old people in Sukumaland
3. To identify and make recommendations to the church, government and the society on how to deal with the challenge of elder abuse (killings) in Sukumaland

### 1.8 Significance of the study

The study is dealing with "The Tragedy of Witchcraft Accusations and Elder Abuse as a challenge to the Church's mission in the ELCT East Diocese of Lake Victoria in Sukumaland, Tanzania. Some research has been done within and outside the country concerning witchcraft but not specifically related to the church's mission. These are some of the research which were done; "The Belief in Witchcraft as an obstacle to the Christian Faith and social Development among the Sukuma- ELCT East of Lake Victoria Diocese" by Andrew Gulle, (2004), and another study is "Witchcraft and Witch-Killings in Tanzania Paradox and Dillema" by Mesaki Simeon (1993). Apart from that, there are no studies about the tragedy of witchcraft accusations and elder abuse in relation to the church as a challenge to its mission work. This study will try to look at how witchcraft accusations and elder abuse have been the



challenge to the church and its mission, efforts which have been done by both the government and the church to deal with the issue and how far have they reached, the study also will challenge the church to be part of the solution and the voice for the affected people by making new plans and strategies if the previous strategies has ended/failed.

### 1.9 Scope

Sukumaland is big, it have four regions. The study is limited to Mwanza and Simiyu regions specifically Geita and Bariadi districts where the statistics of elder abuse/killings is reported to be high. Along with that, the scope is bound up within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, East of Lake Victoria Diocese.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 Methodology Chapter

#### 2.1 Methodological approach and sources

This study falls under the discipline of missiology and is using a qualitative approach. As the part of my study, questioned theological texts in relation to the discussion of witchcraft and the response of the Lutheran church is discussed. Empirical data from the interviews and documentary materials concerning elder abuse and witchcraft accusations, and reference of the church and its mission works are connected as they refer to peoples social and spiritual worlds. The church is connected here as a theological tool to intersect its work of mission and the social challenges of its people that happens in Sukumaland especially the challenge of elder abuse. Qualitative approach has given more room for discussion with different people through interviews.

The qualitative approach also included documentary analysis from different sources like church documents and regional reports about elder abuse, the killings of the elderly and reports from different NGO'S. In order to achieve the aim of the study concerning the mistreatment of the elderly in Sukumaland, which aims at looking for possible solutions, either those which are already done or are in the process to be implemented by the church to overcome the challenge of the tragedy of the elderly mistreatment, how the church has been the voice to fight against the tragedy of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations, which efforts succeeded for both government and the church and the community in general, the focus and application of empirical materials of data collection by interviews, information from different reports about the problem and discussion with people. Relevant literatures for the study like books, journals, reports, articles, other people's thesis about elder abuse and witchcraft (published and unpublished materials) and electronic sources all available at MF and other accessible libraries, ELCT East of the Lake Victoria Diocese, Tumaini University Makumira library and Mwanza regional office, Geita and Bariadi districts and state reports which relates to the study are used.

For the books concerning witchcraft I will use Wolfgang, Behringer, (2004): *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* which talks much about the meaning of witchcraft, witchcraft beliefs and how it is perceived in Europe and a bit of its understanding in Africa. Along with this I will also refer to some books like Lenny, Largerwerf, (1987): *Witchcraft, Sorcery*, Tanner, Ralph. S., (1967): *Transition in African Beliefs, Traditional Religion and Christian*

*Change: A Study in Sukumaland, Tanzania, East Africa and Spirit Possession: Pastoral Responses in Africa*, and some other books. Research methodology book which is referred to is Alan, Bryman (2012): *Social Research Methods, 4th ed.* In order to connect and balance the study, I also referred to different books about the church, mission and diakonia.

## 2.2 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research method is applied to this study in order to dig deep the information concerning the tragedy of witchcraft and elder abuse. Qualitative research is applied to this study to give room for more detailed information and discussion. Denzin& Lincoln have named qualitative method as “Field of inquiry” (Denzin& Lincoln 2008:3). Qualitative research method in this study has provided relevant data collection and accessibility to the correct information by hearing, talking and discussing direct with the informants.

During field work I visited Sukumaland, I met with the intended informants (church leaders, affected families, government leaders and others), and talk about witchcraft and elder abuse. Strauss& Corbin argues that;

The qualitative research method is chosen by many researchers because of the closeness it brings between the researcher and the informants which reveals their inner experiences eventually assist in exploring the gap between what was done and what is not done in regard to the concerned topic (Strauss& Corbin 2010:5).

In this study, qualitative research method helped to acquire the informant’s inner experience and perceptions to the world and their social environment through talks, discussions and sharing their life situation. It is important to face the reality of what is happening in Sukuma rather than what I would have been hearing and reading from reports about elder abuse (killing) and witchcraft accusations in Sukumaland.

## 2.3 Inductive theory

This study has applied inductive theory in which I inferred the implications of the findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise as Bryman has explained that it shows how the findings and the interpretations of those findings are inferred, (Bryman 2012:578). This implies that the findings are presented, interpreted and discussed. In this study this theory has helped not only to present the findings but also reasoning, challenging what has been said/ written and make suggestions and conclusions.

## 2.4 Interview method

The applied empirical method in this study is semi-structured interviews. Bryman mentions the interview method as the best method for the collection of the qualitative data compared to other methods like ethnography which needs participation with the studied context (people) and long period of observation, (Bryman 2012:469). In this study, semi-structured interview is used by been guided with some questions (Interview guide). Different questions were written down and categorized in three parts namely; Questions for the pastors and other church leaders, questions for government and non-government leaders and the third category was for affected families and all other members (Christians and non- Christians) of the community.

Horrocks & King have quoted Rorty (1979) who defined interview as “How knowledge is constituted through conversation and social practice, bringing social interaction and sharing experiences and at the end knowledge is brought into being” ( Horrocks& King 2010:17). Interview method became very helpful for this study as the social interaction is what catalyzes the conversation and has brought more freedom of talking with the informants. Interview method was chosen in order to get direct access and clear information from the intended informants and get direct contact with them. Kvale (1996) was quoted by Horrocks& King stressing on the same point that, “If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?” (Horrocks& King 2010:7). Getting into the intended area of the study (Sukumaland) and talk directly to people have given me more access to some other information which I could not have found them as written or presented anywhere else.

As I have explained above, this method enabled direct access to the people to hear and to understand how the situation is rather than what I could have read on books or reports although what are already written can be supportive to what have been said. It provided clear data by observing the moods of the informants when explaining the situation and their views and opinions which in one way were not considered/had nobody to present them.

## 2.5 Interview Process

Through the process of interview, In some places, I was challenged by the situation where by some of the interviewees were not ready to give all information, either because they knew it is a research and still many cases of killings were in operation. This challenge was met by considering ethical issues and establishment of good communication to the informants to let them be free to talk and assuring them security in terms of what they explain, and provide anonymity of their names and informing them that the study is just for school matters not for

government issues. From the very beginning I introduced what I should be responsible of, what were the interviewee's responsibility, respect for each other, speaking ethically and the use of polite language. Sometimes the questions were repeated in order to be understood, it helped the process to be a bit easier, well clarification of the asked questions saved time because the interviewees were answering direct to the point of what was asked. Also informants had freedom to choose where to meet and by which time, it helped to have more trust that wasn't a plan to involve them to any killing case rather a talk to share what was going on, views and opinions on what should be done to eradicate the situation. Through the process some of the conversations were recorded and some notes were written down to ensure that everything said is kept for presentation and analysis.

## 2.6 Analysis of the material

The materials in this study are thematically analyzed. The interviews and the discussion of data are in themes. Themes have been presented and more of its discussion in chapter four, chapter five and chapter six in which recommendations are given. It has given more room for the reader to follow the systematic flow of the materials and understand what is to be next in the presentation. It also helps to connect the ideas of one chapter with the other.

## 2.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics were observed by respecting the interviewee's cultural norms and personal ethics, letting them know my ethical principles and assuring the interviewees that all the information will be confidential through all the interview session, and their names will not appear in my study. Respect between the researcher and the informants is highly considered, the careful use of accepted language in their community (there are some words which cannot be said in public or to a person who is older than you), and the conversations were recorded when the informant permitted to do so, otherwise notes were taken. The researcher tried not to interfere with the informant's privacy by avoiding to insist for information which the informant feels is very personal to share, and provide anonymity in the presentation of the information obtained (Bryman 2012:135-136).

## 2.8 Theoretical framework

This study is organized and shaped under social construction theory which explains that many of the societal problems are defined according to social reaction of people within the respective society. Spielman have observed that;

Social attitudes affect moral thinking about old people and shape the criteria by which persons are categorized as old. The criteria most often chosen are chronological, physical, and social; all are shaped through processes shaped by social attitudes (Spielman 2012:57)

Middleton & Winter have presented Brown's view about social theory within the context of religion and present religion as

“An important part of the social machinery as is morally and law part of the complex system by which human beings are enabled to live together under social relations (Middleton & Winter 1978:282).

Thus makes sense in this study affirming the place of the church (Lutheran church in Sukumaland) in contributing in socially constructed norms to maintain peace, justice and social relations within the society. Shorter is of the same argument, he says that, “Social analysis reveals that witchcraft accusations serves mechanisms of competition in enclosed communities” (Shorter 1985:95).

Within this social framework, different names and labels have been given to explain witchcraft and witch doctor. Witchcraft as I have explained earlier in Sukuma is understood as mystical evil power which is beyond human thinking mainly intending to harm while witchdoctor is defined by Shorter as traditional diviner-doctors in pre-literate societies, particularly in Africa (Shorter 1985:8). Words like elder abuse, mistreatment, witchcraft and elder killings will be used in this framework of study.

Michael stresses;

The study of killing elderly people relies on an analysis of the social context in which old age is perceived and experienced. The violent death of the elderly, geronticide, senecide, and often patricide and matricide, whether at the hands of oneself or of others, willingly or unwillingly is a social phenomenon, an outcome of social evaluations of the older person's worth, (Michael 2001:13)

## 2.9 Selection of the Informants

In this paper I will consider elderly people as those old people aged 60 and above, both male and female. The selection of informants includes all groups of people (old, youth) and status (government leaders, church leaders, church members, high economic status people, low economic status people and people outside the church (non-Christians) as long as the problem affects all people). The selection of informants is categorized into three; Church leaders, government and non-government leaders, affected families that include all other members of the society. To avoid bias, I did not seek any supportive information in confirming the study, the study is based on what was said and explained by the informants.

Also the issue of setting was considered. The interviewee was not influenced by anything, the information from both rural and urban places was considered and helped to weigh out how big the problem is. Through these plans and techniques the study has attempted to reduce bias as much as possible. The informants are from different places, churches and offices. The church leaders, government and non-government leaders were from different regions of Geita, Mwanza and Bariadi, also pastors were from different parishes. All other informants and the affected families were also from different places but within the scope of the study. Some of the government offices are located in urban areas thus I was able to visit rural areas for the other informants such as the affected families, as I have mentioned earlier that many mistreatment (killing) incidents are reported to be done in rural areas.

The total number of members interviewed was thirty (34). There was an interview with twelve (12) church leaders (ministers) which included seven pastors (7), two evangelists (2) and three church workers in different church departments namely diakonia and advocacy department. Another one was nine (9) government and non-government leaders which was composed of three Attorney in charge of the Geita region and Bariadi District, one chief judge, three leaders from the center which takes care of the affected elderly and two village chairmen. Interview was also done with the affected families. I was able to interview three families which the first and the second families had 3 members and the third had two members. These families also suggested some people who had more information about what was going on. Through this way I got two more people to interview. There after I conducted an interview with 3 youths (two boys and one girl). All these interviews involved both well off and low economic standard people.

### 2.2.1 Interview guide

The interview process was conducted following the written down questions which targets different kinds of people. There were guiding questions for church leaders, questions for government and non-government leaders, affected families and other members in the area of the study (Sukumaland). Bryman argues that the interview guide helps the interviewer to glean the ways in which gives room for the informants in their social world and flexibility (Bryman 2012:473). The interview guide in this thesis has helped me to stick within the scope of the study and move from general notion of the study to specifics without losing focus while giving freedom to the interviewee to think broadly and be more confident in responding to what was being asked.

### 2.2.2 Work plan

The whole process of data collection was carried out during for approximately one and a half month, from June to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016 I surveyed the regions of Mwanza and Geita, specifically Ilemela, Nyamanoro and Pansiasi districts, which includes Lwenzera and Malya villages. I met with some people and made appointments. This was through visiting some offices (The government attorney general, police, office of the chairman of the village) and churches where I met with church and (non) government leaders. After introducing myself and brief explanation concerning the study, they were ready to share what they know on the planned dates. Through them I was directed to some families and other people (congregants) and make an appointment with them too.

On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016 I had an interview with government and non-government leaders individually in their working places, explaining and giving opinions about the situation of the mistreatment of the elderly and the killings which they confessed to have many reported cases with them. On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> interviews were conducted with one affected family which had three members, this was a visit to their home.

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016 after church service the interviews were conducted by some of the church leaders (pastors, evangelists and leaders from church departments like diakonia and advocacy). The interview was conducted individually not as a group although pastor and evangelists were interviewed together because they were in the same office. For the leader of diakonia department, was not able to meet that day because she was travelling, so we postponed an interview with her and rescheduled it until 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 I had an interview with an old man aged 66 who shared his story on how he was accused of being a witch and how he ran away from his home village to escape being killed. On the same day another interview was conducted with two youths aged 24 and 20 from the church (Christians). On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 another interview with one youth (a muslim girl) was conducted, she shared her experience of how she has seen religious institutions fighting against the killings of the elderly in her community and what she understands about the killings.



July 5<sup>th</sup> another interview was conducted with two pastors from different parishes. One interview was in the morning and the other was in the afternoon. An interview with another pastor also was conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> at his home.

There after the postponed interview was finally made on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016, she was ready and free to share on how diakonia has helped to reach out people who are affected with the killings, which help they give and what is the situation out there when they pay a visit to them (affected people).

From there I was done with this place, 13<sup>th</sup> I travelled to Bariadi (Simiyu region, Ditwa ward) to survey the place and make appointments with people. I made appointments with 3 leaders of the centre where elderly who escaped from being killed are taken care, one family which had two members, 4 pastors and two lay people.

On 15<sup>th</sup> July the interview schedule resumed until 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 when the process ended up successful in the sense that, interviews were done, intended people were met and I got relevant materials for the study. Through the process confidentiality was highly considered by not naming the real name of the person, rather letters like L, M represents the informant's names.

### 2.2.3 Problems encountered

Limitations and challenges that were encountered throughout the study were language, financial viability and the problem of transparency. Language in the sense that questions needed to be translated to Swahili which is the Tanzanian official language, and as long as many killings are done in the rural areas as I have mentioned earlier, there was a need for a translator to Kisukuma (traditional language of Sukuma), and from kisukuma to Swahili (Tanzanian national language) especially for the aged interviewees who were not able to speak Swahili. The study was conducted far away from the researcher's residence which means that there were some travels, shelter and food expenses. Also as an African tradition specifically Tanzanian tradition, when we visit people especially old ones we cannot go in empty handed. Something can be bought like a kilo of sugar so I did when I visited those affected families which had old people.

Transparency arose as a challenge to a certain point in which was resolved on the process. At first people were not ready to disclose the information about the killings simply because many cases of elder-killings were still being investigated and persons interviewed were scared of

being suspects to those cases. Some people are afraid of telling the truth or to give all the information about the abuse of elders/killings as they think they will be caught been among the offenders. Many reported cases about elder abuse and killing cases are said to be done by the family members of the accused, so many of the affected families had a difficult time to talk about the issue as they were afraid to be caught as suspects. Also some of the interviewees did not meet the scheduled dates or time and had to be rescheduled. Though the process was consuming, it was ultimately successful.

These limitations/challenges were met by making earlier arrangements, setting out the whole schedule of the study, making preliminary surveys to the place (Sukumaland) to see if there will be a need for the translator or any other things which can arise, having enough budgets and ensuring people that the information will be secured and it is just for the study not for the government issues. Finally the process was successful and fruitful that I got to the place, I got people to interview, the interviews were done successful and the materials obtained are relevant to my study.

## 3.0 CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 Introduction

Human life cannot be understood out of his/her social environment that surrounds them. Their lives are more understood in relation to communities within which people are associated to, living and engaged in different daily activities. This view is supported by Needham, who argues that,

From the study by sociologists, human life and personality can only be understood in relation to the communities with which people are associated during the course of their lives (Needham 1987:77).

To Understand the Sukuma tribe among many other tribes in Tanzania it needs to study and relate the Sukuma people with their social, political, religious and even economic life. This chapter will present the historical background of Sukuma; cultural life, religious life, and social life.

### 3.2.2 Historical background of Sukuma

The Sukuma are originally Bantu-speaking people. Migrations, invasions and movements of people from early forms of Bantu speaking, in the first millennium AD, (1300 AD) are said to be the result of the relocation of the Sukuma from Western Uganda where they originated along with Nyamwezi to the current place they live (around the shores of Lake Victoria). Other people argue that the Basukuma originated from the Balongo tribe who lived on the Western side of Lake Victoria, the area which is now known as Geita District. Scattered settlements of the migrants were grouped according to their clans and “Ntemi” was an official traditional leadership of Sukuma people (Mirambo 2004:113).

The Sukuma lives in northwestern Tanzania on or near the southern shores of Lake Victoria, in which the territory was divided into nine administrative districts of Mwanza and Shinyanga Region but recently the division was done again as the Simiyu region was added (as indicated in the map in the preliminary pages) that includes Bariadi district, the area where the study is based specifically Ditwa ward. Sukuma people are divided into two groups namely Kimakia and Kisomayo but all are speaking same language (Kisukuma) (Mirambo 2004:114).

The Sukuma are practicing mixed farming, and are also hunters. Always boys are the one responsible to take the cattle to graze in the plains/communal grazing land. The crops of the Basukuma are mainly maize, millet, rice sweet potatoes and vegetables.

### 3.2.3 Cultural life and Social life

Like some of the other African societies, Sukuma has its own and unique way of living. Their social setting division is of three groups. Youths (boys and girls) who are named in kisukuma *basumba* (boys) & *banike* (girls). Both are still dependent to their parents to be taught different things about life in general. Boys are taught by their fathers while girls are taught by their mothers. These teachings are basically given to the boys during the evenings while sitting around the fire with their fathers. For girls they follow their mothers in the kitchen and been taught about how woman should be and behave.

Another group is that of greater/older youth which is called *nsumbantale*. This group is included in the first group of youth at some point but are the one who leads the youth. They supervise other youths to carry out their responsibilities properly in the community.

The last group is the group of elders which includes both men and women. This group of elders aims at educating and serving the whole community and to make sure that all cultural rules are kept, solving some of the family conflicts, and others considered as special and able to perform special Sukuma rituals on behalf of the others like conducting sacrifices to the departed ones, (Interview with N, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

The Basukuma are patrilineal society. Women always take care of their husbands and children and do all house chores. Marriage is conducted when person is ready to bear the responsibilities of marriage and family. Young people are initiated into adulthood in a ceremony known as *lhane*. Is a known ceremony for the greater youth to enter into the elder's group. Young people who are involved in "*lhane*" ceremony have to be well prepared by both parents and the group of elders. Respected elders of the community teach these youth about their roles and responsibilities in the family and the whole community. The initiates are expected to think, act and participate as adults in all rituals. After '*lhane*' the initiates are considered as adults and they cannot be asked to deliver messages anywhere, as it is a job for non-initiates (Mirambo 2004:115).

Informant G describes that Sukuma have a family trend of extended family which relates from one generation to the other. Even when a person from a certain family become a witch doctor they can trace back to the previous generations to see who was a witchdoctor in the family or clan. He said,

(...) “Becoming a witch doctor was not something which a person does willingly in order to get money, it is related to the generations of the ancestors who were witchdoctors and seers many years ago” (Interview with G, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2016).

Apart from this interrelationship of generations, another issue is about the relation and responsibilities of children who are born in a family depending on which number are they, counting from the first born to the last born. This takes account on both sides for men and women which counts that for men’s first born is considered to be like a leader to the family to the younger ones, the last born is considered to be a care giver to the parents and even if he will get married, his place is at his parents’ house or he should build his house near his parents’ house. In division of wealth especially pieces of land which normally are given to all male born in the family, the last born is given the parent’s remained piece as they know that he is the one mostly responsible to take care of them traditionally. In some way this is what has influenced the mistreatment to the elderly because some of the families are well off while others are not. Once other relatives noticing that their fellow is going to get a great part of the wealth they start conflicts. Informant H added;

(...) “It is not only about relatives but also the one who is going to inherit the rest of the parent’s wealth (male last born), may lust for the wealth hence killing his parents” (Interview with H, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

#### 3.2.4 Religious life

The Sukuma are said to be very superstitious, and most will seek aid from the Bafumu (diviners) Balaguzi (medicine men), and Basomboji (soothsayers). Tanner added that,

“The Sukuma have been little influenced by Christianity and Islam, they are continuing to practice their own form of ancestor worship” (Tanner 1967:2). Ancestral worship and practicing of traditional beliefs is still conducted in Sukuma until now.

(...) “The Sukuma have many stories based on their beliefs on death and sufferings in which they believe on shingwengwe, (ogres and spirits). Even during sickness they won’t go to hospital without consulting the diviners” (Interview with B, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016).

The ogres are usually shown as being half human, half demon, or as terrible monsters. Much of the Sukuma myths reflect religion, superstition and traditional beliefs. It also shows the Sukuma belief that death is not the ultimate end to a human being. It is estimated that about 10% of the Sukuma are Christian. The vast majority have retained a belief in divination, magic, and Spiritism. The belief is that these spirits heals, provide answers to their problems, sustains life and many families retains to name their children after spirits of their ancestors

(departed grands) which symbolize their relationship with the departed ones. Traditionally, the Sukuma have been perceived as slow to change and passive (Mirambo 2004:116). This has influenced elder abuse/killing elders in a certain point because of its conservative behavior (not easily changed).

### 3.2.5 The Sukuma myth of origin

Myths and narratives speak powerfully to the members of the society with the aim of educating and are given contextual priorities as they reflect the origin, character or identity of a certain society. In this section I will share a myth of Sukuma which is connected to their traditional beliefs. The myth will provide us with some information and perhaps answering some of our questions about witchcraft and the affected gender in Sukumaland.

Apart from that these myths are explaining the Sukuma understanding of existence and the world in general. Douglass Thomas has quoted Benjamin Ray;

“Most African myths tell the origin of human life and the creation of the social order. As such they describe the social and cultural building blocks of African societies and give meanings to life-cycle events and the moral rules for everyday life”, (p. 8).

He argues that African myths in different societies can attempt to explain the reality of how something came to existence and explain the natural realities and facts of life, (Thomas 2005: 9). The Basukuma (person from Sukuma tribe) are famous of their narratives. These narratives are used to instruct, teach, warn and put things in order to encourage good performance and good behavior within the society and sometimes intended for entertainment especially during evening hours where the group of people or family can sit together and listen to the narrator. They include myths, ogre stories, spirits (shingwengwe), and animal races (especially about the hare's cunning). Other stories of the Basukuma are about reality of people's life both heroes, losers, stupid and wise one but all as a lesson to the listeners, (Mirambo 2004:116).

The story is told which is of a Sukuma myth about Masala Kulangwa and the monster which reflects the origin of the traditional Sukuma beliefs. Sybertz & Healey explained about the monster Shingw'engw'e who came and swallow all people who were on the earth except one pregnant woman who hide herself in the pile of chaff. So later the woman gave birth to a boy and he grew up asking why they were only two people on earth (him and his mom). His mom told him that the monster (Shingw'engw'e) came and swallowed the other people and she was

the only person who managed to escape by hiding in the pile of the chaff. The child promised to look for the monster, when he grew up to manhood he finally found the monster and stabbed it in the back. All people who were swallowed came out happily except one woman whom unfortunately Masala Kulangwa cut off her ear when trying to stab the monster. She was so furious and she tried to bewitch and kill Masala Kulangwa, (Sybertz & Healey 1996: 64&65). Mirambo also told the same story and at the end showed that fortunately those people who were rescued by Masala Kulangwa helped him and he was appointed as the chief of that area, (Mirambo 2004:117).

The authors have interpreted the story as it is a woman who tried to bewitch Masala Kulangwa functioning as a symbol of evil and death for the Sukuma people. Although the story is related and translated in many ways, also on the other side can be related to the woman who stand out the pain and labour of giving birth to a child (although Masala Kulangwa is a man), raising him/her but at the end being called a witch and being killed.

Also the woman who was trying to bewitch Masala Kulangwa has signifies why many women in Sukumaland are accused of being witches than men.

### 3.2.6 Conclusion

Many writers are of the opinion that the illiteracy and traditional beliefs which Sukuma hold on has made things to be even more difficult. Help Age International which is a global network working with older people over 75 countries has reported on their face book page about how women in Mwanza are killed, abused and even threatened to death. Having conversation with some of the older people in Sukumaland, Help Age International noted that the number of killings was growing high in such a way that even elderly themselves came to realize that the discrimination and mistreatment they are facing is largely connected their age.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 ELDER ABUSE IN SUKUMALAND

#### Introduction

This chapter shows how the informants responded to the interviews and conversations about killings of elderly persons in Sukumaland Tanzania, their concern, ideas and understanding of the issue of elder abuse. Also I will present how the tragedy has affected the mission work of the ELCT.

Mosqueda& Dong presented National Research Council's definition of elder abuse as;

Intentional actions that cause harm (whether or not harm was intended) a create a serious risk or harm to an older adult by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder, or failure by the caregiver to satisfy the elder's basic needs or to protect the elder from harm (Mosqueda& Dong 2011:533).

I agree with National Research Council's definition of elder abuse as it gives clear and broader understanding of elder abuse, it tells who will be the first suspect to mistreat elders and mentions partly of what are the deeds which sometimes reflects elder abuse. For me, elder abuse is all inappropriate actions against elder people, which intends to harm, kill or put an older person in traumatic fear of his/her life. In this paper the concept of elder abuse will be shaped in our understanding in relation to the Sukuma context. Therefore, elder abuse in Sukumaland manifests in the form of killings as a result of witchcraft accusations.

Magesa noted that,

In African religion an understanding of witchcraft is central to understand wrongdoing as evil. It has been an enemy of the society and life in general as it destructs harmony, order, good neighborliness, good company, cooperation and sense of sharing (Magesa 1997:179&187).

Behringer is of the same opinion that

In traditional societies, witchcraft has been a synonym for evil, characterized by the central norms within the society. Attributes of witches are unusual for a normal person to do unless he/she possess a magical power like the ability to fly through the air, shifting shape (metamorphosis), to enter houses through closed doors or walls, to become invisible or to be at two places at the same time, skills in fortune telling or divining the future and the ability to speak or sometimes to use animals (Behringer 2004: 2-3).

Whatever definition of witchcraft may be and categorized depends much with the context, for Sukuma people witchcraft is something extra powerful and beyond human capacity that can



be inherited/acquired intending to harm or protect either people, animals or other properties. Behringer supports that,

There has never being a universally accepted definition of witchcraft. Within a given society the opinions about witchcraft and sorcery usually vary. In Europe a number of clear-cut definitions have drastically challenged traditional notion of witchcraft. Each of the interpretations is rooted in a specific intellectual environment (Behringer 2004:4)

So, throughout the discussion of witchcraft accusations, the understanding of witchcraft is narrowed to Sukuma's understanding as a matter of their context. The following section will give us an overview of local perceptions of old people as far as they are concerned in this study.

#### 4.1 Perspectives on old people

Spielman referred May Sarton's understanding of getting old that "Old age is a foreign country with an unknown language" (Spielman 2012:57). Growing old is one of the characteristics of human being. For the purpose of this study, an elderly person is an individual who is 60 years old and above as perceived by many people. The concept of old age in Tanzania is based on the age of the person, responsibilities and the status which the person has in the society; for instance a leader at a workplace or in a clan. Old people have always been considered to be important members of the society because they are perceived as wise. In Tanzania, wisdom is usually associated with the age of a person, (Human Rights Report 2013:187). Mary Robinson stated that, 65% of people over the age of 60 are from the developing countries and most of them are at risk. One of the challenges which she has mentioned is that of perception (Mary Robinson, Valuing older people). People have different perceptions about aged/elders as they undergo changes not only additional age/years but also great physical change.

I have observed that physical change sometimes depends on the context and the general life situation of a person. For example an old man/woman who is well-cared, the skin tone, eyes and sometimes strength can be seem different from the age they might have. Those who are not well cared for some time seem to be tired and very old compared to their age. Shorter is of the opinion that, "All creatures which exist necessarily include the experience of growth and decay. As we grow older, we do not only experience a failure of bodily and mental powers, but we also become more susceptible to diseases" (Shorter 1985:37). This is what makes our

body to look differently compared to how we were some years back, diseases and other bodily weakness has affected elders physical appearance(wrinkles, bending).

In Sukumaland unscientific understandings of the physical change due to the normal human aging process, some believe that a person who does visibly age (wrinkled skin, red eyes) is possibly a witch. This is the case especially for the old people who are living in rural areas where there is not enough healthy food, lacking good shelter, and at their old age some do engage in farming activities in order to get food. Interview with informant N in Geita gave the problem a new perspective, among the changes on the process of growing old in Sukumaland is red eyes. Informant A, who is one of the church leaders, argued that getting old and to be related to witch is just a mentality which has grown in the minds of the uneducated people in Sukuma land. This is because many of the Sukuma are traditionalists and are still holding on to their traditional beliefs. He said,

“The environment and the living condition of a person, are stronger enough to change his/her physical appearance regardless of the age they might have” (Interview with A, 26th June 2016).

Spielman is stressing on social roles/functions as a marker to old age instead of thinking of the age of a person. He says; “Social roles such as grandparenthood, widowhood, and retirement are also used as indicators of old age” (Spielman 2012:57).

Having looked at the perspectives on old people, how they are generally perceived in Tanzania and in Sukumaland, the proceeding section I will present reasons/factors for the killings of the elderly.

#### 4.2 Reasons/factors for elder abuse (killings) in Sukumaland

##### Witchcraft belief

Behringer noted that “Witchcraft has become a universally existing and discussed paradigm to reflect and explain the condition of human life” (Behringer 2004:7) It can be an assumption to start to work on, but in the later discussion I will present how witchcraft has affected the work of mission by the church, and the fear it has created among people. Lagerwerf stresses that, “Beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery are still wide-spread mostly in Africa, especially in the villages” (Lagerwerf 1987:5). Witchcraft has been mentioned as one among many reasons of the deaths of many old people in Sukumaland, is defined as the manifestation of mystical forces which may be inborn in a person, inherited or acquired in various ways, (Mbiti 1991:166)). Mbiti also states that “Witchcraft is just a popular term broadly used to describe

all sorts of evil, employment of mystical power generally in a secret fashion”, (Mbiti 1977:202). Gulle added,

“People in Sukumaland who are claimed to be witches transmit it secretly by teaching their children or relatives. If it is a man he is supposed to teach his son, and if is a woman he should teach her daughter” (Gulle 2004:24).

In addition to Gulle’s point about transmitting witch powers to the following generation, Middleton& Winter added that in many of the African cultures if the man is a witch, all of his witch powers are given to his son, if it is a woman who is witch, she can transmit her powers to her daughters not to her sons. This comes from their social and cultural division of labor. Middleton& Winter have described this in relation to Azande tribe;

The Azande believes that a man who is a witch transmits his powers to his sons and not to his daughters, while the female who is a witch transmits her powers to her daughters and not her sons. In an unusual way women alone can pass their powers on to the next generation, to their children of both sexes whereas the power of a male witch dies with him, (Middleton& Winter 1978:5).

Witchcraft has become not only a topic to be discussed academically or theologically as Behringer has stated that “May be it is even possible to assume that at the core of the religion is the fear of witchcraft” (Behringer 2004:7). It should be seen as a current challenge to our African societies especially the situation of killings of old people and albinos that arose early 1998 in Sukumaland, and become a challenge to the Lutheran church too. Approximately 500 old people are reported to be killed in the regions around the shores of Lake Victoria (Sukumaland) from 1998 to 2001. Ministry of Agencies in Tanzania has reported that elderly mistreatment and embarrassment from 1998 to 2001 in these regions (Sukumaland) were 17, 220. Among them 1,746 were associated with witchcraft. According to the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHCR) 2013 report, the number of killed men and women suspected of being witches were approximately 3000 between the years 2005 to 2011 (LHCR 2013). Behringer has noted that

“Witchcraft is still considered as a threat to the lives of people, the studies has shown that there is a fascinating number of killed people for suspected witchcraft in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than any other periods in history” (Behringer 2004:8).

Witchcraft beliefs remained as a social reality in many African societies including Tanzania. The belief in witchcraft in African societies has been said to play a minor role in attribution of misfortunes to gods or ancestor spirits. It is claimed that, the situation of poverty and social structures, other African societies under the same conditions their way of perceiving might be

different. Witchcraft is seemed as obsession; it includes all social relations as well as everyday life events (Bad ones). All are described in a language of witchcraft (Bahringer 2004:14). Lagerwerf is of the same ideas,

“Those human conditions which became a threat especially to people’s health and well-being, those which disrupt social relations within the community mainly in extended families have been stamped as witchcraft/socery” (Lagerwerf 1987:18).

This belief cuts through all classes of the society, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the young and the old ones. Mesaki explained that,

From urban to rural, the elite to peasants, the rich to the poor, witchcraft remains an idiom through which life is experienced and acted upon, as manifested in everyday conversation, gossip or a way of speaking and means of handling day to day ambiguities or means of allocating responsibility and branding scapegoats for misfortunes. This suggests that accusations are leveled by relatives and are often motivated by envy, greed, hatred, misunderstanding or misinformation, strained relations, political and economic frustrations, (Mesaki 2009:132).

The 2014 UN Human Rights Report presented Professor Chris Maina’s (Professor of Law at the university of Dar es Salam) argument about the killings of the elderly. He identified sources of witchcraft belief and practice as anger, hatred, envy, lust and greed. He further argued that witchcraft is associated with storms, sudden death of a supposedly healthy person, miscarriages, infertility, lack of rain, death as a result of various illnesses and even road accidents (Human Rights Report 2014:36).

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has collected a report from the Police Force showing that;

For the period of six months from January to June 2014, a total number of 320 people were reported to have been killed as a result of witchcraft allegations. This number shows a high increase in the number of people killed for allegations of practicing witchcraft. The number is very high taking into account that the killings occurred in a short period of time (six months). The magnitude can also be viewed in comparison to the reported incidents in the previous years of 2012 and 2013, where the reported incidents were 336 (Human Rights Report 2014:36).

Informant J who is the chairperson in the welfare organization in Bariadi explained that witchcraft belief in Sukuma is so high and even the number of what is called in Swahili *waganga wa jadi* (Traditional healers) is growing and they are scattered everywhere. He said;

(...) “When a person gets sick the first thought in mind is that he/she is bewitched. So even if it is a disease like malaria or any other illness which needs consultation to a

physician they always consult those *waganga wa jadi* and divine healers for help/solution” (Interview with J, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2016).

He continued to describe the tendency of people to consult traditional healers for a disease which needs consultation of a professional physician, have been a great challenge to everyday life. Many people are busy daily; others are searching for answers to their different personal problems (who have bewitched them, wealth problems, and sickness). It is because of the negative thoughts which people holds in Sukuma that a person cannot get sick if he/she is not bewitched, or else may be displeasure of the ancestors. O’Donovan noted that, “Some people think that all suffering and trouble is the direct result of evil persons like witches and sorcerers” (O’Donovan 1995:300). This is what is prevailing in the minds of many Sukuma people which have resulted to accuse elder people of being witches, something that cannot be true. However, Shorter stated that,

Suffering that is unrelated to a cause, suffering that is apparently meaningless, is the hardest to bear when it persists. Africans ring the changes on all the possibilities, the possible sources of their sickness. In this they are assisted by the diviners’ ‘switchboard’. When all these methods fail, sickness becomes a scandal, a stumbling-block because it serves no constructive purpose. It is purely and simply destructive of life (Shorter 1985:34&35).

Families are not settled, no more at peace in the community and the lives of people are no longer safe. This suggests that elder abuse and witchcraft accusations have affected daily life of people in Sukumaland.

Apart from what we may know about witchcraft especially the negative part of it, its understanding in Sukumaland is different. Witchcraft in Sukuma is both used as protection and destructive tool. It is used to protect one’s possessions like crops in the fields, keeping cattle safe, protect business and make it successful. Gulle on his thesis about witchcraft as an obstacle to the Christian Faith and social development in Sukuma has added that,

In cultivation witchcraft is used to make crops grow healthy and also protecting them from thieves. Traditional medical protection medicines are also used during inaugurations of buildings (houses, shops and all new settlements) to protect them from evil people who may be aiming to destruct their properties, life or their good successful life (Gulle 2004:28)

Gulle continues to argue that the power of witchcraft is within the Sukuma people. He gave an example of a new born baby that is protected against evil spirits by a certain traditional medicine, if it is a boy, at his age of getting married he is washed by *samba* (Sukuma medicine for purification) to attract girls to love him. If it is a girl she will also be washed by

*samba* to let her attract boys to love and marry her, (Gulle, 2004). Meyer uses the same argument about witchcraft, and one other side of it is used as a protection of one's property in Ewe society, Ghana. She says,

Some people want to go and get money. They want to be rich. So they will go to fetish-people and say I want to be a rich man or I want to sell something, I want people to buy it from me quick, quick, quick, go and get some medicine (Meyer 1992:115).

This is not so different from what some of the Sukuma people do/think of witchcraft from the past until the recent events which pointed witches and witchcraft as enemies of the society. Behringer agrees with Meyer that wealth in Africa sometimes can be associated with witchcraft. He says

“In Africa traditional societies wealth is considered to be suspicious: If everybody is working how can some people get richer than others, except mystical theft from relatives or neighbors? (Behringer 2004:11)

The mentioned statements show some of the understanding of African people about witchcraft and protection of their properties, and wealth associated beliefs. If so, then it could have been no claim or accusing one another of being witches because everyone would have been using it in a positive way. In the contrary, Behringer states that, “Witchcraft is still considered to be dangerous to many people” (Behringer 2004:8).

On the negative side of the understanding of witchcraft in Sukuma, and which has led to the mistreatment of the elderly is the belief that a witch is an enemy of the society. Some claim that the accused witches have bewitched their family members, neighbors and even retarded the general development of the society which they are living in. Bewitchment of the related family members has been explained also by Middleton & Winter in relation to Amba society: “People do not fear the witches of other villages; they fear the witches of their own village. Witches are thought not to attack outsiders but only members of their own community (Middleton & Winter 1978:283). O'Donovan added that,

“Belief in rituals, sacrifices, divination, magic, curses, witchcraft and witchdoctors still forms a large part of the world view of many people today. These beliefs affect many Christians, especially those who are weak in their knowledge of God and his Word” (O'Donovan 1995:245).

Our African understanding of witchcraft and reaction towards witches seem different from that of the European as noted by Behringer that some people tend to think that witchcraft is mostly done by uneducated people and are stressing on the negative part of it (as what is

happening in Sukuma by killing elder witch suspects), something that seem different in Europe. He referred back to the Middle Ages where in some urban centers of Western civilization labeled themselves as ‘witches’ or ‘new witches’. So, the perception and suspicion of being a witch can be under certain circumstances (Behringer 2004:6). He goes further arguing about the recent observations of anthropological research that is modernity of witchcraft which can no longer taken as a marker of uneducated society or something in the history of the past, rather should be taken as a current challenge to the societies in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Behringer 2004:34). He added;

The European denial of witchcraft is rooted in pre-Cartesian opposition to atrocity adopted by the representatives of European spiritualism, rationalism and Enlighten, because they did not believe in witchcraft, for them witch killings were an ardent injustice committed by the authorities judicial murder (Behringer 2004:5).

This has been taken for granted and became a reason for accusing and killing elderly people by the members of the family. This negative perception and impacts of witchcraft in Sukuma being linked to general development of the society, opens the way to the next reason to abuse elderly (killings) as described below.

### Poverty

Poverty has been among the reasons mentioned for mistreating old people in Sukumaland. The economic changes which occur in daily activities have led to low generation of income. Kirk has referred poverty as a physical death because everything that gives unity and strength to the dispossessed is destroyed (Kirk 1999:98). This means that the sense of communal sharing is cut off; everyone is struggling for his/her survival whether in good or bad ways hence fostering many elder abuse cases. Banik has borrowed Gordon & Spicker (1999) meaning of poverty, he stated

“Poverty implies need, limited resources, low standard of living, lack of basic security (e.g. vulnerability to social risks), inequality, exclusion and dependency (in relation to other individuals, groups, organizations and the state)” (Banik 2006:11).

Many of the Sukuma people as introduced in the previous chapters are farmers. In a farming process no one can be sure of the good harvest as they depend on seasonal rains. However we need to note that sometime farmers may spend a lot of money to prepare farms and buy some seeds for planting but because of the weather and other seasonal effects, they get nothing back/poor harvest and great loss. Therefore poverty remains as a long time challenge to people.

Informant K in his explanations on poverty mentioned a negative side of witchcraft (bewitching other peoples' crops not to grow well or sometimes moving the crops to the witch's farm) in a magical way, he said

(...) Sometimes in a magical way you can find nothing on your farm, the witches have already taken everything for themselves. Nothing more you can do than seeking out who has done so. In this way consultation to witchdoctors and diviners is inevitable". This has contributed much to the problem of mistreating old people by killing them, once they are suspected to be the ones who did that some of the village members intrude him/her especially at night and kill them, (Interview with K, 15th July 2016).

Poverty also facilitates elder abuse especially when family members are having conflicts on the heritage of the parents' properties. Informant M who is one of the members of the Advocacy department of the Lutheran church said that many of the reported cases about the killings are about wealth (inheritance) especially among the family members. If they have no means of life and earnings and if their parents are old they see them as no longer valuable. So they conduct the killings secretly in order to get land and other possessions, (Interview with M, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016).

Owning something more than others or not owning at all has seemed to be disturbing the minds of many people, and strikes more in the family which results to family conflicts and misunderstandings as described in the following point.

#### Family problems/conflicts

Family problems have played a major role in the problem of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations in Sukuma, many of the reported mistreatment and embarrassment cases, as I have mentioned earlier, are done by the family members. Informant R, who serves as a pastor in Bariadi describes that,

(...) Among the problems in many families which facilitate the problem of mistreating old people in the form of killing, is polygamy. This is a practice where by one man can marry more than one wife. If the man will seem to favor one wife or to love one wife more than others, the rest will fight and even kill the man and the favored wife. When it comes to the point that the man has to divide his wealth to his wives if the wives will not be satisfied with the division they will find a way to kill him (Interview with R, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

This has been happening to old age people because they are now settled which means that business or any other economical work they have struggled since they were young men. Old age is the time to enjoy the fruits of the works, although some of the old people especially from rural areas (low economic standard areas) are still engaging themselves in farming



activities. So for those old people who are well off, their retirement age is taken as the time to relax with nothing to stress for rather than just supervising their businesses.

Quinn& Tomita noted;

Family conflict noted in preindustrial times centered on the eagerness of the young to inherit the land and the fears of the old that they will be neglected in their old age. In addition, the burning of postmenopausal women at the stake as witches and the outright physical violence against older men are evidence that elder abuse and neglect existed... (Quinn&Tomita1997:10).

Wealth issues are noted to be among the reasons for family conflicts that resulted to abuse and killings of older women/men in the pre-industrial times. The same challenge has reappeared in our time, in Sukumaland. Informant R added that there is a tendency that some girls refuse to get married to young men because they have no money, they believe that many old age people have money and are settled. He said,

(...) “Many old people, whom we know have already officiated their marriage in the church, are reported to have added other wife/wives just because they are rich. This creates enmity between elderly people and youth, because male youth would like to have relationship with the beautiful girls who are taken by those old well off people, and sometimes women and girls got accused of this as they are accepting to get married to old men instead of their fellow youth” (Interview with R, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Another family problem that has contributed to the problem is marital trouble, especially the separation between wife and husband. Informant E explained that husband and wife can separate either officially (divorce) and locally by chasing a wife out or by wife deciding herself to leave her husband because of some conflicts between them. She said,

(...)Separation by divorce is better because everyone will understand that is officially made, and the wealth is divided to both wife and husband. Many of the separations in Sukuma are the local ones. This has become a problem because one of the spouses can threaten the other to death especially when one of spouses got married to another person (Interview with E, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

This has built hatred between the two as described by the informant that at the end the wife can kill the husband or vice versa. Parents sometimes may be involved in the case because they failed to teach or resolve their children’s misunderstandings or failed to advise them, (Many of the Tanzanian marriage conflicts have to start being resolved at the family level) These conflicts resulted to killings, also when children grow up they tend to revenge for their mothers/fathers something that has become hatred trending in the family. Another fascinating point was described by the informant C saying that there are some cases where either both parents (father and mother) or one of the parents disown their children which is caused by

children's disobedience. This also has prompted the issue of the killings of the elders because sometimes in the process of revenging, the child can kill his/her parents.

(...) "Disownment of children happens to both male and female children. For both (male and female children) the reason of being disowned is mainly associated with disobedience of a child to his/her parents or neglecting parents. In a furious way the parents can either curse them (children) or disown them", he said calmly (interview with C, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The problem of family conflicts (which involves many things as explained above) seems to be initiated by wife and husband which transcend from family level to community level. Sometimes the sparks reach another general stage of desire, the desire of having more than what we can afford, living the life of competing with others, hence results to envy over those who have a successful life as explained below.

### Envy

Envy can be measured and described as a negative feeling as noted by Behringer;

"Envy is the most negative feeling on an anthropological Richter scale of emotions which affects and relates to all human beings. This phenomenon is mentioned to be in every society and every human either in greater or lesser extent" (Behringer 2004:25).

Feeling envy for someone's success is not a bad thing if it is a good way of influencing others to try until they succeed. Harries has borrowed Parrott & Smith's (1993) definition of envy, "Is an emotion that occurs when a person lacks another's (perceived) superior quality, achievement, or possession and either desires it or wishes that the other lacked it", (Harries 2012:129). Lacking something which other person owns leads to desire, when the desire grew it become lust and hence envy for the one who possess.

Kirk stresses on the same point that "On the most concrete level the search for wealth and possession has led to either envy (if unsuccessful) or to possession's and fear of loss (if successful)" (Kirk 1999:173). This implies that when a person has nothing to possess he/she got envy for the one who succeeded, something which results to enmity and hence killing the one who has succeeded in order to gain the part of his/her possessions. Persons with possessions struggles to keep his/her properties safe from thieves and other enemies (witches), he will be looking for some ways for protection (benevolent part of witchcraft as named by Mbiti). This is confirmed by Behringer who noted that, "In Africa, the association of wealth and witchcraft is still widespread" (Behringer 2004:11).

In Sukuma envy has been mentioned as one of the reasons for the killings. Envy over wealth, good harvest, good and happy family and any kind of success are categorized as catalysts for

the mistreatment they are encountering with. Help Age International reported about an old woman in Mwanza who was cut by bush knife in different parts of her body by unknown people who came in her house during the night, just because she had a better harvest than other people who surrounded her. Informant K also explained on how his aunt was killed because of envy over her children's successful life,

(...)We can take these events as stories but it has become a real life now. My aunt was killed just because her children are well educated and she was living a good life. It was nothing more than envy for her" he said sobbing. (Interview with K, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Moreover he continued to say that he noted in many places in Sukuma, several cases of mistreating old people/killings of people occur in the months of harvesting

### Illiteracy

Informant O argued that people are illiterate and it is hard for them to understand how parents who raised them since childhood can turn their back on them and bewitch their own children. If parents were witches they would have bewitched their children in their childhood but not when children are old enough to know good and bad. He also said that

(...)“Illiteracy is something which made the Sukuma maintain their local beliefs hence children dare to point to their parents as witches or accusing them for some disasters” (Interview with O, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016)

Mbiti added that

“If you have your ears open you can hear names of people blamed for misfortunes, sickness, accidents and other forms of suffering in many villages. It is mainly women who get blamed for experiences of evil, and suffer under such accusations” (Mbiti 1977:201).

Mbiti highlights the gender disparity in witchcraft accusations in Sukuma, something that is also reflected in Sukuma myth of origin and in the point in this section under gender issues as we will see later.

All these claims and many others may be the result of being less informed/educated, something which leads the Sukuma to retain their traditional beliefs as I will explain below.

### Traditional and cultural beliefs

Many of the Sukuma people are said to continue with their traditional and cultural beliefs. When something bad/strange happens they tend to find the reason for the problem, in the search for the cause they go to the witch doctors to ask for help. Every bad situation or event in Sukuma is held to be caused by witchcraft as they believe that witchcraft is the source of

many misfortunes. Apart from this belief, they also believe that some of the misfortunes are caused by ancestral displeasure. Gulle noted that the traditional beliefs are much associated with families and clans. The family which is affected by any disaster should be responsible for searching the root of it, when it seems to be above human thinking, understanding and ability, the disaster is then taken as witchcraft, (Gulle 2004:13).

The tension is on the ways of preserving and maintaining traditional and cultural ways of living (traditional beliefs and culture) against the changes which occur every day. This has prompted the problem of the mistreatment/killings of the elderly in Sukumaland. For it seems to be difficult for the old generation (elders) to accept the changing world which has become the world of science and technology. Something an old people may think is caused by ancestral displeasure, is the new era(new generation as it is understood) who may think vice versa and say it is because of either food stuffs we are consuming in our bodies or weather change, and other related issues. To remain behind in “old thinking and perceiving things’ to name it, has made people to continue to point fingers to the innocent people by the name of witches, which in turn has caused hatred between families hence cause some to be killed in Sukuma. Tanner added that

“Many changes have occurred in Sukuma which were brought by early Christianity but much has just passed by leaving the majority of Sukuma untouched particularly by the calls of Christianity and Islam” (Tanner 1967:vii).

It shows how the Sukuma society is in some way conservative and slow to change. Tanner has noted that too, he says,

The Sukuma are a conservative people, slow to see the need for or the inevitability of change and even slower to act”. He continued to say that the slowness in change might have been contributed by the absence of single culture. There is tension between the use of Swahili language as a Tanzanian national language which is used in different places like education centers and businesses, and the “Kisukuma” which is the traditional language of the Sukuma people (Tanner 1967:59).

This is what I have explained above in the methodological chapter presenting the problems which were encountered during the study, that mostly of the elderly people who are living in rural areas in Sukumaland don’t speak Swahili. I needed a translator especially when I visited families.

Informant Y has explained another point about the belief held in Sukuma that when a woman dies during delivery, it is associated with witchcraft. He said,

(...) “Sukuma people do not believe that dying while giving birth is something obstetrical and sometimes happens accidentally. If that happens (death of the woman during delivering a baby), women of the village gather together and fight with men, women gather pots and fill them with ashes, take the pots to the neighboring village and pour the ashes there to chase away the bad omen”, (Interview with Y, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2016).

These beliefs have contributed to elder abuse and killings as their traditional and cultural beliefs points to nothing but creating enmity among members of the community (Interview with O, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016). Informant S, who is a church leader stresses on the same point that

(...) People have been mistreating old people by killing them because of people’s illiteracy, they think red eyes is a sign of being a witch. She continued to say that many of the cases are reported to be of the older women, noticing that they are the one who suffers from cooking in smoky houses. This causes their eyes to turn red, something which Sukuma people refer as a sign to a person who is a witch, (Interview with S, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

However Middleton & Winter related the Sukuma people’s belief of women with red eyes, who are accused of being witches, with the Kaguru people (another tribe from Tanzania) who describe a witch as an ugly person with dark skin and red eyes (Middleton & Winter 1978:68)

From all the described points as among the reasons for elderly killings in Sukumaland, the origin of the problem has been mentioned to be the witchdoctor/diviner who points out a person as the one cause problems or any other misfortunes as presented in the following point.

#### [Role played by witchdoctors, traditional healers and soothsayers](#)

Tanner has pointed out the role played by magicians/diviners in Sukumaland as being done for economic benefit. He says that

“Many of the Sukuma are up to this kind of work; referring back to colonial administration where by the career of diviner/magician was the only position to which non chiefly Sukuma could aspire” (Tanner 1967: 44).

This implies that if a person is after money, it won’t cost him anything to tell you that your neighbor or your relative is the one who is causing uncertainties and misfortunes in your life/family. In this way the role played by diviners/magicians has prompted the hatred between people and families hence killings of the accused ones.

Informant F describes that there are many witchdoctors, diviners and traditional healers in Sukuma. He said,

(...) “It has been mentioned in the district meeting that from a small research which was conducted in Bukombe, district of Geita, witchdoctors and diviners were around six hundred (600) in the year 2014, which seems to be high for only one district. These witchdoctors and diviners have contributed not only to the mistreatment of the elderly people but also the killings of people with albinism whose body parts are believed to bring good fortunes (wealth) to a person. In payment, these witchdoctors and diviners tell the customer to bring either a big amount of money in cash or animals. Occasionally, they are ordered to bring hens especially black or white ones” (Interview with F, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

These animals have been mentioned by Tanner that men usually use oxes and goats with specific color, totally black cows or goats or black with white spots. Women have to bring sheep (Tanner 1967:33).

For the traditional healers Pastor R explained that they have contributed to the belief of the Sukuma that even if a person needs medical checkup for a certain illness, they tend to give them traditional herbs. When the condition becomes critical then they decide to go to the diviner who insert them hatred spirit by pointing either one of the relatives to be responsible for the illness. Some of the diviners who are already educated about the negative impact they bring by mentioning the name of the accused person, tend to refer them to the hospital for medical checkup and treatment.

### Unemployment

According to Banik, unemployment is generally regarded to have two main effects on poverty; “Eroding the funding for social services while simultaneously increasing the expectations for and pressures on the same service” (Banik 2006:161). Unemployment is a big problem in Tanzania in general for both educated and non-educated people, it has been mentioned as one of the reasons for the killings of the elderly people in Sukumaland. This situation forces people to engage in evil deeds especially killing of the elder people in order to get money for their survival. Advocate U says,

(...) “Unemployment is among the reasons which prompt the killings of the elderly. Many of the cases I’m dealing with here, many of the accused are the youths who have no job. I think staying idle creates evil thoughts of looking for any means to survive” he said with calm voice, (Interview with U, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Another informant added that,

(...) “People tend to be easily convinced when it comes to the issue of cheap and quick ways of getting money. All this has been caused by unemployment hence when they get a killing ‘deal’ to be payed ten or twenty million shillings sounds fair to them

without thinking of the innocent blood they are going to shed” she said sobbing (Interview with W, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

As I have presented in the previous chapters, many of the elderly people in Sukuma are living in rural areas. In this case, elderly seem to have money (wealth) because they are always on their farms engaging themselves in cultivation of food and cash crops.

### Gender based issues

Ankarloo & Henningsen in their discussion about witchcraft in the early Roman communities they have shown that women were associated with witchcraft than men. They describe;

“Among the Romans it was commonly thought that men were by nature prone to thieving, while women, no less naturally, were inclined to witchcraft and poisoning” Arkanloo & Henningsen 1993: 22). It shows that, Sukumas’s myths that refers women as witches did not begin with them, seems to be a trend from early Roman communities. Arkanloo & Henningsen referred to St. Augustine’s personal experience text that relates women to witch acts;

When I was in Italy I heard of certain women, innkeepers by trade, and practitioners of these evil arts, who (it was said) gave travelers cheese to eat and thereby transformed them into beasts of burden. When they had performed the task they reverted to their proper form. Their minds did not turn to those of beasts, but remained human and rational (Arkanloo & Henningsen 1993:24)

Behringer relates witchcraft accusations in Europe and Africa and shows which gender was affected the most, he says,

In Europe, the elites generally denied the existence of witchcraft and the efficacy of sorcery from the age of Enlightenment onwards, again and again elderly people usually women were bullied and sometimes killed” (Behringer 2004:22)

In Sukuma, the tragedy of witchcraft accusations and elder abuse has been associated with gender issue which affects the female gender more than male especially in interior parts of Sukumaland. Women in villages have been living with fear and yet cannot do anything as an alternative to what they have in order to escape the accusations of being called witches. Human Rights Report added that elderly people have continued to face challenges when it comes to their security. This is true especially for female aged people. They have continued to be mostly attacked in connection to witchcraft beliefs. The year 2013 witnessed an increased number in the attacks on female aged people for allegedly being involved in witchcraft activities (Human Rights Report 2013:190).

There has been a tendency of accusing elder people in Sukuma especially those with irritated eyes as suspects of witchcraft. Informant N explained that, red eyes which has been taken as a reason for accusing old women of being witches is not a disease as it may be understood by some people in Sukumaland, but is a result of excessive smoke from cooking by using firewood and cow dungs. Informant B added that many of the sukuma have a tendency of cutting off trees in order to have big space for cultivating their crops. And once there are no more trees to cut which means also no more firewood to cook with, they start to use cow dung as a cooking fuel.

Moreover he argues that

(...) because of the nature of the environment and the Sukuma traditional round houses they live in, which have no big windows enough for the smoke to get out, the smoke tends to affect their eyes and cause irritation. Informant N concluded by saying that this is the reason why many accusations of witches go to women because are the ones who always cook for the family and many of them have red eyes (Interview with N&B, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2016).

The argument has both answered the question about cultural perspectives of the Sukuma people on elderly people and affirmed the question which asked “Which gender is mostly affected?” which is also supported by Middleton& Winter’s argument about many African societies who maintains that all witches are female but in some few societies men are included in witchcraft too (Middleton& Winter 1978:9).

Behringer made it clear that

“In many African societies witchcraft is perceived to be female’s art, ability or quality due to their bitterness, freedom from male control and economic dependence” (Behringer 2004:40). But through this all witchcraft accusations had not been interpreted in relation to gender conflicts as explained by Behringer who adopted Larner’s formula that “Witchcraft is sex- related and not sex-specified, (Behringer 2004:41)

These claims give us a new perception and encourages us to research more about witchcraft and gender within our contexts.

#### 4.3 Human rights concern

Witchcraft has been seen as a social phenomenon in Tanzania and has resulted to violation of the right to life, leading to deaths of a large number of people especially aged people. As the challenge becomes big and serious, more than legal solutions are needed to overcome the situation for the legal system itself does not provide the realities of witchcraft, (Human Rights



Report 2013:35). Killing is not only prohibited by laws at a national level but also internationally, targeting every human being's right to life.

All forms of tortures are prohibited regardless of its source, and The Tanzanian Constitution guarantees the protection of one's life although there might be some weaknesses in accomplishing and achieving this goal. One of the reasons of failure in achieving the goal has been mentioned that witchcraft has usually led to violation and abuse of a wide range of human rights namely: the right to life, liberty and security, the right to property, and also social and economic marginalization. Most of the affected members of society have been women, people of old age, children and the poor. Women have continued to constitute a large number of people affected by witchcraft-related killings especially the regions of Geita, Mbeya, Shinyanga, Iringa, Tabora and Mwanza experienced a greater number of those killings, (Human Rights 2013:24& 37).

Internationally, the rights of elder people were first considered during the adoption of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, 1982 (VIPAA) at the World Assembly on Ageing. The VIPAA recommendations included avoiding the segregation of elderly, making available home-based care for elderly people, rejecting stereotypical concepts in Government policies and recognizing the value of the old age, (Human Rights 2013:188)

Legal Human Rights Centre (LHRC) calls upon the Government, civil society and religious organizations to increase sensitization programmes in these regions (Sukumaland) in order to curb this situation and let people live free and feel secured. Within this call is where the church takes part confidently although it has already started to make an effort even before it was recognized of doing it.

After the above presentation of factors/reasons for the elderly killings in Sukuma, I will in the next part present how the tragedy of the elderly killings has become a challenge to the church.

#### 4.4 Witchcraft Act

Mesaki has quoted Feireman (1986) who stated;

Before colonial rule, witchcraft formed an integral part of social structure in most traditional African societies which makes it difficult to cut the root which has already grown strong. What the government of Tanzania did is to make an amendment of the witchcraft ordinances (now witchcraft Act) which was there since the colonial rule (Mesaki 2009:133).

At times, depending on the nature and the need of the current situation, seemed a need to make an amendments of the colonial witchcraft ordinances.

The Tanzanian Witchcraft Ordinance of 1956 has evaluated witchcraft as being including sorcery, enchantment, bewitching, the use of instrument of witchcraft, and the purported exercise of any occult power and the purported possession of any occult knowledge. The person who commit these or if the person is accused and the district commissioner found that the claims made are true, the offender will be prisoned for seven years (Tanzania Witchcraft Act 1956 (Ord. No. 45 of 1956 s. 4)

The current legislation of Witchcraft Act of 2002 revision has described witchcraft as

Anything which is used or intended to be used or commonly used, or which is represented or generally believed to possess the power to delay or prevent any person from doing any act which he may lawfully do, or to compel any person to do any act which he may lawfully refrain from doing, or to discover the person guilty of any alleged crime or other act of which complaint is made, or to cause death, injury or disease to any person or damage to any property, or to put any person in fear, or by supernatural means to produce any natural phenomenon and includes charms and medicines commonly used for any of the purposes aforesaid (Mesaki 2009:136)

The current legislation about witchcraft is the revised version of 2002. The Act refers to the various previous versions/editions of (1928, 1935, 1956 and 1998), showing how the amendments were done. Mesaki continued to argue;

“Currently, judicial instruments (police force and the court), started to work in Tanzania against witchcraft and focused on the law as the means of overcoming witchcraft beliefs and practices” (Mesaki 2009:136-137).

Informant L describes that,

(...) “Despite of the effort by these instruments the problem still continues to be worse. Our parents and relatives are killed and threatened to death. Life is uncertain despite of the laws that have strictly started to operate. There was a meeting conducted by the government leaders (Regional leaders), and all witchdoctors were prohibited not to operate any service unless with special permission from the government (Interview with L, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The concern must be to make sure all people are aware of the Act and live according to the government law. The seven years punishment for the offender may help to reduce the problem of mistreatment of the elderly but my worry is will the same person under the same accusation be prisoned for the second time after finding out he/she committed to witchcraft by harming others again? The amendment of the Witchcraft Act gave a direct answer that after the offender has been prisoned for seven years, if he/she will be found guilty of the same no possibility to go back to prison for seven years more. The explanations here are not very clear

and this points the weak side of the Acts in which some people have argued that the Act is even more on the side of the problem rather than a solution.

#### 4.5 How elder abuse is done in Sukumaland

Mistreatment of old age people in Sukuma is done in the form of killings. As I have mentioned earlier the study is presenting and discussing the issue of elderly mistreatment in the form of killings. The killings of elderly in Sukumaland are conducted in a particular way. We hear of people being shot or hanged but in Sukuma traditional tools are used. Informant Y explained that the killings are conducted secretly during the night at the targeted person's place (house). Before going to kill they always pass by the witchdoctor's house, and they are given a special medicine to wash their bodies with before they leave. He mentioned things which are used to kill as bush knives (mapanga in Swahili) and machetes. They tend to cut the accused person in different parts of his/her body just to make sure she/he will not survive. He added that sometimes they burn the houses of the accused especially when it is a Sukuma traditional house (built of grasses and cow dung). This implies that if the house is burned, the people who are in the house will be burnt also. Informant A states that

(...) "The offenders make sure that, the targeted person is in the house on the day of conducting murder" (Interview with A, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Informant Y continues to say that after killing the targeted person, the offenders have to go back to the witch doctor again before going home. They wash all the tools used to kill and are given special medicine to wash their body which they believe will help to prevent them from being recognized. This implies that the point which was mentioned above about the role played by the witch doctors, diviners and soothsayers is again confirmed here. Informant Y describes,

(...) There is a special agreement made between the witch doctor and the offenders that they swear not to name any of them if they will be accidentally caught. The witchdoctor tells them that if any of them will mention the witch doctor as the one who gave them medicine, he will die (Interview with Y, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016).

This means that many of the killing cases which happen in Sukuma, witchdoctors are seem to be one side of the problem and the offenders the other side. This suggests and gives strength to the point given by informant S who described about the meeting which was held in Bukombe the year 2014. There the district commissioner announced in the meeting that if any killing will happen to a place where a witch doctor lives, the witchdoctor will be prisoned because he/she knows who conducted the crime (Interview with S, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

For many of the accused elders who escaped from being killed but got injured, some of them were reported on social Medias in Tanzania and some photos were posted showing how different parts of their body were badly injured and left with scars. In the following section I will present how the tragedy of elderly killings has become a challenge to the ELCT church in Sukumaland.

#### 4.6 Elder abuse (killings): The challenge to the ELCT, church in Sukumaland

The mistreatment of the elderly in Sukumaland has become a great challenge in Tanzania in its whole but specifically to the ELCT, East of Lake Victoria Diocese churches. This section will present how the killings of the elderly have been a challenge to the Lutheran church in Sukumaland, church ministers and all other members of the church.

##### i. Theological challenges

Theology and different teachings in ELCT has been criticized for not having been in a position of been able to answer all faith perspective questions in an African context. The question of existence of witchcraft, good and evil, veneration of the departed ones and other traditional and cultural based issues remained a puzzle especially in Sukuma. The challenge was articulated in by some of the informants;

##### (a) Lutheran Church ministers and preachers

Informant A says,

(...) Many preachers have contributed to the problem of witchcraft accusations because much of their preaching and sermons are about evil/Satan. At any of the conducted air gospel meetings preachers say that they had a fight with witches in their spiritual world/dreams. They give such testimonies and opened a space for the others to testify if they have experienced the same or if a person was sick and through prayers have become healed, or others who were been fed meat in dreams by witches or children who were taken by parents or relatives and taught how to bewitch people (Interview with A, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Informant P added that these preachers tend to tell people there is a force which restricts our blessing from God, the force that prevents good things to happen in our lives, and that force is caused by witches because witches never want people to succeed (Interview with P 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016). Shorter added that,

In many Third World Countries today health and health behavior are linked to fears about witchcraft and sorcery. An African Bishop once told me that he attributed the deaths of three of his priests to witchcraft. Another Bishop asked me to investigate a witchcraft case concerning a prominent member of the diocese who sincerely believed

he was under a spell. There is of course much to say about bringing fears out into the open, since witchcraft beliefs and practices thrive on secrecy, (Shorter 1985:103).

This implies that, in one way the preachers have created some fear in people and the spirit to fight with whoever suspected to be a witch. This has added to why Sukuma understanding of a witch is taken as an enemy of the society since their church leaders point that out openly.

Pastor M shared a story of a woman who came to their office asking for help because her family abandoned her and accused her of being a witch. The pastor assigned the evangelist to deal with the issue. In the midst of the process of helping and defending her, the woman's relatives wanted to kill the evangelist, being furious that he was getting involved in things which are not his business. The evangelist disappeared and the pastor and other church leaders were not able to find him, so they reported to the police. Later it was discovered that the evangelist was bribed and he sided with the woman's relatives to fight her, so he left the village while assisting them to fight the woman. The issue became a major public affair and a confusing one. In the end both the evangelist and the woman's relatives were caught by the police, announced to the social media that the offenders were planning to harm a woman who is their relative by accusing her of being a witch with the aim of taking her properties. The reporter of the event also mentioned the church leader (evangelist) who got bribed in order to side with the offenders and it is a shame to see a church leader getting involved in such a case. Later everything was settled. The woman's case was handled by the police and she went back to live with her family. The woman's relatives and the evangelist came back to church and confessed what they did, (Interview with M, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016).

This incident draws our attention to the important matter as it has revealed the other side of a problem of the elderly killings in Sukumaland that it has become a challenge when trying to help people to get out of the problem, the co-workers whom they think are together in the fight against elder abuse aside with the other part of the offenders by been bribed. Also it has confirmed the question of how big the problem of mistreating elderly is by showing that many of the mistreatments and killings of the elderly are done by family members and not people from outside.

The explanations of the incident are directly opposite to what the church ministers are expected to do, meaning that they are expected to make effort to solve the problem of elder abuse of in Sukuma and not being part of the problem. This shows on how the Lutheran church in Sukuma has contributed to the problem 'unknowingly'.

The murderers of the elderly in Sukumaland who are accused of being witches have challenged the church theologically, and the church leaders' way of preaching and sermon preparations. ELCT always arranges the church's yearly guiding calendar (January to December) which has different Biblical studies and titles for every Sunday in relation to different seasons of the year of the church (new year, Passover, Pentecost, Christmas etc). It is the same for all the Lutheran churches in Tanzania, they have the same Biblical texts and headings of the day, especially Sundays. Sometimes some church ministers tend to change their Sunday sermons/preaching if there is a special occasion in their parishes like ordination of a church minister, weddings or confirmation. Otherwise, all Biblical texts and titles will be the same except the way of preaching or different contents of the sermon.

Informant P, who is among the church ministers in Sukumaland has explained that this system by the church has being challenged by the tragedy of witchcraft accusations and elderly killings in Sukumaland. Many killing cases are taking place every day, some of the affected people are members of the church, and still when they come to church they don't get anything that will nurse their wounds in their hearts (Interview with P, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Minister A added that,

(...) "The tragedy of elderly killings has really been a challenge to the Lutheran church in Sukumaland. We find ourselves trying to preach in relation to what is happening to suit the context, every day the word 'Love of God and love to our neighbor' has become our song while trying to rebuke with love" he said sobbing. (Informant A, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Many of the church ministers find themselves repeating the same way of preaching and sermon used in another place. Minister P added that because of many killing cases, they have become part of their life, they find themselves conducting burial ceremonies three times or more within a week which makes it difficult to do other church work like visiting sick people, or sometimes cancelling some arranged church plans. He said,

(...) "Sometimes we are unable to teach people about other developmental factors which nurture them spiritually because of sticking to the issue of the killings just to suit the context and eradicate the tragedy through our sermons. We are meeting with many people especially during funerals (Christians and non-Christians), that is the place we can say something to stop the killings because many people in Sukuma are believing that when a person is killed, the offenders attend the funeral just to be sure of what has been said and what steps will be taken by the church or government" (Interview with P, 8<sup>th</sup> July).

The presence of the offenders of the killed person in the funeral stresses the point mentioned earlier that many of the killings are done by the family members, and if not, they have cooperated in a way to kill the person either by hiring a person/people to do so or been given a large amount of money not to mention the offenders.

#### (b) Witchcraft and sorcery in the Bible

Another challenge from the point of theology is witches, and the following question has been prevailing in the minds of people in the church, “What does the Bible say about witchcraft?”

O’Donovan has given some explanations that the Bible recognizes sorcery and witchcraft although it does not make a great distinction between these two concepts. He gave an example in Micah 5:12 and Nahum 3:4 in which in Hebrew the same word is translated as witchcraft and sorcery. Having recognized by the Bible (witchcraft and sorcery) does not mean that is something to fear about as long as their power is nothing compared to God (O’Donovan 1995).

Behringer has presented the idea of the Ancient divine Jewish law which contains the rule that witches must be killed, and that generally diviners and prophets were to be killed (Deuteronomy 13: 5), ( Behringer 2004:48). Here comes another challenge to the church ministers especially when a member refer to a verse in the Bible from Exodus 22:18 “You shall not permit a sorcerers to live” (RSV Bible). In swahili it reads different. It mentions a woman, “Usimwache mwanamke mchawi aishi” (Good News Bible, Swahili version). Mwanamke is a woman, so it can literally be translated as “Don’t permit a witch woman to live” (My own translation). So people who are reading this in the Swahili versions ask the question what the Bible says if it is right to kill a woman who is a sorcerer, but it says nothing about men who are witches/sorcerers. Then in the commandments the fifth one in Exodus 20:13 says, “You shall not kill” (RSV Bible). Which one is right and which one is wrong?

Some of the church leaders become stranded when asked such kind of questions and find no good and promising answers at the moment. Some church leaders whom I had interviewed have shared some Biblical verses which they use as a response to people’s questions as their standpoint; Minister T refers to the message of love in Romans 13: 9, “The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment are summed up in this sentence, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (RSV Bible). He also referred to Luke 17: 3-4, “Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times

in a day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent', you must forgive him" (RSV Bible).

O'Donovan is of the opinion that those people who always follow traditional practices are wrongly thinking of charms, magic and other forms of protection against witches which is lack of trust in God. He responded on what the Bible is saying about witchcraft by referring to a verse in Deuteronomy 18:10-12 which reads "There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer. Or a charmer, or a medium or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominable practices the Lord your God is driving them out before you"(RSV Bible). He went further describing that the Bible has confirmed the reality of supernatural powers and witchcraft but God condemns both these powers and people who use them Jer. 27:9-10. Throughout Scripture God also condemns the use of mystical powers by one person to control or manipulate other people, (O'Donovan 1995:240).

Minister T said,

(...) "Love is above all things and the commandments are summed up in one sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'. What I teach people is to love one another despite of the flaws we have. If love will lead, killings will not happen. The commandment says you shall not kill, we know the only person responsible for our life is only our creator (God). Killing is sin" (Interview with T, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Finally Harvey& Watson made it clear by doing exegesis of several texts in the Bible that speaks of witchcraft. They mention Lev. 20:27 which points both men and women to equal punishment, hence knowing that the laws were not based on gender, (Harvey& Watson 1995:118).

(c)Scapegoat mechanisms involved in witchcraft

The Sukuma tradition and cultural practice of scapegoat has been trying to refute the work of Christ on the cross for He has taken the sins of the world, died once for all. Blaming and accusing others for the wrong doings in order to be profitable as a solution to life problems has challenged the Lutheran church teachings. The blood of Jesus was shed once for all people despite of our social, economic, political stratifications or races. Therefore killing older people for one's benefit in the name of the witch is totally against human rights and is sinful.



## ii. Sociological challenge

The tragedy of witchcraft accusations and the killings of the elderly in Sukuma have sociologically been a challenge to the Lutheran church because superstitions beliefs are still having roots in the society as many other African societies. Some of the offenders are the members of the Lutheran church. There is no collected data which indicate how many Christians do engage in the killings but Christians are involved in some of the reported cases. The Christian families also marginalize the accused elders and victimize the vulnerable. Instead of looking for the right way to solve all social or spiritual problems which happen to a person/society (spiritual ways like faith and prayers, medical treatments), people tend to engage in the wrong ways and are blaming others leading to killings. Lagerwerf added that,

“The support by the church, engaging in the community for solving the problem have become difficult because church members are also members of the traditional community, (Lagerwerf 1987:34).

Another point was described by the informant V who says that on the other side social media has negatively contributed to the situation of the elderly killings in Sukuma. The growth of technology has connected the world together through social Medias like face book, tweeter, Instagram and other Medias. Informant V gave an example of Nigerian movies which shows many of the educated people practicing witchcraft and many succeed in their lives. These clips are uploaded on social Medias where by many people are able to get through them and send them to others too. In this way witchcraft has been seen as something which is good and can bring prosperous life (Interview with V, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2016).

This results to ignore the church’s teachings about God’s blessings to people through hard work as reckoned in 2Thessalonians 3; 10b “If anyone will not work, let him not eat”. So people opt to have prosperous life in an easier way without working on it. Along with this argument I think also globalization has played a big role in fostering the problem of mistreatment of elderly in Sukuma. Globalization incurs rapid urbanization and migration, but older people often stay behind in their rural areas. As traditional family life erodes, organizations such as HelpAge International reported that the chance of elder abuse is ranging from neglect to physical violence, especially of women is always increasing (HelpAge Internationala page)

In addition to the above points the killings of the elderly in Sukuma has been a challenge to the Lutheran church socially in the sense that it has broken the social relationship between people and families. People are living with fear of one another that any can be the enemy whom was never thought of. It gives a difficult time to the church ministers when they preach about love and unity, and at the same time see people going against the will of God.

### iii. Economic challenges/the challenge of sustainable funding

Although the Lutheran church leaders in Sukumaland cooperate with some of the government and non-government sectors to solve different problems which arise in the society like the killings, still the economical challenge has not been solved. The right ways of fighting with poverty has not yet been met.

Clarification about economical challenge was made by informant S who explained that the problem is the unsustainable programs which rely on donors and funds from different partners. She gave an example of a program initiated by the church of America (ELCA) that it was helpful but it didn't last long because the partners has stopped to send funds for support (Interview with S, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

### iv. Ethical challenges

The impact of patriarch system in Sukuma where by women are sometimes equated to children has led to the label of many women as witches because men are respected and seem superior to women. Informant S described what she witnessed several times when she make some visits or a walk around the village;

(...) "I saw several times women working in the farms with their children. It is very rare to find a man working in the farm, if he does, he just supervising others who are working, whom many of them are women. Sometimes the one who negotiates the job and gets paid is the husband but you will find a wife and her children working" she said looking sad (Interview with S, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

We may think of the agreement between wife and husband but it sounds strange to see how the same agreement could be made in many families? The status of women in Sukuma, as I have indicated earlier is that women have no voice in this society.

The Lutheran church has been challenged by this situation regarding how women are treated, as ministers are teaching about love and equality among people. Referring back to the work of creation where by God created a woman as man's helper but this seems to be interpreted and misused by some people. It is therefore clear that if women have to work and are considered

as the family workers, biologically their bodies change and hence they suffer from suspects to witches. I would not imagine that love exists in the midst of this kind of mistreatment and inequality.

Another ethical challenge is lack of respect and dignity among people especially family members. It is an African culture that we have an extended family and everyone should show respect to the other, especially young ones to the adults. Mistreating elders in Sukumaland who also are biological parents of the offenders, has greatly challenged the Lutheran church ethically. Parents are believed to withhold children's blessings; they can bless them or curse them. The church have been teaching about ten commandments which includes the fourth commandment reading from Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (RSV) Going deeper to the meaning of this commandment as it is in the books of Lutheran confirmation classes where it says that, "For this is the first commandment which promises". This commandment together with the other commandments, are always taught in Sunday school classes, confirmation classes and in the sermons during Sunday services. It made the church ministers think of what is happening to people who are taught from childhood to adulthood about love and honor to their parents, on the contrary they are killing their parents which is unethical and unbiblical too.

#### 4.7 The general effects of elder abuse in Sukumaland

The above explanations have presented how the tragedy of elder abuse has become a challenge to the Lutheran church in Sukumaland, in this section I will describe general effects of mistreatment of elderly to all people in Sukumaland and the community in whole.

Firstly, elder abuse in the form of killings which have been happening in Sukumaland, has removed the concept of good governance. Many people are accusing the Tanzanian government that has not been in the position to provide enough security to its people and their properties. Informant K says that, "The concept of good governance is dead as long as people are no more secured and are being killed every day. The weak response by the government which is caused by poor budget and economic slowdown, has been a great challenge. The community security groups like Sungusungu who are believed to help people to solve the problem of mistreatment of elderly, particularly the killings, these groups have been accused of breaking the law by punishing people instead of presenting them to the respective state organ" (Interview with K, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016). This implies that apart from all struggles to fight

against mistreatment of the elderly, the government has been regarded as having poor governance because they have failed to eradicate the problem/success in dealing with it to a great extent. District Police Chief Wendo was once reported by *Tanzania Leo* magazine, saying that there are some barriers which made the problem in a worse. He mentioned the problem of limited budget especially in fueling cars to track the criminals. This statement indicates how big the problem of elder abuse is as it has been given less concern/resources in tackling it hence poor governance in responding to brutal cases that threatens the lives of its people (Tanzania Leo, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013).

Secondly, lack of cooperation between people, police and government, has led to live an ambiguous life. As I have explained earlier, many killing cases are in control but people are not cooperating with the police/government by revealing the truth of what they know because of being afraid of been caught as suspects. People have lost hope to police and it takes much time to investigate killing cases because many people are not ready to cooperate in revealing the truth of the cases. District Police Chief Wendo was also reported by *Tanzania Leo* magazine saying that lack of confidence in telling the truth of many of the killing and other elder abuse cases has been a big challenge to the extent that sometimes they have to give some cash to people as a way of convincing them to tell the truth and to cooperate with them in revealing the evils in the society especially in killing cases in Sukuma (Tanzania Leo, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013).

Thirdly, elder abuse in Sukumaland has created fear among people especially the old ones. The elderly are no longer feeling safe; they trust neither their own family members nor their own children from what is happening. Their lives are surrounded with great fear of being killed, full of stress and they are mentally affected. It is not only the fear to the elders to die but also fear to other people about witches and witchcraft. O'Donovan argues that "For a great many people, including some weak Christians, the fear of witches and witchcraft is the greatest single fear in their lives. The very fear of witchcraft can be so great that a person can develop serious symptoms of physical or mental illness. We must not underestimate the power of fear itself, whether there is actual witchcraft involved or not" (O'Donovan 1995:311).

The fourth general effect is that the community is loss of elders who are needed in different community duties like solving some family conflicts, performing cultural rituals, wise people to educate and teach people about culture and traditions, different life issues especially for the youth and even contribution to different community activities. Also mistreatment of elderly in

the form of killing them has reduced a number of elders in the community and country in general. The statistics which I have presented in previous chapters, show that every year the number of elderly mistreatment/embarrassment/killings are increasing and a great number of them are linked to witchcraft accusations.

Another effect is the growth of the spirit of selfish desire. There is no longer a sense of communal sharing within the members of the community. Everyone is seeking to accomplish his/her desires through different ways as I have mentioned earlier. This may result to slow down the growth of the church as O'Donovan has stated, "Failure to make a definite and permanent break with the beliefs and practices of traditional religion has greatly weakened the church in Africa. Failure to completely put away non-Christian practices is a serious sin and brings God judgement. It can bring the loss of God's protection over a person's life" (O'Donovan 1995:223). When comes to relate what is happening in Sukuma (Killings of elder people) with God of mercy who forgives and forget, I hesitate to agree with O'Donovan's about loss of God's protection among a sinful community. All we can bring is suggestions and presuppositions but no one is in the position to understand the real human situation with what might be in the very heart of God. For God's thoughts and plans are not like ours as it is written in Isaiah 55:8-9. Also in Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us about God's good plan in our lives that which brings hope.

Apart from that also there is an effect of sinful generation which may be a trend because of shedding of an innocent blood of the elder people and the use of witchcraft and other mystical powers to solve/harm others. O'Donovan says that, "There is never a time when it is right for Christians to use magics, charms, spells, spirit medicines, fetishes or other secret powers to solve their problems or to gain power over others. These things are sins. They reveal a lack of faith in God" (O'Donovan 1995:241). In addition to what O'Donovan has said, if all mentioned and related issues to witchcraft and sorcery are sins, then we all know the outcome of a sinful generation as reckoned in Romans: 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ" (RSV Bible).

## Conclusion

People seem to be aware of elder abuse in Sukumaland/killings and their life seem to be threatened. After presenting the reasons/factors of the killings, how the killing is conducted and how it has become a challenge to the Lutheran church in Sukumaland, the next chapter will present the discussion and the analysis of the findings.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 THE RESPONSE OF THE ELCT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### Introduction

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania through its churches in East of Lake Victoria Diocese, have been dealing with spiritual and partly physical life of its people by helping them in their physical needs through diakonia which provides help for the widows, widowers, orphans, disabled people, elderly people and all who are in difficult life situations. This chapter will show how the church has responded to the elderly mistreatment, by analyzing and discussing the findings.

#### 5.1 Response of the church leadership

“Actually, the church is identified with its task, its mission. The mission of the church is not to secure man’s room in heaven, but to be a visible sign of the presence of the Lord in the longing for freedom and in the struggle for a more humane and just society” (Oftestad 2003:16). Sine also added,

If the church is truly to become a viable and a dynamic agent in the glorious tomorrow that God has promised us, it cannot choose to play safe by adopting policies of neutrality. The principles from the jubilee, prophets, Jesus’ life and the early church really challenge the church to participate and identify with the suffering of the community of the poor, disinherited, the victimized, the outcast and the broke-hearted (Sine 1983:137)

Both Oftestad and Sine are insisting on the necessity of being visional and focused on addressing the issues of people in the communities which the church claims to serve. Therefore, the Lutheran Church cannot stay quiet in the midst of the suffering. The following is the response of the church’s leadership to the tragedy of witchcraft accusations and elder abuse in Sukumaland, responding to the main question which asks, “What is the response of the church to the challenge of elder abuse/killings in its mission work?”

The first response is through diakonia as presented below;

#### Diaconal ministry

“The mission of the church cannot be carried out without diakonia, because it is the body of Christ and lives as such” (Oftestad 2003:28). The Lutheran World Federation Studies in the

2002 meeting in Johannesburg developed the understanding of diakonia to be “Prophetic critique of economic, political and cultural structures that produce and perpetuate suffering and violence, and as advocating for societal conditions conducive to a life of respect and dignity” (LWF 2006:81). Being critique through diakonia the church needs to go an extra mile in having strong economic goals and the ability to act upon any injustice act in the community. Diakonia has been essential work done by the church as one way of fulfilling the church’s missional call to the world as stated in Mathew 25:35-36, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (RSV Bible). Oftestad added that, “Diakonia exists in solidarity and communication with the poor and those who do not belong to any community and in the spontaneous and situational service” (Oftestad 2003:18).

The claim of the church to be a place for all people, ( marginalized and the poor) it takes the role of providence no matter what the structures of the community may be. Informant X responded to the question by describing diaconal ministry as combining the Word of God and provision of physical needs. It does not make sense to visit a person who has no food and just tell him/her about the Word of God and say prayers. He added that,

(...)The work of diakonia in Sukuma churches should now be twisted to suit to the current challenges which arise in our communities daily. We have tried at our best to help out elders who are affected by the tragedy of witchcraft accusations by providing food and temporary shelter especially for those who ran from their families while waiting for their case to be operated (Interview with X, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The diaconal activities are always conditioned and challenged by our contexts, Christian communities try to participate in all essential ways of social and economic service by supporting the needy physically and financially making efforts to establish or cooperate in programs which offer direct relief to different kinds of human sufferings and needs. The Lutheran church through their ministers have tried not only to teach people the Word of God but also help them meet their physical and social needs in general, including elderly people who are affected by witchcraft accusations and killings.

Pastor R responded to the other question which asked, “What plans/new strategies are they (Lutheran Church) having to address the issue of elder abuse?” He describes that they always address the needs of the people not only through provision of physical needs but also teaching them the Word of God as a way of comforting them. He said,

(...)Teaching the Word of God to a person who is going through difficulties in life is a challenging task. But we try our best to look for a verse that suits their context and after that we support them in their physical needs. Example of the verse which I find myself used to in many cases is that of Mathew 6: 25-26, ‘Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?’ This is very contented with God’s love, power and hope for the afflicted person, he said confidently. (Interview with Pastor R, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The church does visit the affected people; help them find a respective place to claim their rights (reporting to police or to court) and assist them financially and other needs. The LWF studies also stresses the same point that, “The diaconal ministers and deacons who work on behalf of the church should reach out to the excluded and marginalized people and give a feedback to other members regarding what they have experienced (LWF 2006:87). This is also done by some Lutheran church leaders and diakonia departments in the ELCT, East of Lake Victoria diocese. The informant X who is the leader of diakonia in one congregation , gave a clue on how they have tried to allocate some people in different villages who works as the reporters of what is going on out there and give feedback on what kind of help is needed. He said,

(...)We usually appoint a person who is living in the same village so that it won’t be difficult to get the information or use expenses for it. By doing so it has helped much to reveal even the deep information of the affected members of the killings, and other members like disabled children who are hidden at home with no right to education and no freedom to be out with others. They also look for possibilities to extend our help there through diakonia (Interview with X, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

This implies that, the main aim of diakonia is not only to help people/provide them with their needs but also to empower them to address their own issues and cross the economic, social, political and cultural barriers which seem to limit their daily lives. Dietrich added that,

Diakonia has to serve as a transforming tool by including all people on the margins (disabled, the sick, old people and women)....Diakonia is not just a matter of charity or feeding people but also of empowering people for the purpose of transformation (Dietrich 2014:110&114).

This suggests that the church is not only in a position of feeding/providing physical needs always, but also to empower people to go out and do something as an impact of the work of diakonia in transforming the society.



## Evangelism

Evangelism is used by Lutheran church in Sukuma as a way of spreading the message of love and teaching the Word of God. In Sukuma evangelism is done by house to house visitation and through air meetings in which different Lutheran church ministers teach and preach. It is not necessary that the ministers who officiate the meetings and teachings are from Sukumaland. The ministers in Sukuma sometimes invite pastors and preachers from other regions. Recognizing the church's responsibility in evangelism, Kirk added that,

It is the church that evangelizes, looking for acceptable and understandable cultural terms and channels to express the faith in Jesus Christ, participate in the struggle for justice and the care of the environment. The church should also engage in different dialogues with all people including people of other faiths and build a peaceful community together (Kirk 1999:205).

It shows how ethical consideration is important in order to deliver the right message of evangelism, participate to bring justice in the community and making dialogues with other people. Informant Z when explaining how they do evangelism as a way to respond and eliminate elder abuse in Sukumaland said,

(...)We are not the one who preach and teach every time. Sometimes we invite preachers from other Lutheran parishes and regions just to let people share different gifts of teaching and preaching. In a way it has created an awareness of many people to attend the gospel gathering and listen to the message which is offered (message of love, justice, value of life and harmony). We make announcements in our churches and put posters in different places welcoming people to attend (Interview with Z, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

He went on giving an example of the gathering which was conducted by the Lutheran church in Bariadi the year 2014 and invited New Life in Christ group from Dar es Salam, that came with retired preside Bishop Dr. Malasusa. Without considering faith differences, status or any other class, the Regional Commissioner gave them the place for conducting the gathering and insisted all people to attend.

Among the topics taught in these gatherings and evangelic meetings are the meaning of life, God's love to humanity, the fourth commandment and the right to live. I will explain the teachings as follows;

(a)The meaning of life, value of life and the right to live

I don't think life was meant to be without any challenge or obstacle, but rather to face the challenges that come in our ways and eventually become victories and success in life. This is

confirmed through Jesus who suffered with us in human a body. That draws him near to the world and transforms human life of suffering, in that he shared his own life with human beings, Shorter has called it ‘sufferings redemptive power’ (Shorter 1985:41). O’Donovan added that,

“God knows that we will face problems and crises in life. He has not left us without a way to handle these problems. Instead of turning to magic, fetishes and charms, God wants his people to turn to him in prayer for problems and needs they face” (O’Donovan 1995:24). Shorter argues that, “Suffering is written into our human constitution”. He continued to argue that, “It is the suffering that saps life that is intolerable, the suffering that serves no cause. Such suffering reduces the will to live” (Shorter 1985:37&34). The aim and the meaning of life is neither suffering nor to live a desperate life but to fight against any form of human suffering in a meaningful way and to enjoy the creation of God to the fullest. Both O’Donovan and Shorter are trying to bring an argument that problems are inevitable but through it all there is a way to get out of it, a way of faith and prayers as mentioned by O’Donovan. Shorter shared the understanding of suffering in Buddhist faith and describes;

At the root of suffering is craving and desire, therefore to eliminate suffering one must be released from all desire, whether for good or for evil. One must pass beyond joy and pain, good and evil to the realm of no desire. Christians on the contrary do not, at all times and in all circumstances, seek to avoid suffering as they discern a meaning and a purpose in suffering (Shorter 1985:37)

Although desire and craving can be one of the reasons for human suffering, applying this understanding within our contexts will be another predicament issue which will need the church to go deeper in the Bible teachings especially in John 9:2, when the disciples of Jesus were asking him about the man who was blind whether his parents sinned or the man himself. The answer was no one has sinned between them but that was done in order that God’s work to be manifested in him. Neither his parents nor the man himself was craving for something/desire which caused him to be blind. I can agree partly with Shorter’s view/example of a blind man but still questioning on how God of love and mercy can allow difficult situation to an innocent people for manifestation of his works?.

The great work of creation of human and all other creatures reflects the love of God and his omnipotence, powerful over all evil deeds and human suffering. Kirk argues that

All human beings need to be treated as having essential value which is derived from them being created in the image of God, the primary value which is neither given nor

can it be taken away by any other human beings apart from being only recognized (Kirk 1999:108)

In Sukuma the creation means the presence of high divination power which is beyond all humanity. This power is revealed through all people equal to the image of God which is celebrated through the gift of life. In the church gatherings, the value and the meaning of life to all people as one way of impacting them knowledge about the value of one another and stop mistreating elders. Informant X describes,

(...)The teachings are conducted linking the Bible verses and examples of different old people in the Bible like Solomon who was wise, King David and others relating them to some elders who are prominent figures in the country known for their wisdom and ability to advise, warn and direct others according to the ethics” (Interview with X, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The Lutheran church went further on evangelism through different programs on the radio. The Lutheran Church has a radio center called “Radio Sauti ya Injili” in which different programs, teachings and discussions are conducted direct with people. Among the program which makes elder people feel cared for is the program of “*Wazee ni Hazina*” literally means old is a treasure (my own translation). Through this program they present a discussion held by some of the elderly people whom they have managed to visit, discussing different issues about life, what are the challenges the elders meet in their old age and their experience of being old. In all this emphasis is on the value of everyone in the society, the value and meaning of life to the elderly, challenging everyone to see ageing as a biological process which we will go through and honor the gift of getting old.

Another teaching by the Lutheran church is God’s love to the world as explained below;

(b)God’s love to the world

Pastor M explained how they do evangelism as one of the method to reduce/stop elder abuse especially when it comes to their right to live as any other citizens. This female pastor mentioned the place called Nyampalahala in Sukuma which was among their yearly goals to reach out people. She said,

(...)We succeeded to plant a church with a minister to serve, together with my group of other Lutheran church ministers, we stayed for one week preaching through open air meetings, we did house to house visits and baptism for those who needed it. Through house to house visitation it has given more room to be close to people, hear their problems and some of the visited people revealed what was going on in that place about elder abuse”. (Interview with M, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016).

Camping in this place has made the church leaders glad that they have tried to reach people through visitation and gatherings, hoping that people will change, reveal all crimes in the society, and finally that the killing cases and all kinds of elder abuse will decrease or disappear.

## Education

It is uncertain whether the Sukuma people have any understanding of the conception of good and evil's abstract forces which are available in many societies. Tanner describes that, "Many of the average Sukuma seem to grade their ideas of right and wrong according to the degree of relationship they may be having with others in their context" (Tanner 1967:22). This is trying to suggest that the first place to relate to is in the family. Besides family, are neighbors and friends. According to this argument it is therefore suggesting that many of the killings can be directly related to family members as I have described in the factors for elder abuse/killings.

In the response to the fight against elder abuse, witchcraft accusations and killings, the Lutheran church tend to conduct meetings in villages and give a general understanding of the forces of nature like earthquakes and others which Sukuma to be related to witchcraft or personal evil deeds. The church ministers also organize different groups like women group which targets to visit people in their homes. They have regular visits in different villages teaching people different handicrafts, health education, reminding them about different roles of men and women in the society and they have a special program sponsored by friends from ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). They also support women's basic education to address the fact that Sukuma is a patriarchal society and many women were not able to go to school. Informant Q, who is a leader of the women group in church, added that,

(...)In the meetings/groups we also stress on knowing God (teaching the Word of God), which helps a person and keeps him/her away from doing evil deeds, killing or mistreating others, we also teach and discuss the meaning of the fourth commandment 'Honor your father and your mother (Interview with Q, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

O'Donovan argues that the Bible has given a general guideline about life of the person on earth and how we should relate to one another. The Bible tells it all about person's relationship with parents and elderly in the community. He quoted a verse from Lev. 19:32, "You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord" (RSV Bible). O'Donovan says that, "This statement from the Law of Moses reveals that it is right and pleasing to God for people to show respect for the elderly at all times" (O'Donovan 1995:222).

Another point in was offered by informant T (church minister) in the response to the same question about strategies and plans for fighting against elder abuse, by providing education through teaching people about self-reliance education. He said,

(...)The church has been working hard to teach people different ways of self-dependence without relying on donors or help from other people. Establishment of women groups and other groups in the church where they gather together and learn handcrafting, making home vegetable gardens and giving them support to participate in competitions with other groups from other congregations in the diocese. It has helped to decrease family/ wealth conflicts which lead to elder abuse (killings), (Interview with T, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Sine added that, “Self-reliant development concentrates on people and requires a structural change in society. This would be possible if policies of social justice are followed in the society” (Sine 1983:339). Changes in all structural spheres in the society, removing any form of exploitation and oppression, the society will be a peaceful and developed one. As the matter of struggling for making a peaceful community, the church has engaged in a work of advocacy as described in the following point.

The work of advocacy in congregations

Dietrich has mentioned work of advocacy by the Lutheran church as challenging the work of diakonia. He says, “It (work of advocacy) should act as the transformative sign of hope, advocating for the people in need and advocate for peace and justice within the community (Dietrich 2014:193). The work of advocacy in the congregations in Sukumaland is the church’s tool for advocacy issues targeting justice for the oppressed, the murder of elders in the community and the murder of people with albinism, whose body parts are believed to make people wealthy. Pastor M explained that the advocacy department in her parish has succeeded to extend the service in Ushirombo yard in Geita as a step to overcome elder abuse. She says,

(...)The work of advocacy is responsible to teach those people affected by witchcraft accusations, elder abuse and killings on how to disclose criminal cases and especially such murders, where and how to report problems and also how to defend women and those who are oppressed. The work of advocacy was initiated by the church but today is an interreligious service and includes different religious leaders (Muslims, Christians etc.), government and non-government leaders, traditional leaders and all social leaders like councilors. So we mainly teach people about human rights (their rights) and different ways to disclose violence in the society (Interview with M, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016).

After presenting how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in East of Lake Victoria Diocese has responded to the tragedy of elderly killings in Sukumaland, the following section will proceed with the discussion and the analysis of the findings.

## 5.2 Analysis and discussion of the findings

### Introduction

Witchcraft accusations and elder abuse in Sukumaland has been a challenge not only to the Lutheran church and the Sukuma community, but also to all people. The killings have been shocking one, the cry of older people being accused of being witches and of everyone regardless of social, tribal or economic status have been heard across cultural and national boundaries. The frustrating incidents in different parts of Sukumaland brought fear and uncertainty not only to the elderly people but also to the families while the tragedy of the killings has remained a puzzling one. This part of the chapter will discuss what was found in the field work and analyze the approaches used by the church to overcome the problem together with all proposed approaches by the informants.

### Description and analysis of

#### (A) Approaches by the church

“The congregation (church) makes approaches in order to help the needy and the threatened people” (Oftestad 2003:30). The Lutheran church has been making some efforts to approach the challenges of witchcraft accusations and elder abuse, specifically killings in Sukumaland as it is expected to address the needs of her members. In relation to the response of the Lutheran church shown above, the following are the discussions and analysis of its approaches;

##### i. Preaching

Preaching is done by the church ministers and the invited preachers from different places, in and outside East of Lake Victoria Diocese (Sukumaland). The preaching is not only done in the church during Sunday services but also on weekdays gatherings held either at the ground of the church (if there is a big ground) or at nearby primary or secondary school grounds from 15:00pm to 18:00pm mostly during holidays. Pastor L explained how Lutheran church leaders have been doing preaching in Sukumaland to inspire and rise an awareness of people to stop the killings of the elderly and all other mistreatments and evil deeds. He said,

(...) “In order to reach all people, we are trying our best to use every available opportunities or creating opportunities to preach and teach the Word of God, the message which is love. The preaching is done in funerals, weddings, seminars and different community meetings. In funerals and weddings is where we can meet with many people at once from different faiths and status. Sermons and preaching touches all kinds of people, stressing on love to our neighbors as we love ourselves which is written in Mathew 22:39b “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”, (RSV Bible) and honoring our parents (elder). Love has power over all evil deeds. Galatians 5: 22-23, is also talking about love and other spirit fruits, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law”, (RSV Bible) (Interview with L, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016)

In addition to this we can refer to 1Corinthians 13:4-6, “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right”. One of the informants I have mentioned above reported that many young children in Sukumaland especially girls, have been through many life challenges such as forced marriage, being raped or abandoned by parents since they were born. These traumatic experiences create hatred in their hearts which they vow to pay back. For this reason they go to witch doctors intending to bewitch or to kill the one who kept their lives in lamentable situations they are in. But through preaching the Word of love and having some counselling sessions with a pastor or other church minister, their heart wounds are healed and they learn how to forgive others, hence reduce the killing incidents as Paul has mentioned in the verses above that love is not arrogant or rude, neither rejoicing at wrong but rejoices in the right.

Preaching as an approach to fight against evil deeds in Sukuma can be of help, but the challenge is outstanding that how often, at different time and places, the same preaching should be heard by people in order to be transformed from evil deeds? Preaching in funerals and other possible occasions can be one approach, my worry is about those who do not attend funerals, weddings or are from different faith, and will one day preaching /sermon able to put some sparks for change in a person from evil doer to a good man? I would rather think of combination of preaching, visitation and different gatherings as explained above.

The content of the preaching matters a lot in transforming the lives of people by suiting the current situation and be part of the solution to the challenges in the community. (Elder abuse and witchcraft accusations). Preaching also goes hand in hand with the work of advocacy, helping people to live the Word (about love- show love, justice-fight for justice, peace-make a peaceful community)and also be an advocate by fighting for their rights, voicing up for the humiliated and others as I will describe in the following point.

## ii. Advocacy

Being a voice of the people especially the poor, the needy and those who are humiliated is an advocacy role which the Lutheran Church has played. The aim is to plead for the innocent men and women who are living in fear of being killed because of the accusations of being witches. As I have mentioned earlier many of the accusations affects women, worse enough in Sukuma where women have no voice (the patriarchal system). They are both fearful and lack attention of sharing what they are going through. The Lutheran church through its ministers has stretched out their hands to help them voice up and rise from those oppressive bonds. Here is an incident shared by a church minister on how the work of advocacy helps people in Sukumaland;

The church minister S, shared a story of an old woman whom he met with during house to house visitation and prayers. The woman was living in a separate traditional house (Sukuma houses) after being chased from a brick house in which they were living with her husband before he died. From my experience of some tribes in Tanzania including Sukuma, traditionally children are given part of parent's wealth especially a plot of land for boys. The girls are not counted as the part of it because they are assumed to be someone's wife.

Her children abandoned her accusing her of being a witch and that she is the one who killed their father. To escape the fights she found a place to stay living a lonely life with no help.

Once when the church minister visited her knocking at her door she was afraid that they came to kill her. She was afraid to open but after the explanation of who was knocking at her door she finally opened and let him in. She was happy that she got someone she could share her life story with but she warned him not to tell anyone because once her children would hear, they would come to fight with her or even killing her.

The minister assured safety for her and helped her to get back what was hers. He went through legal processes hand in hand with the woman and at the end she returned to her house. From there she was advised to write a will so she did. She got back her happiness through the advocacy role the church has played (Interview with S, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).



This story is an example of how the church helps people to get out of their difficult situations. It really encourages and brings hope to the victims knowing that there will be some help and place to run to for their safety and survival on.

My worry from faith perspective is that there might be some tensions from non- Christian believers that the church is doing so to attract more people to convert to Christianity. A parish pastor added that several times they have met those claims especially when assisting and advocating non- church members like Muslims. Of course people always run and make a stay where they get helped especially after being abandoned with no help from anyone (Interview with P, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016)

In previous chapters I have mentioned the center for elderly people who were rescued from being killed after witchcraft accusations. Kolandoto in Shinyanga was established by the church (but recently have been cooperating with the government) in their process of defending and helping all elderly people who ran away from their families to escape being killed. These elderly are from different parts in Sukumaland. At present includes also people with albinism, because they are affected too, as their body parts are cut off believing that they bring good fortunes in business and wealth. The Tanzanian government together with other private organizations, individuals provides food, shelter and health support for these people (Habari Mzunguko 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2016).

### iii. House to house prayers

This approach is a planned one in some parishes where the responsible church minister together with church elders pays a visit to their members. An Evangelist Y noted that this approach has been successful to some extent as they get to know more about their members than what they see outside when they meet in church. Informant S added that it feels good when a person is visited, talking and having prayers together. This is more church membership based and seems to be difficult to extend to non- Christians until they are asked if they need to. Informant Y continued to share his experience of house to house prayers, he explained that,

(...)Sometimes we meet with circumstances where the husband is a Muslim and the wife is a Christian. When we went for prayers we were chased by the husband because he rejects the wife's faith practice. These are very rare cases because most of the women who get married to Muslims or other faiths they tend to change to the husband's faith (Interview with Y, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016).

This practice is very common in Tanzania. The same point is described by Meyer who has shown that many members of the prayer groups are women. Meyer, in her presentation of Ewe people of Ghana and their understanding of devil and witchcraft in Ewe Presbyterian church has pointed out prayer groups as one of the ways which help to liberate people from evil deeds. She says,

There are organized weekly prayer meetings and healing sessions in which most members are women. During their meetings they read the Bible thoroughly, pray together loudly, beat drums, dance and testify the deeds of the Lord. During the healing sessions sick persons are treated by laying on hands and by invoking the Holy Spirit in order to exorcise evil spirits. The members of this group believe in the existence of witches and other evil spirits and understand them to be Satan's servants. These ideas are shared by many Ewe Presbyterian Church members (Meyer 1992:102-103)

In other cases when a person got relief from a problem he/she had or after the prayer session, others tend to ask what has she/he did. Informant Y stresses that,

When women meet while going to the market, parties and other events they always talk about what they are up to, what happened in their families, children and other stuffs. They tell others too about how prayer sessions or how the church has helped them solve their problems. This has helped to bring others who were non- Christians to ask for a visit, and help hence transformed in their way of thinking and of treating others. Apart from that, women have a great deal of influence and tend to influence others including their husbands by telling them about the prayer group, what they have heard or seen, hence win to pursue them to join the group (Interview with Y, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016).

This has helped in a way to reveal the evil deeds and plans for elders and killings especially when a person knows killing is sinful and we need God in every single minute of life.

#### v. Bible study groups

In Bible study groups people learn that God's gift of life is for every one and that we need each other in life, people learn the value of parents and one another in general (the meaning of the fourth commandment). Bible study groups is mainly targeting to teach people the Word of God in a way that they feel free to ask questions, share experiences and pray together. In fighting against any mistreatment and the killings of elderly in Sukumaland, Bible study groups have contributed in a way that people knows the Word of God in deep, use their time wisely in working by engaging themselves in different productive activities example tailoring, hired motorcycle, tax drivers etc. (Referring to 2Thessalonians 3:10, 'If anyone will not work, let him not eat') By engaging in these activities have helped to keep them away from peer

groups which would persuade/associate them to evil deeds (killing). This approach was confirmed effective when some people gave testimonies in the church, prayer meetings, and Bible study groups and confess how it has become of a great help for them.

One of the informants who always attend Bible studies witnessed that it has helped him a lot, changed his life and a way of thinking. Before, he thought church ministers were only using the Bible as a way of earning money until he was persuaded by his wife to join Bible studies and got to know what it real means to our lives. He said that,

(...)I was once directing people to whom they can hire for the purpose of killing if they needed to and I was paid a lot of money for that. Now I am saved and I like Bible Study groups” (Interview with D, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016).

So through this approach then he decided to stop those evil deeds as he now knows about the commandments and what life was exactly meant to be.

#### vi. Pastoral care and counselling

Patton states that, “It is not necessarily that all caring communities are connected/related to the church, although the church can seem to be the first caring community of believers which extends its cares across the margins” (Patton 1993:21). Good pastoral careers should feel that he/she is part of the people/ person whom is given care. Dillen stresses that, “Pastors and other members of the church community are used as the expressions of the pastoral care of the church showing compassion and mercy for the others” (Dillen 2014:17). Patton goes further in arguing that “Caring also implies remembering, which means keeping the other person in mind. Remembering is caring for what we remember” (Patton 1993:27).

Lutheran Church in Sukumaland through its ministers and all other church workers and members have shown its care and remembrance of those who are in difficult situations and needs. The visit and prayers for the abandoned elderly, provision of food, helping the elderly to move to Kolandoto center in Shinyanga (The place which takes care of the elderly and people with albinism who escaped from being killed as I have explained in advocacy section) if they are willing to and sometimes church ministers arranges some meetings with the family for resolving the conflicts. Pastor I describes,

(...)Some of the elderly come to ask for help from us. We always give them options like if they would like to move out from their families or to arrange a meeting with family and discuss the issue. Because in the family is where they belong, many of the elderly especially in many Tanzanian tribes likes to die and be buried at their homes. So many of them opt to start with family meeting in which we try to talk with both

sides (family members and the elder him/herself). What is needed is that spirit of care, knowing that there is a place/person to run to for help” (Interview with I, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Pastoral care and counselling is much needed to help both elderly who are still living with their families and those who managed to escape from being killed. They are psychologically affected and their lives are full of fear that anytime can be the last time to live. Also the church (leaders of the Lutheran church) has been counselling them to remove hatred and prevent them from revenging. Through frequent visits, conversations and sometimes having lunch together with other people have helped them feel cared for and valuable.

Shorter argued on the same point that, “Fear and despair which is caused by the belief in witchcraft encourages the very attitudes which are the props of witchcraft theory: enmity and envy, secrecy and revenge” (Shorter 1985:100). So, pastoral care and counselling is very important to eliminate spirits of enmity and revenge. Oftestad added, “Naturally, the pastoral counselling is concerned about the individual and his personal growth and healing” (Oftestad 2003:14). It is about the spiritual, mental and soul healing which is reflected upon physical growth of a person.

Having discussed and analyzed the approaches by ELCT, East of Lake Victoria Diocese, the next part B, I will present responses, views and presentation of the proposed approaches by all informants.

#### [\(B\) Response and suggestions made by the Informants in addressing the issue of elderly mistreatment](#)

The following is the response of other informants (lay people, affected families) about elder abuse and witchcraft accusations in Sukumaland although some of the interviews are already included in the discussion in the previous chapters. When I asked the question, “Have you heard about elder killings?” the response were as follows;

Informant N who is a member of the affected family says,

(...) “The issue of elder killings is not only heard but also has become part of or daily life. Our mother was injured in different parts of her body when she was trying to escape from being killed last year (2015)”

When asked if the incidence was linked to witchcraft accusations the answer was as follows;

(...) “Before she got injured, we heard some people accusing her of being a witch. We did not understand if there were some other reasons behind or not. You know when a person is accused to be a witch, neither the person nor his/her family can be told”

directly rather than hearsays when passing around or sometimes a close friend can tell”  
(Interview with N, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Another informant H who is also one of the members of the affected family responded to the same questions above, he said;

(...) There was a young girl who lives not very far from here, she got sick (unknown sickness but claims having headaches). She used some medicines but no relief. Then her parents decided to go for some help to the witchdoctor. The answer was she is bewitched by our mother. From there all people around here started to hate not only our mother but the whole family. We are living the life of fear from what we have heard and seen from others who got killed for witchcraft allegations (Interview with H, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

The next question asked, “Do you think there might be a reason for it to be connected to the mentioned gender above? (women)”, informant N responded,

(...) “There is no strong reason for women to be more accused of witchcraft. From what we have heard as stories and myth from our elders is that women in the beginning wanted to bewitch a man who saved people from the monster. And also the traditional life in our village, cooking by using smoke stoves in the houses which have no enough windows for air supply cause women’s eyes to turn red, (red eyes is among the physical sign by Sukuma to identify witches (Interview with N, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

From the findings, and all informants response through the discussion in this study, the following are their suggestions;

i. Cooperation between the government and religious/faith institutions and community

The fight against the tragedy of witchcraft accusations and elder abuse in Sukumaland needs cooperation between Tanzanian government, NGO’s and all the religious institutions and the community in general.

When I asked a question, “What is the role of the government and other private sectors in dealing with the killings?”

Informant X complained that the government is not close to its people until something happens and become worse. He said,

(...)The weakness of cooperation between government, churches and other organizations is that the government only shows up late after the problem has become big. If the problem of witchcraft accusations and elder killings was cooperatively fought in its early stages, it would have not reached this worse stage (Interview with X, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Informant D shared a story about an older woman, who was injured in different parts of her body by bush knives, accused of being a witch but the response of the government to help was

so tardy. The person was taken to the hospital and he was excessively bleeding. Surprisingly, he was not given any first Aid. The medical officers told them that they cannot attend a patient until they bring PF 3 (Police Form of medical examination for a person who is harmed). The process took long that the patient died (Interview with D, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016).

According to these explanations are therefore suggesting that there are some flaws in the response by the government to what is happening to its people, especially in regard to the event which reflect the killings of the elderly in Sukuma leading to unnecessary death of the victims, although not directly pointed in reference to other incidents.

Oftestad is of the view that, “Communication and identification with the poor and those who are suffering reveal Christ, and consequently are critical of the whole society. This sort of communication and identification drives the whole social community forward” (Oftestad 2003:16). Good communication and cooperation between government, community, faith institutions and others will make it easier to solve people’s problems including elder abuse and eventually eradicate them.

#### ii. Investing more in diakonia

Oftestad states that, “Today, in many churches and in the ecumenical work, the concept of diakonia ha been implied to the structure of the church and to the relationship between church and society” (Oftestad 2003:5). In order to strengthen that relationship between the church and society, the Lutheran Church through the work of diakonia has seemed very helpful and has played a positive role in a way. As I have suggested earlier, the victims and other people who are in need have been helped through diakonia by the church in Sukuma.

The challenge is that the diaconal services has not been able to extend its service to many people due to economical challenge. Oftestad recognizes the importance of supporting and investing more in diakonia, he says, “The diakonia is supported economically and encouraged spiritually by many Christian associations and societies outside or inside the church” (Oftestad 2003:11). Also he quoted LWF (1982) understanding of diakonia, “Diakonia is humanitarian, which means it is not limited to churches and Christians” (Oftestad 2003:19). Recognition of diakonia as worldwide and communal service will encourage people to join hands in uplifting it economically in order to be able to reach out as many people as they can.

Informant T is calling and encouraging the church and other donors to invest more in the work of diakonia in the churches. He says that diakonia has been a fast and direct target help

to people even in emergence time (unpredicted events like victims of the witchcraft accusations, people with albinism, the sick) (Interview with T, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Although HelpAge International is an NGO, it has joined hand to the struggle of the church against witchcraft accusations and elderly killings in Sukumaland. They have made fuel-efficient stoves to support women who cook in smoky houses hence cause irritation of their eyes which later cause them to be suspects of witches. From HelpAge International statistics, they made a great success by 99% reduction of the elderly killings at the places they have visited and conducted projects (HelpAge International Report 2016 about women's right in Tanzania). HelpAge International has been working with partners in 90 villages in Sukumaland since 1999 aiming at working with the community to prevent witchcraft accusations and attacks against older women. (HelpAge International 2016)

### iii. Conducting seminars to teach about human rights

Informant P presented the point of encouraging the Lutheran church ministers and other leaders to teach their people about human rights. He insisted on conducting seminars and meetings or even during church services like Sunday services, to spare some time for teaching people what their rights are, what it means, and what should be done to avoid breaking human rights.

He added that,

(...)If the church leaders won't be able to teach about human rights, an easier way is to invite people who work with Human Rights Organization in Tanzania. The teaching may be done separately like a special meeting/seminar targeting only the issue of human rights, depending on the nature of our contexts and the response of our people in social/church meetings" (Interview with P, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Sine added that,

The church has an educational task to accomplish among those of its members in order to keep before them the precepts of respect for the human person, justice and human dignity. It should alert its members to remain critical of any approach, whereby the individual is seen as an object, a mere case study or experimental material (Sine 1983:338).

### iv. Education in rural areas

Many rural areas in Tanzania have been difficult to reach because of their remoteness. As I have mentioned earlier, in Sukuma many killing cases are reported to happen in rural areas (villages) rather than urban centers. Informant C described that

(...) “Lack of education and poor infrastructures have catalyzed the problem of elderly killings. Many people in these remote areas cannot read and write and have no any basic knowledge about negative impacts of witchcraft beliefs. For them, connections to witch beliefs and traditional beliefs are of a great value. For the few schools which we have, there are no enough teachers and also sometimes children are not going to school, they stay home helping their parents in grazing and farming activities (Interview with C, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Gulle added that, “Many schools in rural areas have no enough teachers because of poor infrastructures and witchcraft belief. Some teachers refuse to work in interior schools especially places where witchcraft belief is strong” (Gulle 2004:29). Also education about human rights has been taught and through it traditional healers got involved. Some of the traditional healers have confessed to be helped by this education and since then they have stopped to name a person who might be a suspect to a witch. Instead the traditional healers give the patient (customer) a relief medicine and sometimes they are referring the patient to the hospital. It is therefore clear that education is the most important needed for all people.

#### v. Review of Witchcraft Act

The government needs not only to review the witchcraft laws but also inheritance laws which will include the clear changes and action upon them. Human Rights 2013 report also has presented some arguments about the Witchcraft Act by stating that, “Witchcraft Act is actually promoting the existence of witchcraft” (Human Rights Report 2013:36).

Informant U says,

(...)As the part of the law workers in Mwanza, what we look for and work on is who killed who, and not the reason of the killing. According to this then the killings of the elderly people due to witchcraft accusations is not something given priority and perhaps it might be one of the reasons for growing in number every year (Interview with U, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

Informant R was of the opinion that,

(...)The Tanzanian government should firstly fight with any kind of corruption which can rise during operating elder abuse cases, investigate all killing cases related to witchcraft and punish offenders according to the active laws. Also I suggest to the government to set a strict law against all traditional healers and witchdoctors who are said to have contributed to the problem of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations (Interview with R, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Gulle added that,

For the Sukuma people, killing the suspects of witchcraft is a common practice because of the weak government laws that do not provide punishment to the witches



even if they will confess before people that they are witches. Therefore, people decided to take law in their hands as a way of solving the problem by killing them (Gulle 2004:23).

### Conclusion

From the analysis of the findings, the Lutheran church have made a big step from past perspectives of early bishops of separating spiritual and world matters as long as we are living in the same world in which interaction and dependency is inevitable, there is no longer need of pointing spiritual issues without referring to physical needs of people too. This way of understanding opened doors for the church to be challenged by the social context of its people where also the church is located. Responding and share with others their joy and sufferings is part of the ministry which Jesus did, and as his followers we need to follow his footsteps.

It seem that people are aware and are appreciating the effort by the church more than what the government has done as a way of solving elder abuse and killings in Sukumaland. It is the time for the Lutheran church to make more effort and the government to show their concern and address the problem in Sukumaland. In chapter six I will say more about what I suggest for both the church and the government to do.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

In this thesis I have been dealing with the tragedy of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations as a challenge to the mission of the church in ELCT, ELVD. The challenge of elder abuse in Sukumaland has currently challenged the Lutheran church in the midst of its mission work where love is expected to prevail. We all want to see a changing community from the darkest thoughts and deeds to the light of justice, love and transformative world. But it has been surprising that within the Lutheran church members, some are associated with mistreating their parents (elders) despite of the Christian teachings and preaching which are offered. This alerts the Lutheran church that something is wrong and quick response is needed to rescue the situation.

I have discussed people's local perspectives about elderly in relation to Sukuma myth of origin, which at the end revealed why the accusations and mistreatment is a kind of a gendered issue, although no author/researcher has discussed it openly and deeply. I further discussed the reasons/factors for elder abuse (killings), the form of elder abuse in Sukuma and the response of the Lutheran church. Moreover I have discussed elder abuse in Sukumaland as a theological challenge, sociological challenge and economical challenge trying to connect them as a whole and dependent upon one another for the wellbeing of the church, its members and the community in general. Additionally, I presented a witchcraft Act in Tanzania that shows different amendments which are done in order to control the recent witchcraft accusations and killings in Sukuma and Tanzania in general.

The following are recommendations made from the data findings of elder abuse and witchcraft accusations. I will present them in different parts namely; theological recommendations, sociological recommendations, economical recommendations, community groups and the work of mission of the church as the transformation way of helping people getting out of their problems. After the analysis and the presentation of the materials from the

field which were collected through interviews and documentaries and other sources mentioned in methodological chapter, this is what I found out;

Firstly, many of the accused people seem to be widows and widowers. Through all the interviews and families I visited, I did not meet both husband and wife alive who were accused of being witches. This suggests that many of the accusations and mistreatment are at family level and the source might be wealth conflicts. Oftestad in his presentation about widows in relation to the Bible says, “Widows and orphans were very much vulnerable group in the old society. Therefore the care for these people has been emphasized in the diaconal work, 1Timothy 5:3” (Oftestad 2003:100). I think it was not only in the old society because this has been recently experienced in Sukumaland too.

Secondly, it seem through the preachers/ministers either from the Lutheran church or other invited preachers from outside who are invited for some services by the Lutheran church ministers to their congregations to conduct gospel air gatherings have played a negative role unknowingly. Oftestad added that, “Everything that is done builds on the preaching of the Gospel” (Oftestad 2003:27). This means that preaching’s and the preachers are of the great impact in the community from what they preach, the context and how people understandings and interpret it.

Thirdly, the Lutheran churches have not been able to use diakonia as a sociological tool for eradicating and overcoming elder abuse and witchcraft accusations in Sukumaland. It seems to be more of a religious work of charity. Oftestad added that, “To the Lutheran church the term diakonia seems extraneous a foreign word whereas to Christian reality and to the whole concept of church and faith, it represents the key word” (Oftestad 2003:5). If the Lutheran church could have understand diakonia in a broader sense, invest more in diakonia and extend its service outside the church there could have been great success in addressing the challenge of elder abuse.

Diakonia through support economically, socially and visitation to the needy gives a strong social connection, unity, dignity and love in the community. I would recommend to the Lutheran church to make more room for outsiders which will help them identify themselves with the church for social rather than religious reasons. Some people may not be ready to join or may be weak to abide to the guiding moral and spiritual rules by the church although they would like to interact with the church socially. So being both a religious and social institution

will widen access to many people hence getting to know people's problems and if possible, suggest possible solutions.

The fourth point which I found is that, witchcraft in Sukumaland is both perceived as good and bad, hence makes the categories of diviners, witch doctors and traditional healers seem to be people's refuge while witches seem to be enemies of the society. Gulle is of the same view that,

Witchcraft is sometimes taken as something good especially when witches go to another people's fields by using witchcraft move the crops to their own fields, businessmen use witchcraft to attract customers and earn more than others, protect one's business from thieves (Gulle 2004:27).

Gulle goes further in describing how witchcraft is perceived as good in Sukuma,

When a baby is born, he/she is protected against evil spirits by certain medicines. During inauguration of new apartments, there is a special ceremony which is done by putting some local medicines while uttering some words in order to protect the place from evil people (Gulle 2004:28).

Lastly, from all discussions, interviews, proposed approaches and informants' opinions which are presented in previous chapters, I would like to recommend the following approaches in relation to supportive literatures in order to strengthen the points and strategies to be taken into consideration by both the Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Tanzanian government.

### 6.1 Theological recommendations

The following are the proposed theological approaches and recommendations to be tackled by the Lutheran church in Sukumaland and Tanzania in general.

#### i. Preaching skills and knowledge

Preaching is one of the approaches used by the Lutheran church and in a way has contributed to the fight against different evils in the society including elder abuse in Sukumaland. But preaching can be more of the transforming tool to Sukuma community from their local beliefs, traditional practices and perception upon others (elderly people). If the way of preaching will be improved by adjusting the content and the techniques (Insertion of teaching stories in the sermon/preaching, the use of vivid examples) it can draw people's attention and become of great influence in encountering witchcraft accusations and killings of the elderly. O'Donovan added that, "There is a great need for churches to patiently disciple new believers into maturity in Christ through the Word of God, so that when difficulties and problems arise,

Christians will know how to lean on the Lord for his guidance, strength, help and deliverance from evil” (O’Donovan 1995:246-247).

Although it is not inevitable to mention witchcraft as a challenge to our societies because it seem to be a disturbing issue in Sukuma and other parts of Tanzania, preachers should preach about the presence of God in the midst of every human situation and his power above all setbacks, sickness and other human conditions and place the human sufferings as a process to redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ. Refuting the idea of seeing the accused and elderly in general as witches and enemies of the society, instead they should preach love and teach people on how to pray for their enemies as reckoned in Mathew 5:43-44, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”. In addition to this is Romans 12: 21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (RSV Bible).

ii. Theological colleges/universities to teach and stress on contextual theology

Contextualization is something biblical, it is seen through incarnation and revelation of God in everyday life. Moynagh& Harrold stresses that “God comes to a context from outside, but he then works within it. When the church adapts to context, therefore it adapts to a world in which God is already present” (Moynagh& Harrold 2012:154). Regan& Torrance in their introduction started by posing a statement, “How we claim to subscribe to a universally valid Christian message is when we must also recognize that theology is always done in the context (Regan& Torrance 1993:9). Although theology can be understood in a broader sense we must also put in mind that it won’t bring any impact in our local communities unless it became contextualized. Moynagh& Harrold explains that,

“The stress on contextualization reflects a consensus that has emerged since Vatican II among theologians across spectrum from Roman Catholic to Evangelical. These theologians agreed on the importance of contextualizing theology” (Moynagh& Harrold 2012: xiv).

Theological colleges/universities have a great role to educate and make good preparation of the church ministers to do theology contextually. There should be some help for the church ministers to translate faith in a right way in relation to the context especially the traditional contexts example the scapegoat mechanism, Jesus Christ became once and for all a scapegoat, church sermons and critical Biblical texts in relation to our contexts should be discussed and interpreted well. Moynagh& Harrold continues to argue that,

Church no longer has the option, if it ever had, of relating to people as if they were all the same. It has to engage with each of them appropriately, a task that has been described as contextualization. Contextualizing the church is the attempt to be church in ways that are both faithful to Jesus and appropriate to the people the church serves. It assumes that the shape of the church can change according to the situation. Churches will look different because they are engaging with different people (Moynagh& Harrold 2012:151).

Banik added that, “Over the course of time, the nature of problems has changed as have the proposed solutions” (Banik 2006:28). Walalaze in his master thesis is of the same view that, “Theology is sometimes shaped by the changes in the society, theologians and the church as part of the system have to be open to the changes” (Walalaze, 2001:88). This implies that things are never the same, in order to positively respond to the need of the current situation the question of flexibility and contextual theology is of more important to address the current challenges.

### iii. Introducing theology of disability

Our bodies have always been encountering with different biological changes time to time. Reynolds describes disability as the indication of the perception of an inability to perform designated task or activities considered necessary within a social environment which sometimes can be socially constructed, (Reynolds 2008:52). He continued to argue that “Disability is not merely a medical problem for individuals as many may think, it is more of a social constructed problem which needs both medical and social models in addressing it (disability) as a social problem and a matter of human rights” (Reynolds 2008:26). Block has borrowed Susan Wendell’s definition of disability that “Disability is socially constructed from a biological reality” (Block 2002:33). This stresses the point above that our cultural norms have the power to shape our understanding and perceptions we about disabilities.

Reynolds argues that

Human beings are vulnerable and dependent creatures and the idea of self-sufficient is illusion. Disabled and non-disabled people alike, are caught up in networks of dependencies, relationships without which participation in life activities considered normal would be impossible (Reynolds 2008:47).

Moreover Creamer stresses on the same point by explaining the negative effect of ignoring disability. She says,

“Ignoring disability not only hinders our possibilities for reflecting on the fact that the full range of human embeddedness includes experiences of disability; it also cause us to fail to reflect appropriately on the real lived experiences of non-disability” (Creamer 2009:69).

The question is presented by Reynolds, “Disability strikes a fundamental note of ambiguity in the Christian witness. The question is ‘how Christians respond to disability?’” (Reynolds 2008:28). This is the kind of a question which prevails and can be in people’s minds either with unsatisfied answers or not answered at all. Moreover Creamer added that,

“Both disabled and non-disabled may be part of the randomness of life but failing to recognize and reflect on the difference as an important aspect of the metaphor of the body of God leaves us theologically impoverished” (Creamer 2009:69).

Theology of disability needs to be introduced, taught in our theological institutions and to all of our members to understand the imago Dei as a changing body, at times as abled and disabled one hence count disability as one of the characteristic of our physical bodies. Referring to Jesus’ ministry in the world we can see how people with disabilities were part of Him by healing them, sitting with them and sharing bread with them. The marginalized (crippled, people with leprosy, women, the blind) Jesus made them feel as part of the society of His time, refuting the domination of the non-disabled to disabled which can be named as ‘Unintentional domination or well-intended’ (Block 2002:47).

The challenge of today’s theology as presented by Reynolds has shown that since there is a great diversity, disabilities are not all the same and all needs recognition and attention. As I have presented above that disability indicates inability to perform certain tasks within a social environment, getting old/ being old can be taken as one of the category of disability. Biologically getting old goes perpendicular with the decrease of body’s strength as a result of the human bodily change. Because of the changes then, different parts of the body may not function properly as they did before. Mary Robinson on her presentation about old people she argued that old people are sometimes unable to do things, how can they be witches which can be of much demanding to get involved to? Reynolds added that,

Now we need to move from the narrow perspective to the wider/broader perspective that disability is something that affects us (all of us) and not merely ‘them’ (the disabled) because non-disabled persons are just temporarily non-disabled, subject upon old age if not before to conditions of bodily impairment, limitations and weaknesses of one kind or another, (Reynolds 2008:47).

The problem might be the views which we holds on when referring to disabled. I think every individual has a certain disability whether seen or unseen. Being able to reason, react, work,

see, and hear and other such bodily functions, the person is counted as normal and active (with no disability). For me disability is beyond physical limitations, to act uncontrollably or not acting at all can be a disability too. Example anger may be considered as person's weakness but if that a person have this weakness in his lifetime, it means he got limitation to act when he is angry, when he act it might be in a violent way, and this is what I'm referring to as 'lack of adequate power to' decide or to do anything. In this way then old people can be categorized in a group of disabled people as they lack physical power/strength to do their daily activities.

Reynolds argues that,

“For like other inadequate approaches that have failed to face the reality of disabilities and provide a solution, a theologically trivializing view of disability has refuses to recognize disabled persons at the speaking center of their own lives” (Reynolds 2008:40).

This is linked to contextual theology, the details which I have explained in point (ii) above. By introducing theology of disability will help to analyze critically the wider understanding and different perceptions about disability, recognition of the rights of the disabled people, discouraging the notion of many people considering disabled people as objects of pity, discouraging the use of bad language to the disabled by calling them physically challenged people instead of words like “lame” them in this way can minimize the mistreatment to the elderly (whom are considered weak because of life's biological cycle)and such language and make them feel part of the community enjoying all rights like others.

As a community of believers (Imago Dei) and parts of the body of Christ we should create love and peaceful environment for each other whether is abled or disabled. In order to get in a deep understanding on how theology of disability should be introduced and act as a foundation to it, Block has categorized four supportive theological notions namely;

Christian anthropology, embodiment, spirituality and social justice. These all are reflecting on the meaning of life, being a human, Incarnation in which God's misery is revealed in the variety found in in the human person all whom are created in the likeness of God (Block 2002:84-85).

iv. Getting back to the roots of Liberation theology

Liberation theology is understood to be grounded in the experience and perspective of the oppressed, and is in a great position to search for the wrong done, the right things to do and help people recover from their wounds and chains of social suffering. Block has quoted the



primary themes of liberation theology by Paul J. Wojda in which among them he mentioned ‘the use of scripture that interprets the biblical drama of creation and redemption as disclosing a God who, in the people of Israel and the person of Jesus Christ liberates and takes the side of the poor and vulnerable’. He further described general steps of liberation theologies in which the first step is described as the description of human situation, which is manifested through social anthropology, and theory of knowledge, that interface with theological imagination. The second step is presenting the theological teachings in response to the human dilemma which is done by interpreting Christian doctrines referring to human existence in social terms (Block 2002:96). Additionally, Oftestad has supported the above view of Paul J. Wojda and stated that, “Liberation theologians emphasize that a right theology has action as a consequence and the right action is the change of the living condition of the poor” (Oftestad 2003:21)

Kalilombe added that, “Liberation theology is of practical use only in the measure in which it is practiced by the ordinary people; otherwise it remains a merely intellectual activity indulged in by comfortable academics” He continued to argue that “In Third World countries there are efforts which are still continuing to make people discover and employ the power of the Bible for people’s full liberation especially the ordinary people” (Kalilombe 1999:197).

All these view supports the idea of persuading the Lutheran church and theological institutions to look back to the foundation of the liberation theology which puts the poor and the needy first by responding to their social, physical and spiritual needs. By doing so, elder abuse will be included in the target by addressing the issue in a special and attentive ways for quick solution than what have been already done.

Responding to human needs in a right way depends on the context and the need for that time. Working with churches/institutions/community which aims at cutting the chains of suffering and make transformation to its people, strengthens social, religions and political relations hence building up together a peaceful community for all people (eradicate all sorts of mistreatment and killings of elders).

Theological approach cannot work itself without co-working with a sociological approach as long as both approaches deal with interactions between people and their contexts. The following section I will explain the sociological approach as one of the recommended approach to combat/fight against elderly mistreatment and witchcraft accusations in Sukumaland.

## 6.2 Sociological recommendations

This recommendation stresses more of a relationship/closeness between the church and its people, church and government with its people through different social organizations/social networks that keeps them together and social education to all people.

Establishment of good cooperation between church and government will help to bridge up the relation which will help one another to get easy access to what is happening within the communities which they are working with. Fighting against elder abuse and witchcraft is not the work of one church or one person to deal with. It should start from individual level to national level. Which means that every person on his/her position should see the need of joining hand with the church/government/different organizations or community, working together to fight against elder abuse and witchcraft accusations.

The church is one of the actors that can respond and pass the information quickly by teaching all of its members. So, all people from different fields and sectors should participate effectively. Shorter stated that, “The social world must be transformed if the fears (of witchcraft) are to disappear. Socio-economic development and Christian community-building are certainly helpful in bringing about the transformation that is required” (Shorter 1985:104). It is a call for all sectors of development to join hand the work which Christian communities has initiated in order to transform our societies from local beliefs and practices that hinder social development and threatens peace of the community hence build safe and free social interactions between people.

Also review/amendment of different by laws by the government that stress family level issues is very important in dealing with different community problems including elder abuse which started at the family level. The reality should be faced, and the solution must be found, through cooperation and commitment in dealing with laws that ensure safety and dignity among people in the society.

Furthermore I see the need of establishing more close relationship between church ministers and their members through regular visitation, talks and engagement in different social meetings. The Lutheran church should restore and maintain the good social relationships among its members and others in the society, this will help them ventilate what families are going through, their thoughts and opinions about different situations and events that happen in the society. Moynagh& Harrold stresses on the same point by pointing out that,

“The church has been self-limiting in its availability when members set the rules of when they meet, where and the form which the meeting should take. They argue, “Other organizations

have adapted to social change, but not the church” (Moynagh& Harrold 2012:77). The Lutheran church should not engage in people daily life only because they are doing discipleship or because diakonia needs them to go out, rather it should be a welcoming body, interactive and deep engaged in the community social activities. Diakonia may be taken as one step to break the silence as stated by Oftestad, “Diakonia is the responsibility of the church to accomplish a ministry of communication i.e. to unite, and make the different parts connected in a healing process to restore integrity and mutual responsibility and to make the fellowship work” (Oftestad 2003:18). Good communication will strengthen relations between church and community hence make it easier to work for people with harmony.

Along with social relations and interactions, social education will be of a great importance which can be provided basically in schools from primary level, education about human rights, life and aging, religious education in schools and educating people about the importance of writing wills. By doing so, many people will be aware of the negatives effects of elder abuse, killings and any other sort of abuse.

In achieving all these plans, funds are needed to support the programs and education. In order to sustain and succeed in the planned goals, good economic planning is needed as I will explain in the approach below.

### 6.3 Economic recommendations

#### i. Creating employment opportunities

Banik argues that, “Poverty and the lack of employment are closely linked in most developing countries. The ability to work is the only asset of many of the world’s poor” (Banik 2006:155&157). We should not wait all the time for the opportunities to come but we should go out to create them. It is not necessary that everyone should be employed by the government, church or any other organization/institution. Through the natural knowledge which we are granted free by God, we can be creative in different ways apart from what we have, and finally create employment opportunities for others by involving them in our work.

I met with one woman who completed her degree in law but because of scarce employment opportunities by the government, she decided to engage herself in cooking and built a little restaurant to start with. Her commitment to work and good food service gave her many customers and she expanded her business. This opened a way for others to be employed in her restaurant as chef and waiters. Creative minds are not challenged by the situation they face but challenge whatever situation which comes on their way. This example and many others

like crafting and sewing can be seen as low class jobs but they are productive if well handled and is much better than staying idle. It reminds me of the saying ‘An idle mind is the workshop of the devil’. Staying idle waiting for something to happen out there is when a person thinks of evil things which lead to engage in mistreating others in order to get wealthy, killing and other related issues.

Creating employment opportunities will help people to have something which keep them busy, and at least help them earn their daily bread without engaging in different offensive acts like robbery, killing or accusing others of being witches for personal benefit.

Employment opportunities can also be created by the government by making some programs that will influence and encourage people to work hard. I think it is not true that people are lazy and they want easy money making stuffs, but I think many of them don’t know what to do or how to run a business or how to do farming activities, and other small projects which will sustain their life. For example the program for groups of women in Mwanza (Malya church mamas group, mamas of children with albinism) who are included in beekeeping project by Emmanuel International UK, other people can pay a day visit in a bee farm to learn and see how others are working out there can impress others to try. Not only a bee farm but also different enterprises like natural vegetable farms, fruits and other projects which do not need much capital to start with and which can be run throughout the year (not seasonal), even without rain, irrigation can help the project to go on. (Immanuel International UK, Helping churches serve the poor in Mwanza).

Creating employment opportunities sometimes can be of no big deal. The difficult is seen when it comes to the question of how to sustain the enterprises in order to continue to benefit from them. In the following point will explain what I recommend/suggest in the establishment of the sustainable programs.

ii. Establishment of sustainable development programs.

Sustainable development according to Banik is “A social economic process related to the level of social and individual welfare that is to be maintained and developed” (Banik 2006:137). According to Banik, poverty in developing countries is especially acute where it is often difficult to sustain effective organizations that involve poor people on a continuous basis. He said, “The poor especially indigenous groups who reside in remote and often inaccessible rural areas, have traditionally been neglected by the ruling elites” (Banik 2006:68).

Sometimes programmes may end because of economic slowdown and dependence on the donors to the extent that when the aid contract ends, it marks the end of the programme. Many programmes are run/supported by donors from abroad hence it is impossible to be so forever. When the day comes that the donors are no longer able to provide for it, the programme dies, something which is not good but reasonable. We should learn how to stand on our own feet if not on two feet, at least on one foot and learn how to use it. This is what I have explained in the above point that when an individual is on the position to create his/her own employment opportunity it will be easy to run it without depending on others or the season.

Sine presented the same opinion by referring back to decades where a number of development projects were initiated by Christian organizations in the Third World countries and have received support from donor agencies in developed countries in the West; he says

“These programs were expected to become self-supporting and provide examples of self-reliance and successful participation by the people. Instead, most of them tend to become new institutions, depending largely on outside funds” (Sine 1983:339).

Dependency is humanly nature, we need each other in life but been so much dependant leads to poverty that we will never learn how to work and produce ourselves, never gain new knowledge in addressing and solving our problems. The church has to cooperate with the government, influence the government to use its leadership power to introduce seminars about private unseasonal projects, how to run small projects, businesses, seminars about human rights especially the right to live and the right to own properties, from local government level to national level. The government also should provide support for those who have started to do small projects as a way of encouraging them to go on and create bigger projects.

Also the church through its media like Radio Sauti ya Injili they can introduce radio programmes for educating people about different ways of sustaining their business or any other projects like cooking different meals, making different baked bites, natural vegetable gardens and allow questions from the listeners as the response to what they have introduced. We should learn how to stand on our own and work on the little we have to add more as we step forward.

Banik added that, “Sustainable development may be a useful tool for change in which current and future concerns relating to economic development, social-welfare and ecology are taken into account in an integrated manner” (Banik 2006:135). Banik is trying to argue that sustainable development framework is what will determine the formulation of development

strategies that may promote more decision making procedures for further development goal/vision.

Sustaining what we have initiated and struggles for greater success goes hand in hand with good plans and being more educated on the thing that a person is doing (being more informed). Primary/basic education is very important as the first step to head to the next step.

### iii. Setting a plan for providing basic education to all people

Sine in his explanations about education he says,

Ignorance is considered by many experts in the field of development as the number one strategy to maintain an existing imbalance between the church, urban and rural, the rich and the poor, the powerful and powerless. Education is not only to be promoted but also oriented in a spirit of love, service, and dedication to one's neighbor. It must be concerned about the whole person in his bio-physical and social-economic development (Sine 1983:338).

In order to achieve whatever thought we may have, we need preliminary plans and goals. In the fight against elder abuse, killings, witchcraft accusations and all other sorts of evil planning is a good thing. Starting with giving people basic education (literacy) will slowly tune their minds and life to the world of challenges. Reaction of the illiterate person can differ much from the literate people in the way of doing things, and a creative mind obviously will seem different.

Providing people with basic education will help to free them from the chains of local beliefs that hinder the development of the society (beliefs like older people with red eyes are witches, all diseases are caused by people, birth of twins means curse etc.) In general the plan for basic education especially in rural areas for both men and women will help to fight against elderly mistreatment and witch accusations.

### iv. Invest more in community fund programs for quick response to disasters/events

Some of the events which occur in our communities need quick response without delay as the delay will lead to more destruction. I would recommend the government in cooperation with the church to invest more in community fund programs which targets the sudden destructive events which occur in our societies, in example earth quakes, attacks, killings and general lack of community safety. Sine insists the church to encourage its members to join these groups, he says,

“The church should support and encourage its members to participate in government-run public services in order that they may play an active part in the process of humanization and growing justice within these services” (Sine 1983:339).

Elder abuse/killings which are happening in Sukumaland, were not something expected to happen, in order to make sure people are protected with their properties security should be provided to them. Not only security issues, but also food and shelter for those who ran away from their families, in the fear of being killed. So the easier way for quick resolution for these all is to introduce and invest more in community fund programs.

### 6.3 Mission as transformation and development

The mission of the church should not forget the main aim of being sent to the world. The great commission in Mathew 28 should be considered in every single move the church is doing, making of the disciples of Christ. The Lutheran church have to bear in mind that missional work transforms the lives of people, not only spiritually but also physically. The church must be the visional church to consider the prophetic action with imagination and wisdom.

Lifting a diaconal vision and the voice that will empower people to address their own needs and of the whole creation both locally and globally. In the world of many events, I don't think only voicing up will make any change unless further steps are taken. In situations of injustice, uncertainties and many cruel acts, action is required. A diaconal pro-action which is transformative, working and evaluating what have been done, what was the failure and what caused it, what more steps to be taken to solve people's problems, asking what difference it makes hence contribute in transforming people's lives without any form of mistreatment and injustice acts (Dietrich 2014:114)

### 6.4 Community groups

#### i. Encourage different community groups (VICOBA, KIBATI, SACCOS)

These are small village community banks, money collecting cycle groups, community savings and credit cooperatives, which are financially targeted by a group of people to solve some problems for themselves.

I would recommend these groups to involve men and women to strengthen love and friendship, remove differences that finger points others as evil doers or any other form of enmity.

The benefit from these groups is a way to start up small businesses, getting capital for any project a person is thinking to start instead of waiting for donors or government to help.

#### ii. Community security groups

Community security groups named *sungusungu* are established by the Sukuma and Nyamwezi ethnic groups to protect their properties. There have been some complains and criticisms about these groups that they are using excessive violence in punishing, beating suspects sometimes falsely accused. Other places the beaten suspects have been reported to die or been killed by *sungusungu*. I encourage these security groups to ensure people's security including their properties. The cases of suspects and the accused should be presented in the right state organ to be sentenced.

There are certainly times when a person lose hope and is no longer able to avoid suffering and mistreatment he/she is going through, and in the end get stranded by allowing whatever is happening spontaneously to take its course, even when that leads to death. When stretches to this point it is dangerous. I would recommend everyone to be the guide of the other in terms of ensuring the safety of one another either in supporting the small security groups or by standing together, after the government failure to protect its people.

#### iii. Youth groups

Helping youth through different youth groups to engage in different activities, planning study tour in some places where they can gain new knowledge and learn how to do different stuffs that will help them earn their living. Helping youth to associate in different activities will reduce the habit of loitering around and reduce peer groups which could result to evil events like kidnapping, killing or stealing. Sine added that, "The church should remind its youth of the possibility of social service and humanitarian vocations which should be undertaken in a spirit of self-denial and dedication to one's neighbor" (Sine 1983:339).

#### iv. Involving aged/old people in different community activities.

Although many of the old people's energy have begun to decelerate, some are still able to advise the young ones, and engage themselves in different activities. Interaction with other members of the community will influence those who have negative perspectives on old people to realize and respect their contribution and value.

Both the church and government through different sectors and departments have the responsibility to discourage the negative perceptions about old people and insist on love and dignity among people in the communities. Spielman presented the response of Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, in his opening statement to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, 2002 in Madrid: "old people are not a category apart, let us look



therefore at older persons not as people separate from ourselves but as our future selves''  
(Spielman 2012:58)

Finally, I encourage people to engage in researching more about people's social problems, especially witchcraft and the killings which are happening in Sukumaland. I also encourage the church to make more effort in creating love, unity and peaceful societies through different teachings, seminars, open air gatherings and Sunday church services. I think the work of the church is not only to make disciples but to be a good ambassador in all spheres of life on earth. A good teacher is the one who make follow-ups to his/her students, I would like to challenge the Lutheran church to make follow ups to what they have done (all church services to people) and see whether they have impacted any changes in the society.

This will help the church to make self-assessment in what have been achieved and unachieved, set up new plans and strategies to the next move to make sure any sort of abuse, inhuman deeds and unease movements are settled/solved.

## REFERENCES

### Published books

- Ankarloo, Bengt & Henningsen, Gustav (1993). *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripherals*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc
- Banik, Dan (2006). *Poverty, Politics and Development: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget
- Bosch, David J., (1991). *Transforming Mission; Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. New York: Orbis Books
- Behringer, Wolfgang (2004). *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History*. Malden: Polity Press Ltd
- Block, Jennie, W., (2002). *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc
- Bryman, Alan (2012). *Social Research Methods, 4th ed*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Corbin Julieth, & Strauss Anselm (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory 4th ed*. United States of America: SAGE Publications
- Costas, Orlando (1974). *The church and its mission: A shattering critique from the third World*: United States of America, Tyndale House Publishers
- Creamer, Debora Beth (2009). *Disability and Christian Theology : Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Denzin, Norman & Lincoln, Yvonna (2008). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, 3rd ed*. United States of America: SAGE Publications
- Dietrich, S., Jorgensen, K., Korslien, K., & Nordstokke, K., (2014). *Diakonia as Christian*

*Social Practice*. Regnum Books International

Dillen, A., (2014). *Soft Shepherd or Almighty Pastor? Power and Pastoral Care*. U.S.A:  
Pickwick Publications

Douglas, Thomas (2005). *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*. North Carolina:  
Mc Farland& company, Inc Publishers

Gulle, Andrew Petro (2004). *The Belief in Witchcraft as an Obstacle to the Christian Faith  
and Social Development among the Sukuma-ELCT East of Lake Victoria Diocese*.  
Master Thesis. Makumira: Arusha

Harvey& Watson (1995). *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honor of John F. A.  
Sawyer*. England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd

Kalilombe, Patrick, A., (1999). *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from  
Malawi*.Gweru: Mambo Press

King Nigel, & Horrocks Christine (2010). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. SAGE  
Publications

Largerwerf, Lenny (1987). *Witchcraft, Sorcery and Spirit Possession: Pastoral Responses in  
Africa*. Gweru: Mambo Press

LWF, (2006). *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*. Geneva: The Lutheran  
World Federation

Magesa, Laurent (1997). *African Religion: The Moral Tradition of Abandunt Life*. Maryknoll  
Orbis books.

Mbiti, John. S., (1977). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann

Middleton, John & Winter, H. E., (1978). *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*. London:  
Routledge& Kegan Paul Ltd

- Moynagh, Michael & Harrold, Philip (2012). *Church for Every Context: An Introduction to Theology and Practice*. London: SCM Press
- Needham, Phi (1987). *Community in mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology*. International Headquarters of the Salvation Army
- O'Donovan, Wilbur (1995). *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press
- Oftestad, Alf, B., (2003): *How to Build a Diaconal Church: A Short Introduction to the Biblical Understanding of Diakonia*. DIATEKIST
- Patton, John (1993). *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care*. United States of America: Westminster/John Knox Press
- Regan, Hilary, D., & Torrance, Alan, J., (1993). *Christ and Context*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd
- Sine, Tom (1983). *The Church in Response to Human Need*. California: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center
- Shorter, Aylward (1985). *Jesus and the Witchdoctor: An Approach to Healing and Wholeness*. New York: Orbis Books
- Spileman, B. (2012). *Social Attitudes Toward Elderly*. Elsevier Inc.
- Tanner, Ralph S., (1967). *Transition in African Beliefs, Traditional Religion and Christian Change: A Study in Sukumaland, Tanzania, East Africa*. New York: Maryknoll Publications
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart (1977). *The Church*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press
- Walalaze, Godfrey Tahona, (2001). *Church and State Relation in Tanzania in the Light of Lutheran Doctrine of Two Kingdoms*. Master Thesis. Menighetisfakultet (MF): Oslo

### Journals and articles

Frits de Lange, (2009). The Dignity of the Old: Towards a Global Ethic of Ageing International. *Journal of Public Theology*, (3), p. 221

Golub, Robert, (2011). Elder Abuse. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 306 (5), p.568

Meyer, Birgit, (1992). If You Are a Devil, You Are a Witch and, If You Are a Witch, You Are a Devil. The Integration of 'Pagan' Ideas into the Conceptual Universe of Ewe Christians in Southeastern Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 22 (2), 103-116

Mesaki, Simon (2009). Witchcraft and the law in Tanzania. *Academic Journals*. p.136 retrieved 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 from

[www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379412973\\_Mesaki.pdf](http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379412973_Mesaki.pdf)

Mirambo, Imaculate (2004). Oral Literature of the Sukuma. *Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 26, pp. 115&116. Retrieved 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from

[www.folklore.ee/folklore](http://www.folklore.ee/folklore)

Mirambo, Imaculate (2004). Oral Literature of the Sukuma. *Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 26, pp. 113-122. Retrieved 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from

[www.folklore.ee/folklore](http://www.folklore.ee/folklore)

Mosqueda, Laura & Dong, Xinqi (2011). Elder Abuse and Self-neglect. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 306 (5) p. 533

Quinn, Mary Joy & Tomita, Susan K., (2011). Elder Abuse and Neglect: Causes, Diagnosis and Interventional Strategies. *Springer Series on Social Work*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, pp.1-100.

### Electronic sources

World Bank (2012). Old and vulnerable: The Status of Tanzania's Elders retrieved 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 from

[Blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/old-and-vulnerable-the-status-of-tanzania-s-elders](http://Blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/old-and-vulnerable-the-status-of-tanzania-s-elders)

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2012). *2011 Report on International Religious Freedom-Tanzania*. Retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 from

[www.refworld.org/docid/5021057ec.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5021057ec.html)

Jenkins, Orville, B., (2002). *The Sukuma of Tanzania, "People Profile."* Retrieved on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from

<http://strategyleader.org/profiles/sukuma.html>

Wikipedia, (2016). *List of Ethnic Groups in Tanzania.* Retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2016 from

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ethnic\\_groups\\_in\\_Tanzania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_groups_in_Tanzania)

Witchcraft allegations and killing accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from

[www.humanrights.or.tz/downloads/tanzania.human-rights-report-2013.pdf](http://www.humanrights.or.tz/downloads/tanzania.human-rights-report-2013.pdf)

Witchcraft allegations and killing accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from

[www.humanrights.or.tz/downloads/THRR%20REPORT%202014.pdf](http://www.humanrights.or.tz/downloads/THRR%20REPORT%202014.pdf)

Working with the communities to stop witchcraft accusations retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016 from [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

HelpAge International (2015). *Women rights in Tanzania,* retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016 from

<http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/womens-rights-in-tanzania>

Emmanuel International UK, *Beekeeping Project in Mwanza* retrieved on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2017 from [www.eiuk.org.uk/donations/beekeeping-project-in-mwanza/](http://www.eiuk.org.uk/donations/beekeeping-project-in-mwanza/)

Habari Mzunguko (2016). *Rais Magufuli atoa Zawadi ya Chakula Kolandoto.* Retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 from

[www.habarimzunguko.blogspot.no/2016/03/mhe-rais-dkt-john-pombe-magufuli-atoa.html?m=1](http://www.habarimzunguko.blogspot.no/2016/03/mhe-rais-dkt-john-pombe-magufuli-atoa.html?m=1)

AgeInternational. *Valuing older people.* Retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, from

<https://www.ageinternational.org.uk/policy-and-research/human-rights/do-we-respect-our-elders/>

Tanzanian map of Lake Zone Regions taken from

[Habariclouds.com/2017/03/mikoa-ya-kanda-ya-ziwa-na-mkakati-wa-kujikwamua-kiuchumi/](http://Habariclouds.com/2017/03/mikoa-ya-kanda-ya-ziwa-na-mkakati-wa-kujikwamua-kiuchumi/)

## **APPENDIX**

### Interview guide

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Place:

#### **Questions for the ELCT, church leaders**

1. Have you ever heard about ageing killings in Tanzania especially in Sukumaland?  
Can you tell when did it start and how?
2. What do you think are the reasons for the killings?
3. Is it a gendered problem?
4. If yes, which gender is targeted/affected more and why?
5. Does witchcraft accusations have anything to do with it?
6. If yes, how is it connected to the problem of killing?
7. How was it encountered by the church?
8. How does the tragedy has being a challenge to the church and its mission work?  
And where is the position of the church in dealing with it?
9. As the church leaders, what are the strategic plans do you have/made to address the problem?
10. Do you think the above mentioned strategies will meet the situational needs of the problem? How?
11. What is your comment/advise/opinion on the whole problem of ageing killings?

#### **Questions for the government and non-government leaders**

- 1) Do you know anything about ageing killings? Can you share a bit about it?
- 2) How big the problem is? Which are the most affected areas and why?
- 3) Is there any special reason for these killings? What is/are they?
- 4) Is there any connection of ageing killings to the cultural beliefs in witchcraft?
- 5) If yes, why is it connected to witchcraft accusations?
- 6) Who are the most affected people? Why?



- 7) Is there anything which has been done by the government as an effort to eradicate the problem?
- 8) Did the above made efforts enough to solve the issue?
- 9) What are the new strategies do you have to meet the current situational needs?
- 10) Is there any support from private sectors and agencies, religious institutions in the eradication of the problem?
- 11) How are they supporting? What should be done more?
- 12) What do you think is lacking and now should be strategized as the way of solving the problem?

**Questions for other members and the affected families**

1. Can you introduce yourself?
2. Have you experienced the problem of ageing killings?
3. Was it associated with witchcraft accusations?
4. If yes, how and why was it connected to it?
5. Can you explain how does this problem of ageing killings have affected your family?
6. Who was the victim in your family? (Gender)
7. Do you think there might be a reason for it to be connected to the mentioned gender above?
8. Did you receive any support from the church or government in fighting the problem?
9. How far does the church have engaged in solving this problem?
10. Are you satisfied with the effort and measures taken by the government and other private sectors in eradicating these killings?
11. What are your opinions and suggestions concerning this problem?