

## Shinning the light on the Case of Wizardry Cage for the Vulnerable and Linkage to OOSC in Kilifi

School going children in many villages in the Coast region have had a lot of challenges that include early pregnancy, poverty amongst other miseries.

School going children in some communities down in the coast province of Kenya have been affected by the act of witchcraft practiced by some of the locals. It has exposed the already vulnerable children who live to challenges in pursuing their studies, some are direct attacks while others become affected through their parents who are exposed. Witchcraft is normally overlooked by the literate but in the villages, it is real to the extent that some children who are bewitched or their guardian targeted they get derailed in their struggle to attain education.

In the 21st century, villagers still believe that witchcraft can help them succeed academically and sometimes use the same to make others fail. In Sabaki village, Magarini constituency, Kilifi County, Rogers Katana is among the victims of the horrendous practice that at some point he had to quit school after the 8th grade some years ago. He has confirmed that it is possible for a student who is not performing well to consider applying witchcraft aids.

“Witchcraft is used even in schools here in the village. It is possible for someone who is not performing well to use it and start excelling.” Confirms Rogers.

Due to the desire to know more, I ask Rogers how this is done? “Okay this is how it happens, if you feel that you are not doing well in class, unlike your classmates, you can decide to visit a witchdoctor and explain all your problems and he will lead you to a solution. If you just explain to him, especially if you find experienced and genuine ones, you can be sorted out and secure your good performances. You will be given a prescription on how to do it but obviously you will pay for it so that it can be administered to you.” Rogers explained.

Witchcraft is also used to catch up with competition in class. Sometimes it can be done to derail your peers and it is mostly done because of jealousy.

“There are some who use witchcraft to counter competition from colleagues, this is mainly due to jealousy,” Rogers added.

Rogers suggests that there are some parents who jealously go an extra mile and bewitch other people’s children either not to perform well in school or fall sick and even at times cause the parents to lack funds to pay school fees. “Using witchcraft some parents bewitch other people’s kids to fall sick, lack interest in school and other numerous challenges to keep that child out of school.” Rogers said.

Some kilometers away from Rogers I meet David Baya who is a village elder in Kikombe Tele B who confirms that some parents in the villages get killed because of witchcraft. This ultimately leaves behind many orphaned children, and it is one of the things that contribute to their lack of fees and dropout of school.

Baya confirms even though cases of parents being killed have reduced it has already affected some who are already disadvantaged. Although he has not declared a specific figure he assures that there are a handful of such cases in the area.

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Fatuma Bulu Ali, Police Commander Kilifi County.  
Photo Courtesy (The Star)

“Witchcraft makes some parents who are thought to be practicing it get killed by villagers. Other villagers cast spells to children to have frequent illnesses which affect their school routines and contribute to them getting targeted.’ Baya confirmed. Fatuma Ali who is the police commander in Kilifi County confirmed that there have been killings targeting the elderly in many villages in the county. Leaving many children orphaned.

“Mkare is true that there are cases of the elderly being killed in the community and mostly it is because they are accused of witchcraft.” Fatuma elaborates.

Now, back to Rogers. He says that witchcraft has contributed to him not continuing his studies after the eighth grade. He says his ‘star’ has been magically captured to stop him from achieving further success.

“After the eighth grade, I left school. There are things I do not understand. I wanted to go to a technical college, but I still had so many challenges and I know I have been magically caught.” He sobs.

Rogers painfully says that he has had struggles and has involved himself in doing manual jobs to raise his own school fees to fund his education but all have been in vain. At some point he feels like giving up as his peers are progressing either in education and some in the same jobs he’s been unluckily trying to undertake.

‘This is very abnormal to me brother. Now I’m on the street just to suffer and it’s not my liking.’ Rogers sobs.

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Rogers Katana, a witchcraft survivor living in Kilifi

According to many people in the villages, the dreams of some children have been shattered or captured not to pursue education to their fullest. However, religious education in schools helps a lot to control this situation. According to Samson Kasena, who is the Deputy Head teacher of Sosobora Primary School in Malindi sub county, admits that they have been persuading students to focus more on religion in order to get rid of witchcraft beliefs.

“In this school we always tell students to focus on religious education and strengthen their faith. It helps them to do away with the ideas pertaining to witchcraft dealings. Witchcraft instills fear in students which at times make them fail their examinations.’ Samson explained.

In summary, society in the current century still believes in superstition/ witchcraft, especially in the grassroots, which causes students not to register good results in school, drop out or have numerous challenges.