

4.1 BROAD CONCEPT OF WITCHCRAFT IN BODO SOCIETY

The word witchcraft comes from 'witch'. It generally means 'a woman regarded as having supernatural or magical power through compact with the devil. She is generally inclined to cast spell. The term 'witchcraft' is derived from two old English words 'wicce' meaning witch and 'craeft' meaning craft. She is also known as wizard. The things connected with witchcraft are magic, superstition, necromancy, nature worship, occultism, spell casting, demonology, paganism etc. witchcraft is a pseudo-science. It is quite unscientific. Generally rituals are involved with witchcraft. Heresy and apostasy are also involved.¹

In India many tribal religious beliefs have been witnessing the use of *mantra* in different socio-religious observation since time immemorial. Thus *mantra* has been enjoying predominant position in various socio-religious activities or observing rituals. It cannot be denied that many tribals of India have faith on magic or sorcery which can influence upon the backward society.²

In Bodo society also the chanting of *mantras* are unavoidable phenomenon which are seen in various socio-religious rituals or festivals. But it is observed that chanting of *mantra* is used for both good and evil objectives. The person who learns the evil *mantra* becomes witch. The older persons both male and female are seen larger in number practicing as witchcraft. The chanting of *mantra* by religious priest along with by offering flowers, sacrifice of chicken, four footed animals etc. are done. But the practice of witchcraft is never allowed; rather it is considered as anti social acts which deserve serious punishment in the society.

4.2 CONCEPT OF ACTUAL WITCH IN BODO TERMINOLOGY

The meaning of witchcraft refers casting of black magic or sorcery to influence upon the targeted enemy. The casting of spell is known as *Rainai* in Bodo dialect. The player of black magic releases his/her *mantra* which is nourished by evil spirit. The *mantra* that

¹ Baruah, Dr. Girish (2015), Witchcraft and Witch hunting, in "Uprooting Witchcraft", ed. Dr. Minuara Begum, Women Cell, Assam College Teachers Association, Guwahati ,p.1.

² Dr. Kumar, *Indian Society And Social Institutions*, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 2006, p.217.

prepared with evil spirit attacks the targeted person. It is believed that persons having weak zodiac sign are easily subject to victims. The witch applies some methods as a weapon to fulfill his/her plan.

HOW AND WHY THE WITCH PRACTICES: The practice of witchcraft is takes place when the witch has enemy in the village. Other client may hire skillful witch to harm their personal enemy. The witch plays a black magic to influence upon the targeted person time and again. But the witch does not attack the targeted person physically nor does rebuke severely. He/she does not challenge with muscle power or arguments. But he/she tries to win silently. The witch takes the challenge against enemy whom he/she dislikes secretly. As a witch then prepares some process of sorcery with *mantra* and releases his/her prepared *mantra* to influence the targeted person.

The study found, that the attacked person firstly sees horrible nightmares about the evil or demonic activities in the night. The horrible nightmare creates traumatic disease to many victims. Who fears seriously about the activities of sorcery falls easily into the onslaught of witch's attack. The purpose of the weapon of witchcraft is to firstly frighten the targeted person through horrible dreams, nightmare. The frightened person is easily subjected to fall into various kinds of psychological problems or sufferings. During this stage the evil spirit vigorously attacks the victim with grasping the heart. The horrified victims see the witch who attacks him/her in night dreams. It is found that some of the victims see the image of witch during the day also. The image of witch appears in front of the victims and continues to remain until it achieves its destination.

However, the exorcist those who have intention in mind to kill the targeted person are said witch. The *mantra* must be very effective enough to affect the targeted person to become witch. According to some aged informants the exorcist those who have killed any targeted person are said witch. The witch implies that he has already killed somebody with the help of *mantras*. The exorcist transforms into witch after taking lives of prey. All exorcists are not *Daina* but all *Daina* are exorcist.³

³. Narzi, Bhaben (2010), *Boro Kocharini Samaj Arw Harimu*, Chirang Publication Board, Chirang, p.211.

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF WITCHCRAFT

The following important characteristics are seen on witch people.

- I. Confined within village: The witch acts only within his/her native or long residing village. He/she does not cross the boundary of his/her own village for attack.
- II. Maximum old age: The witches are seen maximum of older persons.
- III. Pact with devil: The witches are believed to have pact with the devil.
- IV. Very civic in look: The witches are seen as behaving very civic and kind in look.
- V. Involved in traditional healing: The witches are involved in good traditional healing acts so that the villagers are unable to detect them.
- VI. Very sensitive in simple cause: The witches are believed as they are very sensitive in any occasions if people go against their interest.
- VII. Retaliatory in nature: The witches are by nature very retaliatory against the opponent.
- VIII. Works or roam at night: The witches work busily and roam at dark night.⁴

4.4 POWERS OF WITCH

According to folk's belief the witch possesses numerous powers for the meant of sorcery. As for example:

I. Casting Spell: The witch has the ability to cast magical spell for desired result. It may be mentioned that in chanting of *mantra*, some materials are very essential as people says. Articles like a pair of betel nuts, vermil, a little of rice, some herbals etc. are very common. In addition to this, a witch may employ many secrets witching arts to obtain his/her objective. However, if the target is having strong in zodiac sign, the spell can not affect.

II. Enchantment: The witch has enchanting power over the living things including human beings.

III. Cause to sick: The witch has power to cause sick or misfortune to targeted person.

⁴. Chanakya Brahma (70), informant, Culturalist, interviewed on July, 2011.

IV. Cause to insane: The witch has power to cause insane to targeted person.

V. Transform into animal shape: It is the popular belief that the witch has ability to transform him/her into animal shape with help of *mantras*.

VI. Power to loss sight: Witches are believed to have to possess the power of making themselves invisible, by means of a *mantra* helped by devil. ⁵

4.5 VARIETIES OF WITCH IN POPULAR BELIEF

Varieties of witch in popular belief are found as given following.

1. **Neighbor Witch:** This kind of witch is born to curse and attack the neighbor following some conflict. Neighborhood witches are the product of neighborhood tensions, and are found in self sufficient with serf village communities where the inhabitants largely rely on each other. Such accusations follow the breaking of some social norm, such as the failure to return a borrowed item, and any person part of the normal social exchange could potentially fall under suspicion. When conflict arises between two neighbors, the hatred and personal enmity develops. In this moment any neighbor of them may secretly learn the evil *mantra* to defeat or eliminate the opponent. Those who learn the evil *mantra* have feeling in their mind that the evil *mantra* can easily kill the enemy without any public knowledge. So, the worst neighbor between them quickly feels to learn the witch *mantra* to attack firstly the enemy. The neighbor witch born because of that purpose only. But later he or she may transform into village witch, as he enjoys success in first attempt. So gradually he or she learns more and more evil *mantra* to occupy higher position in witch professional. They begin to apply their evil *mantra* largely in slight or simple reason when they get opportunity.

2. **Supernatural or night Witch:** This kind of witch attacks any enemy in a village including the neighbor if he or she satisfies to cast spell to target. They are well versed in the art of witch or sorcery. They travel in the dark night and prepare their *mantra*. He

⁵ Narzi, Bhaben (2010), op. cit., pp.206-214.

tries to dominate all the villagers under his influence. His acts cover whole family within a village.

3. **Exorcist Witch:** This kind of witch is exactly good exorcist in look but secretly he performs the acts of witch. This kind of witch is very difficult to be detected. This kind of witch publicly performs the acts of exorcist but secretly he performs the acts of witch.

4. **Physician Witch:** This kind of witch deals in herbal medicines and acts as local physician. Usually this kind of witch performs as traditional healer. He never discloses about him that he knows the art of witching. When he is hurt by somebody knowingly or accidentally then he gets angry and thus he applies power of witch to attack the fellow who hurt him.

5. **Nominal Witch:** This kind witch is somewhat ignorant. He feels very proud of his little knowledge of witching art. They claim much more than actual they know about the art of witchcraft. They know very little or nothing about the sorcery art. They disclose publicly and try to keep the villagers under their dominance fearfully. At any simple quarrel with other villager he/she used to say that he would bring disaster to you. This kind of witch faces danger and killed by villager.⁶

4.6 UNDERSTANDING OF SPELLS (*MWNTWR*)

In Bodo terminologies the spell can be said as *Muhini*. The *muhini* has capacity and capability to fulfill the desired goals. The using of spell or *muhini* was very natural and common during the early period of Bodo civilization.

There are some common spells used in different occasions of Bodo society. Few spells of them are discussed below:

***Mwider Muhini* (Elephant spell):** This spell implies the charming power to attract and impress any important people towards him/her. This spell has ability to attract the

⁶. Lakendra Brahma (98), informant, old villager, interviewed on January, 2015.

elephant also. So, whatever the people big or small or friend or foe, the elephant spell can attract and charm those people.

Daorai Muhini (Peacock spell): This spell is used for evil purposes. As for instance, to separate or destroys the peace of somebody's family etc.

Raj Muhini (Prince spell): This kind of spell is used in prince palace to attract the prince and other ministers.

Jaolia Muhini (Insane spell): This spell is used to make enemy as insane. This spell is seen applied in the circumstances arising out of love affairs. As for instance, if somebody (particularly youth) marries his loved one then he/she on retaliation use the *Jaolia* spell to that person.

Somai Muhini (Charming spell): This spell is used by the youths to attract loved one of their choice, so that he/she could marry. It is also said that this spell is applied by the actors of play to attract the audiences.⁷

Utility of spells:

Spells can be used for any purpose: to find and attract love; to bind lovers; to enhance and stimulate love; to maximise sex appeal; to beautify; to heal, cure and make whole; to bring money, success and riches; to bring luck and good fortune; to curse, cause harm and destroy.

Effectiveness of spell:

The belief on effectiveness of *Muhini* (spell) used for various purposes find a place in traditional society of Bodos. During earlier days the casting of spells was very normal and part of cultures. People used to frighten of spells prepared by local physician or quacks. Those mentioned spells were very workable and effective as for used. In contemporary Bodo society also, the belief on power of spells is not discarded. Still, many people have faith on power of spells prepared by local physician or quacks.

⁷. Brahma, Kameswar (1992), op. cit., p.154.

Ingredients of Casting Spells:

The main ingredients are needed depending on the nature of spell or *mantras*. Although the common ingredients which are used by Bodo society are impure broom, sticks, pan, arrow, betels leaves and nut, red vermilion, bamboo mat, mustard seeds, thatch, fire stick etc.

However, to successfully cast spells one needs to know exactly what ingredients are required (like candles, oils, impure or used broom, many kinds of herbs, mustard seeds, pan, fire stick etc.), one needs to know how to prepare the spell ingredients and finally one needs to know how to perform the spell (what to say and when to say it, to cast the spell at the full moon, or in the dark of the moon, and so on).⁸

4.7 METHODS AS WEAPON OF WITCHES FOR ATTACKS

The study found, that the *Job* (Bodo term) a small pack of collection of death human and animal bones collected from graveyard, roots of plants, human hair, cut parts of wearing dress etc. are buried secretly by the witch in the courtyard or around the house of targeted person. The *Job* tightly bounded and prepared by witch's *mantra* is acute fearable to some people in remote villages. Apart from *Job*, the witches also use feeding technique to targeted person. The targeted person is deceitfully given a glass of water or other edible sweets by the witch who behaves well wisher to him. The offered glass of water or sweets is mixed with poison and thrown *mantra* in advance. During the detection the exorcist can discover the buried small packs of *Job* in the home of affected person. This *mantra* is commonly used method which is acute fearable to some people in remote villages.

4.8 VARIOUS FORMS AND NATURE OF ATTACKS BY WITCHES

(a) *Lengra Bann* (Lame *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for attack to make the targeted person lame only.

(b) *Nwrjia Bann* (Feeble *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for attack to make the targeted person heart weak permanently.

⁸. Narzi, Bhaben (2010), op. cit., pp.199-212.

- (c) *Or Bann* (Fire or blight *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for to make like burn injury of body of targeted person.
- (d) *Jaolia Bann* (Mad *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for attack to make targeted person mad or insane.
- (e) *Tingkli Bann* (Pot *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for installation of pot shape thing inside the targeted person.⁹
- (f) *Lwnti Bann* (Small pox *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for attack to make small pox to targeted person.
- (g) *Kanaidwing Bann* (Hair *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for entering the small pieces of hair into the stomach of targeted person.¹⁰
- (h) *Saya Maya Bann* (Shadow image *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for appears the image of witch vaguely at day and night also.
- (i) *Kasula Bann* (Cough *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for making the targeted person having unstopped cough resulting tuberculosis.
- (j) *Nindra Bann* (Lethargy *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is released for making the targeted person very sleepy at day and night and causes sick.
- (k) *Bwrla Bann* (Arrow *mantra*): This kind of *mantra* is casted for attack to make the targeted person unbearable chest pain like the injury caused by arrow.¹¹

Curse by Witch:

The witches curse the people if he/she is not satisfied with that person or arouse him/her. The witches naturally don't challenge with physical force against the enemy. He/she challenge or retaliate on enemy with the help of *mantras* or casting spell. The Bodo witches have so many methods of casting curse. One of the methods of casting curse is cited below:

Take a sizeable pan, two times handful of mustard seeds, five nos. of dry red chillies and used impure broom. Then the mustard seeds should be on frying by used broom and during that moment the name whom to be cursed should be recited times and again until the mustard seeds become black by burning. The curse giver will recite in a way that

⁹. Kushia (2011), op. cit., p.12.

¹⁰. Sarat Boro (48), informant, leader of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, interviewed on February, 2012.

¹¹. Narzi, Bhaben (2010), op.cit., pp.207-208.

“you my enemy I am frying you on pan like mustard seeds and you are burning like the mustard seeds.” “Now your body is getting burn like mustard seeds.” “Let your life be suffered like the burning of mustard seeds.”

Also the deserving person for curse by witch depends on the nature of guilt what they have done. As for example, if somebody steals the vegetables or fruits then he/she is cursed to turn his/her body skin like vegetables or fruits etc. If he/she steal cucumber then his/her skin will become like cucumber size.

If somebody steals chilly then he/she is cursed to unbearable pain like the pain of chilies.¹²

4.8.1 PRACTICE OF SOME SORCERY

I. The evil eye: The belief in the danger resulting from the Evil Eye prevails widely in Northern India. The term Evil Eye implies, sight, vision and especially in the sense of the baseful influence emanating from the glance of certain classes of people or individuals. The popular explanation of the origin of this belief is that it is based on envy or covetousness. Thus a man blind of an eye, though he may ordinarily be well disposed, is almost certain to envy a person who possesses a particularly good pair of eyes. The same is the case with persons suffering in other ways, such as the hunchback, the lame or the deaf, old man or woman who envies the good health, youth or good look of others, the childless woman who covets the sons of more fortunate mothers. A person afflicted with squint or cast in the eyes is a source of danger, as well as a man who has lost one of his eyes.

II. Khetra Homnai (assailed by deity): Sometimes the malevolent gods attack any person, either male or female. As a result the patient meets different ferocious animals like elephant, bear, tiger etc. In dream and he is chased by these animals. He loses the health day by day and becomes bloodless. This sort of suffering is called *Khetra Homnai*. It is believed that generally the pregnant women or the babies become victims

¹². Narzi, Bhaben (2010), op.cit., pp.214-215.

of this suffering. The *Khetra* is of five kinds: a. *Daba Matri*, b. *Mwdwm Bugarnai*, c. *Dwi Khetra*, d. *Upashri Khetra*, e. *Mwsha Swdwb*

III. *Shawoinai* (curse): Some persons take revenge on their enemies by cursing. This is known as *Shawoinai*. There are different systems of cursing. The woman curse their enemies pulling off their hairs and say that the enemies (addressing the names of the enemies) would not live long and they would not be able to stay with their family members peacefully; the vultures would attack and eat them etc. ¹³

4.9 WITCHCRAFT AND EXORCIST

There is close relationship between these two terms. To become witch one must have to become exorcist. Though there is observed difference between both the terms but there also lies interrelationship between the two terms. Through observational and analytical method it is found that almost all the suspected witchcraft firstly becomes exorcist. An exorcist can become powerful witch or holder of black magic easily. The religious priest or master or exorcist if he/she is involved in the witchcraft practice secretly then it is very difficult to detect the internal plans. It is also found that the witch becomes religious priest or local physician as an exorcist to conceal his/her internal evil activities in the eyes of public. ¹⁴

4.10 HOW TO AVOID FROM THE ATTACK OF WITCH

The study reveals that as a part of belief on witchcraft. The people who is caught by *Dainy* should covered immediately by the animal hunting net. The body of victims should be properly covered by net. For few hours the net should be properly pressed so that the *Dainy* could be entrapped. After a while the victim should come out courageously from inside the net. If he/she could come out he/she becomes free of witch attack. Then the public should come and be together to catch the *Dainy*.

¹³. Brahma, Kameswar (1992), *A Study of Socio Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*, Punthi Pustak, Calcuta, pp.153-154.

¹⁴. Chanakya Brahma (70), informant, Culturalist, interviewed on July, 2011.

On the other hand if a person spread round him/her with urine then the *Dainy* can not cross the line of urine. Or the witch caught person if sprayed with urine then the witch may leave him.

Beside, the used broom can be used as protective shield from the attack of witch. The witch caught person should be beat slightly by used or impure broom then the witch leaves that person.¹⁵

4.11 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING GO SIDE BY SIDE IN BODO SOCIETY

Along with the practice of witchcraft the hunting of witch is also a serious problem. The suspected person branded as witch is killed or hunted on the knowledge of exorcist which is based on suspicion. In modern society it is also very difficult to believe in the witchcraft which symbolizes uncivil. The progressive people consider it as a mere superstition or blind faith. In human rights context, the right to life, dignity of life etc. it is inevitable rights, recognized universally by the world communities. Nobody has the right to take one's lives in the name of witchcraft. The right to life which is inborn and inevitable should be respected properly. Many children have become parentless and destitute due to alleged hunting of witch. The frequent hunting of witch has been causing mutual distrust among the same villagers.

The beginning of incidents:

The village court firstly trials publicly on the alleged witchcraft practice or suspected person. If evidence is found against him/her then he/she is punished severely or expelled from the village. In earlier days the suspected witch was fed cow dung, vulture's faeces, human stool etc. to make functionless of his/her *mantra*. Also the practitioners are disgraced and publicly humiliated in the village court. But things are changed in modern days the suspected person is killed in night in cold blood secretly. The suspected witch is brutally tortured to death by the villagers.¹⁶

¹⁵. Narzi, Bhaben (2010), op., cit., pp. 212-213.

¹⁶. Dwimalu, *Daina Bhutarlainai Arw Bodo Samaj, Rourwtwn*, a monthly magazine ed: *Gobinda Basumatary*, Vol.VII, No.1, May, 2011, Chirang Publication Board, Chirang, pp.37-41.

4.12 FIELD STUDIES ON SOME CASES

CASE STUDY 1

West Tengaigaon of Dotma Block (January, 2011): After the field study it is learnt that in their village only old couple stayed with their casual male servant and their son and daughter in law with their children stayed at near by small town area. The male victim was serving as a social worker. They had happy life and self sufficient. He held the position of village headmen for few terms. But during his tenure as a headman the greater village got division into two sections. After few years later he got the position of active member of village development council in village. He had little knowledge of preparing *Kashini* (amulet) to treat in disease. But he was not great traditional healer in the village. Unfortunately, during that month serially three people died in the village. The first man died because of high pressure, second man died of cancer and third man died of consuming too much tobacco with betel nut turning heart failure. Then the few villagers began to suspect that serial death was to be involved by some witch practitioner in village. As a result they undertook the detection with the help of astrologers in village. The suspect was pin pointing to old couple. After hearing the rumors and allegation towards them by villagers the old couple requested villagers for fair trial in village. But before getting trial the helpless old couple were dragged out of home and killed mercilessly in night of January 1st, 2011.¹⁷

CASE STUDY 2

West Tengaigaon of Dotma Block (2001): An old man aged 75 was a simple villager in the Kokrajhar district. He also held the position of village headman. He had little knowledge about the preparation of amulet to treat simple disease and rituals for deity. Having little knowledge about the treatment of disease by the *mantra* and selling of amulet is common in remote villages. He had one younger brother. In the meantime his younger brother was not satisfied with the distribution of parental property. So he was jealous and feud with his brother. His jealous encouraged the furious villagers to take merciless step. In course of time, the villagers began to suspect him to be practitioner of

¹⁷. Information from victim, visited at certain village under Serfanguri Police Station of Kokrajhar District, in October 3, 2014.

black magic, because he has the knowledge of preparing amulets as local physician in the village. Thus he was killed mercilessly in the night in 2001 by enraged villagers without trial.¹⁸

CASE STUDY 3

East Tengaigaon of Dotma Block (October, 2002): The case reveals that an old man aged 65 and woman aged 60 were somewhat happy life with their host of relatives in the village. He was simple exorcist and earned petty amount for livelihood in the village. He had little knowledge of preparing amulet (*Kashini*) to treat simple disease and demon catching problem. As a poor villager he used to perform as a priest in religious rituals in locality. His wife was mere illiterate housewife. During that time, unfortunately a little child was died suddenly in neighbor in the village. Then the few villagers began to suspect of manipulation of black magic by somebody in village. As a result the villagers conducted detection process with the help of astrologer and suspect was pointing to him. That time he was in nearby village to perform *puja* and needed to return at home. Surprisingly that evening all cattle in the manger cried out horribly. But unfortunately, the enraged villagers awaited him in road in evening and dragged out to nearby sandbank and his wife who was waiting her husband was dragged out from home and brought to empty sandbank and murdered both of them inhumanely in October, 2002. The dead bodies were buried half in that sandbank. Son in law, next morning searched out the half buried dead bodies. No case was registered by family members because of fear.¹⁹

CASE STUDY 4

Hatigorch of Kuchugaon Block (April, 2011): The case exposed that in remote village an aged couple was staying with their three children. Earlier they have been facing very hardship in maintaining their family life because they have no enough money. Life was very difficult for them as the children were growing. It seemed like that they had no good fortune but only ill luck. The father found no way what to do for maintaining life. After struggling with acute hardship somehow he got contact with other religious

¹⁸. Information from victims, visited at certain area of Serfanguri of Kokrajhar district in October, 2015.

¹⁹. Information from victim, visited at certain area Serfanguri of Kokrajhar district in July 5, 2015

preacher. He disclosed his hardship and difficult life to the preacher. The religious preacher listened attentively and began to help that man in religious approach. They together frequently offer prayer to God for blessing. The man got energy in mind and refreshed in his life to go forward. As a result he began to love the other religious method of life, philosophy, prayer, cooperation etc. At that period his life and economic condition began to prosper. Every family member began to prosper in their right way. Finally their whole family members embraced the other religion.

The news of embracing other religion got spread to all villagers and nearby also. The relatives in the village got furious after knowing that they have embraced unwanted religion without consulting them. After few weeks he began to explain about the love of choiced religion, philosophy, prayer, peace in life etc. to other fellow villagers. As a result some villagers got closer to their family and near to embrace the other religion like them. This scenario added furious to the relatives and villagers also. So the villagers secretly held meeting and planned to murder whole family in during night. As the killers group came in midnight and roughly knock the door with threatening word. They dragged the old couple to nearby River to kill and buried improperly in the sand. The children fortunately could run out taking the advantage of dark night.²⁰

CASE STUDY 5

Bosabil of Kuchugaon Block (April, 2011): After the field studies it is found that from this case that a middle aged couple stayed with their two children. Their economic condition was not so good, although they could maintain their life. A villager woman *Sombari Narzary* wife of *Dusmal Narzary* was suffering from Jaundice disease since December, 2010. Her health was day by day becoming deteriorated. So, her husband *Dusmal* consulted some allopathic doctors but to not cured, therefore he approached *Ojha* at some place and came to know that his sister-in-law *Bihula* was *dainy* and due to witching, his wife has been suffering from disease. So, once in the *Bwisagu* on 16th April, 2011 (New Year festival) *Dusmal* appeared in evening with pre-planned in a drunken condition and sat down along with victim. After having some rough

²⁰. Information from victims, visited at certain area under Soraibil Police Outpost of Kokrajhar district, in July 17, 2015

conversation with the couple, *Dusmal* asked for wine and when *Birendra* proceed towards the house to get the wine, *Dusmal* brought out his knife which he has carried along with him and stabbed *Bihula* on the stomach to death and then surrendered himself at Saraibil Police Out Post and confess to his crime.²¹

CASE STUDY 6

Patgaon of Titaguri Block (1990-91): The study reveals that there was starting of new *Basti* (village). Many people from different places came and began to settle in that place. That plots of land belongs to Nepali community. In that period an uneducated old couple purchased a plot of land from Nepali community and settled in that new *Basti* (village). That couple had a son. His occupation was selling the herbal local medicine in the local market of various places. The nearby villager thought them to be expelled from their own village for anti-village activities as black magic practitioner. Unfortunately the old couple was suspected to be black magic practitioner and the people fear that their life may be in difficult in future for such black magic practitioner. And also in that forest village already some settlers were there before the coming old couple. There was also clash regarding the occupation of low value land in the area. So, clever people took advantage in the name of witchcraft to finish the opponent by false charging of allegation.²²

CASE STUDY 7

Chekadani area of Kuchugaon Block (1996): The case exposes that, a couple who were very poor aged about 75 and wife about 70 with grey hair were living in the village of Chekadani area of Kuchugaon block, with five sons and a daughter. They were petty fish seller for livelihood. They had no property. The old man was casually drunker in the occassion. They were illiterate and very ignorant. They belong to *Bathou* religion specially holding *Kherai puja* celebration. Unfortunately in that year in the village some misfortune incidents occurred. Some people suffered deteriorating health, some died

²¹. Information from relative victim, visited at certain area of Soraibil Police Outpost of Kokrajhar district, in December 21, 2015.

²². Collected information about incident from an aged villager, visited in December 30, 2015 at Mwitabari, Patgaon under Titaguri Block, Kokrajhar district.

suddenly. So the villager began to suspect of having involved of handiwork of evil man. So they consulted quacks to find out the black magic practitioner. As a result the witch finder disclosed the presence of black magic practitioner. The enraged group assembled in the village to punish the accused. As a result some unidentified group came to their home and killed them.²³

CASE STUDY 8

Barlimari of Kuchugaon Block (1990): An old man aged 65 had his spouse aged 55. He has seven sons and three daughters. He could read only upto class five. He was very poor and somewhat maintain their big family. He was follower of Christianity. Due to poor condition sometimes he worked with other *Ojhas* or traditional healer in the village. In course of time in his neighbour people suffered skin eruption badly. That period medical facilities were not so reachable. In the meantime the Bodo Movement was going on. So the family members of suffering patient start detection about the handiwork of witch practitioner. They suspected that their ill luck was because of witch in the village. As a result the village court tried on the case and charged the suspected people. But after few days later the enraged people came to suspected witch in the night (about 8-9 PM) angrily and draged out the old man in the nearby dense forest. That period the wife was not in the home and the children were minor to save their father. The killer group killed him mercilessly in the night and burried in the jungle. The family members filed First Information Report (FIR) but they could not get possible help from police because that period the Bodo movement was strongly going on. The family members could not find out the dead body for one year. After one year the cloths were traced out in the jungle and the decayed dead body was traced out.²⁴

CASE STUDY 9

Shyamtaibari of Kokrajhar Block (April, 2011): A couple as husband aged 40 and wife aged 38 lived peacefully in the village. Her husband was government job holder. They

²³. Collected information about incident from near villager, visited in the month of January, 2016 at Chekadani, Kuchugaon, Kokrajhar District.

²⁴. Information from wife of victim, visited at Mwinaguri Barlimari under Kuchugaon Block of Kokrajhar district, in December, 2016.

had one son and a daughter. Daughter was got married in other place in 2003 and son got married in the year 2009. Their family members were educated and thus well settled and other co villagers had jealousy over them. Suddenly in the village some bad signs occurred in the village. Some people suffered grave illness in the village. Unfortunately few people including a child were died in those days. Although they consulted the doctor but could not come round. So the relatives began to suspect on somebody. So they began to detect with the help of witch finder. The witch doctor point out the particular neighbor in the village. In that horrible night some unidentified people came and called *Madwi* (Aunty). She thought some youths from village come for having rice beer because of the *Bwisagu* (New Year festival) season and came out to receive them. But contrary to this she was dragged out to nearby sand bank and some unidentified killer group killed the woman mercilessly in the midnight of April 17, 2011.²⁵

CASE STUDY 10

Turibari of Dotma Block (1997-98): A Bodo religious priest aged 50 and wife aged 45 with three sons and two daughters had been living peacefully in the village of Dotma. They had good income from the cultivation and religious work in the village and they have the prosperous life. Since long years he and his wife have been working for religious promotion around the area. After few years later a newly married woman in nearby village suffered illness. Although they consulted many doctors and medical treatment but she could not be cured. Rather she has been deteriorating in her health day by day. As a result the relatives began to suspect to be handiwork of some evil people. They began to detect the secret with the help of some witch finders many times. One night the villagers gathered at the home of suffering people and the great astrologer came to find out the secret. The witch finder pin pointed to the neighbor having involved in the evil activities. The relatives and villager began to get angry and remember that earlier a boy was died untimely. Feeling the anger of villagers the priest fled early in the

²⁵. Information from a respondent, visited at near village of Samthaibari under Titaguri Block of Kokrajhar district, in January, 2016.

morning to avoid the horrible incident. Now they have settled at another village and running their life peacefully.²⁶

CASE STUDY 11

Kadamtola of Titaguri Block (2010-11): A man aged 50 who was bus driver has wife and two sons and a daughter. He was illiterate and somehow he managed their livelihood. He belongs to Christian religion. He resides with the mother in law because he had no land. In the same campus they have some in laws families. His wife deals in vegetable selling in evening market. The bus driver had the habit of wine drinking and as a Christian he used to pray loudly. The neighbor always hear this loud prayer but they thought this prayer as chanting of *mantra* for casting spell. In that year the father in law who was ex military died. The mother in law had no please with their livlihood, behaviour and for poor condition. The neighbor people began to suspect the bus driver as black magic practitioner. In the same year in many places the incidents of witch hunting took place. So it was very easy to the people to suspect the presence of black magic practitioner who causes bad luck. After hearing the news that some villagers used to say him as witch he began to stand bravely and dare to challenge this false allegation. And because of firm stand and area is in urban, the false charge began to disappear.²⁷

Case Study 12

Thaigirguri of Kuchugaon Block (May, 2000): The five deceased people were from three different families. From first family, a man (46) has three sons and one daughter. He was a simple *Ojha* in the village. He used to treat *Khasini* in village and around.

From second family a man (55) was simple *Ojha*. He has four sons and two daughters. He was a cultivator.

From third family a man (75) was a simple *Ojha*. He has two sons and three daughters. His son (38) and dauther in law (35) were killed along with their father.

²⁶. Information from villager, visited at Turibari village under Dotma Block of Kokrajhar district, in January, 2014

²⁷. Information from victim, interviewed in the month of January, 2016 at Kadamtola under Titaguri Block of Kokrajhar district.

The village is backward and far from medical and educational facilities. He somewhat leads the family. The deceased were illiterate and they used to sell local medicine to treat ailments. Unfortunately during that year serial deaths occurred in the village and some became abnormal. The villagers began to fear due to occurring of serial deaths in the village. However, the villagers began to suspect that the serial death has something secret reason. As a result they brought witch doctor to detect the secret of witch practice. Accordingly the witch finder told that there is presence of witch in the village, so serial deaths took place. The village headman had to convene the Kangaroo court in the village and the suspected were found guilty in the eyes of villagers. In the same night of May 1st, 2000, the enraged mob gathered and killed mercilessly and buried nearby Hell River.²⁸

Case Study 13

Kalaigaon of Titaguri Block (February, 2005): A couple male 45 and female 35, (husband and wife) who were poor and issueless somewhat maintained their lives with the profession of cultivation. They were illiterate and poor cultivator. They adopted a son. They had few plots of land which was given to other for money loan. Later he sold that plot of land to nearby villager. Then he left the village to Kuchugaon for domestic labour. After few months later he came back to village and maintained poor adjustment with other villagers. The village was very backward in all spheres. They have no electricity, school, medical facilities. Unfortunately that year a young son was died untimely in their neighbor. They had to maintain bitter relationship with the villager at that period. Sometime they had passed quarrelsome moments with neighbor in the village. Gradually the villagers began to suspect that there is presence of witch in the village. The old couple was suspected to be learned black magic from other place. Unfortunately in one night of February 2nd, 2005 some people who were closed face came to their home when they were taking night meal and killed both of them.²⁹

²⁸ . Information from village headman, visited at Taigirguri under Kuchugaon Block of Kokrajhar district, in June 6, 2016.

²⁹ . Information from villager, interviewed the villager of Kalaigaon under Titaguri Block of Kokrajhar district, in June 12, 2016

Case Study 14

Belguri of Dotma Block (April, 2011): An illiterate female villager (55) was killed on charge of witch practice in the village. She has two sons and one daughter. The daughter was married in the village. She used to run a small shop nearby road. She was successful in earning of money by her small bussiness. She did hard labour with dedication, so some people had jealousy over her. In the village two people died of uncommon diseases. A boy about 4-5 years of age suffered from acute eye illness. The boy was taken to Bongaigaon hospital for treatment but could not cure of his eye illness. But gradually his eye began to come out abnormally. Few days later the boy died of his eye illness. After this an old woman about 60 years of age died after prolongs pain in stomach. The women of villager used to fear the victim woman to be witch. The villagers had seen the suspected woman roaming at mid night with holding earthen lamp. So some villagers began to suspect and accordingly undertook detection to find out the secret of witchcraft. On that fateful evening of April 15, 2011, she was coming back to home after attending the *Bwisagu* (New Year festival) celebartion from nearby village. However, the mob gathered at night and took extreme step to suspected witch.³⁰

4.12.1 WITCH HUNTING CASES OF KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT

DISCUSSION ON SECONDARY SOURCES

1. East Maligaon of Kokrajhar district (April 22, 2016): A Kajolgaon Upendra Nath college student Achinta Basumatary, youngest son of Gajrai Basumatary who was branded as witch of Pub Maligaon of Kokrajhar district of Assam, was killed in the name of witch hunting on April 22. The mother Gajrai Basumatary lost her husband and maintains live with her two sons. But she has been suspecting as witch since long years in the village. She had to leave the village of fearing her life and she stayed at her parent's home at Gossaigaon leaving her two sons. That night (April 22) only youngest son was available at home. At that moment the enraged group came at their home and called out the mother but not finding the mother the youngest son was forcefully dragged out and killed and hid somewhere.³¹

³⁰. Information from near villager, interviewed the villager of Dotma Block of Kokrajhar district, in July 14, 2016.

³¹. Kokrajharot Daini Sondehot Kolejia Satrok Hotya, in *Niyomiya Barta*, Guwahati, dated April 29, 2016, p-10

2. Gossaigaon of Kokrajhar district (October 9, 2011) Bishiram Narzary (60) and his wife Urbashi Narzary (55) of no. 1 Jaraguri under Simaltapu Police Outpost in Gossaigaon sub division of Kokrajhar district of Assam were killed on suspect of practicing witchcraft. The bodies of the couple were thrown in to the Sonkosh River which was fished out later.³²

3. Monglajhora of Kokrajhar district, Assam (March 22, 2014), Rajendra Brahma, Bangali Brahma and Malati Brahma were killed on suspect of witchcraft.³³

4. Milonpur of Kokrajhar district of Assam (August 23, 2013), Biren Basumatary (66) and his wife Sukushri Basumatary (55) were killed on suspect of witch practitioner.³⁴

5. Sutharpara of Kokrajhar district, Assam (March 27, 2017) a widow Kumila Murmu (50) was killed and buried in her village. Lakhiram Soren who was relative of victim was suffering from back pain; he called *Ojha* (exorcist) to cure his back pain. But, *Ojha* told him that there was a witch in the village who gave sorcery to him for back pain. As a result the victim was pin pointed as a witch and thus murdered by furious mob.³⁵

4.12.2 WITCH HUNTING CASES OF OTHER DISTRICT

(PERIOD: 2012- 2017)

1. Rangapara of Sonitpur district of Assam (May 8, 2016) two women accused of practising black magic were attacked and critically injured by a group of people at Sesa Tea Estate near Rangapara town under Rangapara Police Station. However, the two victims were rescued by the police and admitted to a hospital for medical treatment. The two victims have been identified as Kwonri Tanti 45 and Dulumoni Rai 60. According to reports, the economically poor labourers of the area normally get health

³². ABSU condemns killing on suspicion, in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated October 14, 2011, p-10.

³³. 3 killed in witch hunting in Kokrajhar in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated March 23, 2014, p.1.

³⁴. Witchcraft: three killed in Kokrajhar, in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated August 23, 2013, p. 1.

³⁵. Kokrajharot Punor Dainy Sondehot Mohilak Nrisongho Hotya, in *Niyomiya Barta*, Guwahat, Assam, dated April 4, 2017, p.12.

check up with local quacks. The people are also vulnerable to seasonal diseases due to lack of proper medical facilities in the area and awareness among them.

With sudden change in weather and heavy downpour in the entire region, the people have started falling ill. However, the local quack reportedly suggested the people that it was because of the two women the people in the area have started falling ill. The information instigated the locals to kill the women.³⁶

2. Missamari area of Tezpur in Sonitpur district of Assam (August 17, 2015), Gita Munda was beaten up by four miscreants for allegedly performing witchcraft and found lying unconscious near a field in Ramnathpur village. Later, she was admitted to the Tezpur Medical College.³⁷

3. Dhekiajuli, Lalita Tanti was attacked by her brother in law Maheswar Tanti who had earlier also tried to malign her image as a witch among the villagers. The assailant entered her house when the two policemen deputed for her security and her husband, were not around. During that period an ailing infant died, who was not taken to the doctor on time.³⁸

4. Borghuli of Tezpur under Salonibari Police Outpost of Sonitpur district of Assam, Phaguni Kawari (50) was lynched by some villagers on suspect of witch practice on 22 September, 2015.³⁹

3. Chalapara village of Goalpara district, Assam (May 7, 2016) a woman and a child were killed in the name of rebirth.⁴⁰

³⁶ . Witch hunting case: two women rescued, three held, in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated May 10, 2016, p.9.

³⁷ . Woman beaten up for practising witchcraft in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated August 18, 2015, p. 8.

³⁸ . Woman accused of practising witchcraft attacked in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, November 30, 2014, .p 5.

³⁹ . Call for implementation of anti-witch hunting law in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated September 23, 2015, p.1.

⁴⁰ . Concern over spurt in witch hunting in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated May 6, 2016, p.5.

4. Bahpula village of Jorhat district, Assam (May 2, 2016), a couple (Mayabati Doley and Manjit Doley) was tied of hands and legs and they were tortured for practising black magic. The police could rescue them from murdering. As report says that the wage earner couple offered various *pujas* for getting baby. At that period in village about four youth including children died serially. So the villager began to suspect of having black magic practitioner. So they charged the helpless couple by torture.⁴¹

5. Baithalangso of Karbi Anglong district, Assam (February 10, 2016), two persons Rajen Rongpi (45) and Jackson Rongpi (55) of a family were brutally murdered while another Paniram Rongpi (50) narrowly escaped public fury on suspect of practising black magic in Baithalangso police of west Karbi Anglong district of Assam. As reports they were tied to a nearby tree and tortured them brutally terming them as witches. While Rajen Rongpi died on the spot, elder brother Jackson Rongpi was hauled to the nearby Borpani River by the villagers and thrown into the river with hands tied behind his back. Police informed that the incident sparked off after one Inglong Teron, a self styled godman claimed that it was the Rongpi family of the village which was responsible for all the diseases and ailments of the Amdubi Majgaon villagers. He had suggested that the Rongpi family should be thrown out of the village. At the instigation of the so called godman, excited villagers destroyed the house of the Rongpi family and carried out the brutality on them.⁴²

6. In Twikarkuchi of Barama under Baksa district of Assam (June 2, 2011) Hogan Boro (65), Saniram Boro (70) and Suren Ramchiary (65) were killed under Tihu Police Station. Reports says that Hogan Boro was with his grandchildren at home around 9.40 PM where his grandchildren were reading, suddenly a group of people closing their faces came and killed him on the spot. After killing Hogan Boro they brought his body in hand cart and killed Soniram and Suren at their different homes. The villagers remained very silent about the incident. The three old people were becoming very close to each other.⁴³

⁴¹ . Jorhatok Daini Sondehot Hat Bhorl Bandhi Swami Strik Nirjhaton in *Asomiya Pratidin*, Guwahati, dated, May 4, 2016, p.1 &10.

⁴² . Two killed for practising witchcraft in west Karbi Angling in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, February 12, 2016, p.9.

⁴³ . Baramar Twikarkucit 3 Bridok Nrekongko Hotya in *AJI*, Guwahati, dated, June 4, 2011, P.1.

7. In Kampur of Nagaon district of Assam (November 27, 2013), Sombor Bey (65), Inglang Rongparpi (52), brother of Somber Bey and Shaon Bey (70) were killed on charge of practicing witchcraft. As local people reports that a group of enemy killed them in the name of witch for ransack of their property.

8. In Komlabari of Majuli under Jorhat district of Assam (November 27, 2013), Kunjoli Payeng (60), Biswa Payeng (45), Solsoli Paying (75) and Binod Payeng (70) were tortured on the charge of witchcraft practice.⁴⁴

9. In Salna Tea Estate of Nagaon district of Assam (17 August, 2011) a woman identified as Rupa Boro (37) was killed and seven others were injured by villagers for allegedly practicing witchcraft. The villagers suspected her as a witch in the wake of some people were falling ill.⁴⁵

10. In Biswanath Chariali of Sonitpur district of Assam (20 July, 2015), Purni Orang 65, was beheaded by some villagers in the name of witchcraft.⁴⁶

11. In Sapkati village of Udalguri district Assam (31 July, 2014), highly educated family had to leave the village on charge of witch practicing.⁴⁷

12. Chekon Basumatary (45) a tailor of Bijni Police Station under Chirang district of Assam was killed while returning home after attending marriage party at locality on 20 February, 2013.⁴⁸

13. In Hadanguri under Udalguri district, Assam (May 25, 2011) Jogen Boro (60) and wife Akhari Boro (55) were killed because of superstitious beliefs of villagers. This village is along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. Medical facilities and other basic facilities are poor. The reports say that Manju Basumatary wife of Dhaniram Basumatary after delivering their sixth child at the young age of 25 years, she fell ill.

⁴⁴. Nagaonor Pukuribostit Potharot Puti Towa Tinita Mritudeha Uddhar, *Asomiya Protidin*, Guwahati, dated November 29, 2013, p.1 & 10

⁴⁵. Witch hunting kills woman in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, August 18, 2011, p.1.

⁴⁶. Accused in witch hunting case held in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, August 21, 2015, p.9.

⁴⁷. Shock over witch hunting in Udalguri in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, dated, August 1, 2014, p.1.

⁴⁸. Witchcraft suspect killed in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, February 21, 2013, p.9.

She suffered of malaria, anaemia and swelling in the feet. As medical facilities are poor, Manju's health problems persisted for a long time. The couple visited the quacks in the village who said that there was a witch in the village and unless the witch was killed, Manju would never recover.⁴⁹

14. In Doomdooma of Tinsukia district of Assam (October 23, 2014) Gangi Urang (58), Ratani Kondho (56), Mala Bhumji (52) were tortured by some people of the Hatiduba Line of Koomsong tea estate for allegedly practising witchcraft. Two local quacks Nilmoni Moran and his assistant Santosh Dhanwar allegedly instigated these people to take action against those three women.⁵⁰

15. In Chitkagaon of Bongaigaon district, Assam (May 20, 2012) one Faguni Ray (50) was torturing for suspect of witch practice. Most of the villagers still believe that she was a witch and all bad things happen for her activities.⁵¹

16. In Magurshila village of Sonapur under Kamrup district of Assam, Birju Teron (40) was beaten to death by people on suspect of witchcraft on 23 January, 2012.⁵²

17. In Lokra of Guwahati city, Assam (October 29, 2011), Devi Das (55) a widow on the suspicion of witchcraft was attacked.⁵³

18. In Sonari Police Station of Sivsagar district of Assam, Phuleswari Halwa (55), a *Kali* (Hindu Goddess) devotee was burnt alive on suspect of witch practice. As report says that a child was ailing and taken to hospital but he died next day. The villagers began to suspect of having witch in the village.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ . Spurt in witch hunting cases in Assam in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, dated, May 25, 2011, p.3.

⁵⁰ . Lathicharge at Kakopathar in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, October 26, 2014, p.1.

⁵¹ . Witch hunting case: police arrests eight persons in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, dated, May 21, 2012, p.11.

⁵² . Yet another victim of witch hunting in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, January 24, 2012, p.3.

⁵³ . Witch hunting in city, woman attacked in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated, October 30, 2011, p.1.

⁵⁴ . Mother of three tied up & burnt alive for practising witchcraft in *The Telegraph*, Guwahati, dated February 11, 2012, p.1.

19. In Chandrapur of Kokrajhar district of Assam (October 25, 2003) one Sobamoy Hasda was killed for allegedly practising black magic.⁵⁵

20. In Sonari of Sivasagar district (July 2012), Jayamani Gogoi (50) was forced by some of her relatives to eat human excreta and drink urine after being branded a witch. A girl child death was leading to the whole incident.⁵⁶

21. Under Kalaigaon Police Station in Udalguri district of Assam (May 31, 2005), an aged couple Nelson Daimary and his wife Bimala Daimary were killed in the name of witchcraft by Niranjana Khakhlary. Again on November 18, 2006 the then district and sessions judge Darrang, Nalinakshya Sarma, in a landmark judgement passed for the first time in the state awarded capital punishment to the accused Niranjana Khakhlary. However, the appellate court later reduced it to life term rigorous imprisonment.⁵⁷

22. *Dainy* (witch) village (May 17, 2016): The expelled and persecuted people on the charge of black magic practitioner from Assam have established the *Dainy* village in Meghalaya. They have established that village in the forest area. It is about 60 kilometres from Goalpara situated at west Garo Pahar district. They belong to Rabha and Garo tribal. About there are 25 households which are expelled in their own village on charge of practicing witchcraft.⁵⁸

23. In Dergaon of Jorhat district of Assam (June 23, 2016): Lal Bauri (40) was lynched by villagers on suspect of witch practice. The villagers alleged that his quackery had led to death of a girl.⁵⁹

24. In Tezpur of Sonitpur district of Assam (August 19, 2016): three women were tortured by a section of miscreants on alleged charges of practising witchcraft.⁶⁰

⁵⁵. Bodos to ban witch hunting in *The Telegraph*, Guwahati, dated, October 26, 2003, p.1.

⁵⁶. Woman forced to eat human excreta on witchcraft charges in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, dated, July 2, 2012, p.4.

⁵⁷. Interaction on social ills held in Udalguri in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, dated August 15, 2011, p.11.

⁵⁸. Daini Sojhoa Esam Manuhor Bakstan Dainigaon in *Asomiya Pratidin*, Guwahati, May 17, 2016, p.10.

⁵⁹. Witch killed in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated June 14, 2016, p.1.

⁶⁰. Two held for witch hunting at Dibru Darrang TE in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, August 20, 2016, p. 9.

25. In Sootea of Biswanath Chariali under Sonitpur district of Assam (August 22, 2016): the victims Jamini Tanti (50) and Nandeswar Tanti (65) were suspected to be practitioner of witchcraft in the village. There were narrowly escaped from public torture on that day.⁶¹

26. In Silphata Naharbari of Nagaon District of Assam (October 31, 2016): Two women were buried alive in that village after being branded as witches by the local residents.⁶²

27. In Bangrikuchi Nishimapur of Mashulpur under Baksa district, Assam (April 25, 2017), an aged couple Bikra Basumatary and Shemsri Basumatary had been harassed for a week by locality for suspect of witchcraft.⁶³

4.13 WITCH HUNTING INCIDENTS REGISTERED IN KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT IN BODO COMMUNITY

Although, the hunting of witch in Bodo society is very old and it has been occurring since immemorable period, but most of the cases were not registered in the Police Station. The relatives or family members of victimised people were only seen to come towards Police Station for FIR since 2000. However, the registered case about the witch related incidents are found only since the years of 2000 as given below.

⁶¹. Administrative having tough time fighting superstition in Biswanath in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, August 28, 2016, p.1.

⁶². Witch Killing in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, Assam dated November 4, 2016, p.6.

⁶³. Baksat Bridho Domphotik Sojale Dainy, in *Nimoyia Barta*, Guwahati, Assam, dated 26th April, 2017, p.7.

Table 4.1

Sl. No.	Year	Number of injured	Number of killed	Male	Female
1	2000	Nil	7	6	1
2	2001	Nil	4	2	2
3	2002	Nil	2	1	1
4	2003	Nil	2	0	2
5	2004	Nil	1	0	1
6	2005	Nil	4	3	1
7	2006	Nil	5	3	2
8	2007	Nil	0	0	0
9	2008	Nil	1	1	0
10	2009	Nil	0	0	0
11	2010	Nil	0	0	0
12	2011	Nil	9	2	7
13	2012	Nil	0	0	0
14	2013	Nil	3	1	2
15	2014	Nil	3	1	2
16	2015	Nil	0	0	0

Source: Crime Branch, SP,Kokrajhar (2016)

Witch killings in India (2001-2008)

Table 4.2

State	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	Total
Jharkhand	52	50	29	26	26	19	26	21	249
Haryana	25	30	34	28	0	0	0	2	119
Andhra Pradesh	23	33	26	75	24	37	23	20	261
Orissa	23	28	36	25	22	26	39	30	229
Madhya Pradesh	17	14	13	13	14	26	24	13	134
Chhatisgarh	15	8	10	9	11	9	4	14	80
Maharashtra	11	13	9	7	4	9	14	6	73
West Bengal	4	0	1	5	8	9	14	13	54
Meghalaya	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	5
Karnataka	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Uttar Pradesh	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Assam	10	7	21	0	0	1	1	3	43
Bihar	0	0	11	1	0	0	1	1	14
Gujrat	0	1	3	6	1	1	4	2	18
J & K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Punjab	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Rajasthan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sikhim	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tamil Nadu	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tripura	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	185	184	201	197	111	138	151	126	1293

Source: Witch hunting: an unabated crime against women by Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Anuradha Chaudhuri and Dr. Amarjit Singh Bhui, 2015, p.121.

Witch hunting cases in Assam (2006-2013)

Table 4.3

Year	No. of Cases
2006	21
2007	07
2008	10
2009	04
2010	11
2011	29
2012	14
2013	12

Source: Witch hunting: an unabated social menace by Sanjoy Kr. Hazarika, 2015, p.142.