

# Witchcraft label on kids worries Plateau residents

By Dickson S. Adama, Jos | Published Date Dec 28, 2019 5:23 AM



*Road leading to the Waduruk of Shen in Jos South local government area of Plateau State where the father burnt his children*

*A father burnt his two children on allegation that they are engaged in witchcraft sparking concerns on the veracity of the accusation.*

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Last week's allegation against two children that they are witches/wizards has continued to stir condemnation and different reactions from various quarters in Plateau State and people have been calling for stern action to nip the menace in the bud.

## HOW OVER 5000 NIGERIA MEN HAVE PERMANENTLY OVERCOME TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS RECENT BRILLIANT DISCOVERY BY MEDICAL CONSULTANTS

The incident which led to a father, Nyam Choji, setting his two children ablaze over allegation that they are into witchcraft happened in Waduruk in Shen of Jos South Local Government Area of the Plateau State. The children are Godsgift (11) and Mary (5).

Some communities in the state are known for branding children as witches or wizards thus leading to their exclusion, stigmatisation and sometimes even death by torture. These children are often accused of being responsible for deaths in their families or being behind prevailing poverty, among other accusations. Thereafter, the children are subjected to inhuman treatment.

The particular case in point caused stir among the people and it become a hot topic of discussion in several places. When our correspondent went to the community to find out people's reaction, he observed that there was a conspiracy of silence on the incident as no one wanted to



*Godsgift Nyam, 11, (right) and Mary Nyam (5), with their mother*

talk about it. They also became hostile. It was however gathered that the action against the children was not only the father's decision but that of the larger community members and leaders.

But the children have been returned to the community after being discharged from Plateau hospital while the Police is looking for some persons connected to the crime.

The Police Public Relation Officer of the Plateau Command (PPRO), Tyopev Terna told our correspondent that one person has been arrested, adding that the father was a major suspect and that he is on the run. He said investigation is still ongoing and that no stone would be left unturned in unraveling the roots of the matter.

Condemning the incident, the immediate past Secretary of Berom Educational and Cultural Organisation (BECO), Martins Dalyop said the action is barbaric and that no culture or community should encourage such.

Dalyop said the action is alien to their culture and that some persons are trying to smuggle it in.

According to him, the perpetrators of the action against children do not have any genuine evidence to do that adding that even if the children were the ones who confessed of engaging in witchcraft, there should be a way of rehabilitating them rather subjecting them to any form of inhuman treatment.

He called on traditional rulers to stand up against such acts saying that if they don't give the nod for such thing to happen in their community, the practice can easily be expunged.

In his remarks, the Director, North Central Zone of Civil Liberty Organization, Steve Aluko, said they had an incident involving one community in the past and had to sue the perpetrator on behalf of the victim until the matter was eventually resolved.

Aluko said the practice should not be allowed to resurface in the state, adding that the authorities should deal with the perpetrator and that people should come out to sue the children's father.

According to him, the fundamental human rights of children should be protected against any form of evil and wrong accusations.

An elderly man in Kwang area of Jos, James Pam, said for anyone to accuse someone being a witch or wizard, that person too must be one.

He called on any community engaged in the practice to be sanctioned adding that they will not accept the practice in their community because it is evil and unacceptable.

An official of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Jennifer Yerima, who brought the matter to limelight after someone, brought it to her attention said she was not comfortable with the return of the children to the community, and that the community have been trying to shield some of the perpetrators because of their position.

She said some of the community members saw the issue as sacred and were not prepared to give any information about it, and could be hostile to people seeking information on the matter from the people.

Yerima said by next week they will be leading human rights advocacy to the community to bring the affected kids out and to cater for them. She called on Plateau State Governor Simon Lalong to ensure justice for the victims.

