

5.1 ANALYSIS OF ROOT CAUSES AND FACTORS OF WITCH HUNTING

The factors for hunting of witches can be studied into two dimensions viz. early period and contemporary period. In early period the superstition was the prime factor for witch hunting. During that period the people were illiterate and remain backward in all walks of social life. Also the atmosphere was not favourable to them to acquire education. They did not have medical facilities in the locality. In fact, the outbreak of disease, ailments of infant etc. were treated by the local physician. In addition to this, the rivalry among the quacks or *Ojhas* was a common issue which was a culminating factor for murder in the name of witch hunting. There was also casuist or false monger in the village for horrors killing of witch.

However, in contemporary period the witch hunting has a different purpose. The planned murder due to personal enmity, political rivalry, property rivalry, jealousy on prospering family etc. is covered by so called witch hunting. However, still the superstition factor plays a great role in witch hunting in remote villages.¹

5.2 DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES

5.2.1 DETECTION OF WITCHCRAFT AND HUNTING

Detection (*Naikangnai* in Bodo term) of witchcraft and hunting: The detection starts when there is a report of prolonged fevering of any person in the same village. The conservative villagers particularly the kith and kins of patient approach *Ojhas* or exorcists when their prolonged illness does not come round soon. If the doctor sometimes feels difficult to detect and cure due to some technical or other reasons about the fevering of the patients then the villagers turn to the exorcist to forecast the actual reasons. The detection about the handiwork of witches is also done by exorcist. The witch finder or astrologers by their detection activity leads to blame somebody and subsequent hunting of witch. The kins of ailing persons naturally suspect that their misfortune is due to casting of witchcraft or *mantra* by some evil persons or exorcists. It is found that some exorcists are involved in evil practice. Interestingly that only an

¹. Dwimalu, Daina Butarlainai Arw Boro Samaj, in “*Rourwtwn*”, vol.vii, No.1, May, 2011, ed: Gobinda Basumatary, D. Brahma, Chirang Publication Board, Assam. pp.37-41.

exorcist can detect or forecast the internal handiwork of an exorcist behind the long days suffering patients.

5.2.2 ILLITERACY AND SUPERSTITIOUS IMPACT

The Bodo society has large supernatural beliefs continuing since earliest period. But in contemporary scientific period the faith upon witchcraft is regarded as superstitious belief. Due to faith on superstitious the suspected witches are killed on the verdict of village court as a punishment for this evil activities. People at this scientific age should realize that traditional beliefs were not based on the ultimate truth. They believe in the occult because they were ignorant regarding the truth of the universe. They believe in the witch doctors and miracles because they were completely in the dark regarding human anatomy, germs and diseases. Almost every rites, rituals and customs were based on some kinds of ignorance and blind faith.²

5.2.2.1 SUPERSTITION OF VILLAGERS: In remote areas the villagers in maximum numbers are superstitious. Since they have been following the tradition of blind faiths, the belief on witch power is common in their mind. They have belief that the *Ojhas* are able to learn the evil *mantra* for becoming witch. At the same time, they have also belief that all the *Ojhas* are not evil, rather they are the main element for observing religious rituals in the village as well as other places. So, the villagers have faith that the *Ojhas* may learn good and evil *mantra*.³

5.2.2.2 SUPERSTITION OF OJHAS: As the *Ojhas* (local physician) are poor and illiterate, they also remain in the superstitious life. They have faith on the power of *mantra* which can harm the others. They have belief that with the learning of evil *mantra*, one can become powerful *Ojha* or witch. So, such person learns traditional art of *mantras* from other already learned *Ojhas*. After learning *mantras* many times from other *Guru* (master), such person begins to work the minor religious rituals. Gradually, such person tries to become famous and earn money with such works. The *Ojhas* have also belief that one can become man eater (witch) with the help of *mantras*. They are

². Illiteracy Root Cause of Witch Hunting: Hagrama, dated 26th May, 2012, *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, p.10.

³. Lawrence Islary (38) informant, leader, ABSU, Kokrajhar district interviewed in July, 2014.

also in superstition as other villagers. However, such *Ojhas* unsuccessfully attempt to cast spell to their enemy to harm. Their process of casting spell for bewitching to their enemy is only nominal and faith without reason. So, they are also superstition in their effectless action.⁴

5.2.3 NON-DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES AND MISINTERPRETATION

The backward communities of some remote villages do not have enough medical facilities. Their living condition is so unhygienic where they are easy prone to various diseases. Moreover, they are not able to cooperate with the modern technique of medical treatment such (ultra sound, scanning, frequent blood, stool testing etc. or taking the regular medicine doses, purchasing medicine, vitamine rich nutrition, rest etc.) due to poor financial condition. These poor living conditions drive them to wrong interpretation of ailments. As a result, the villagers, when their prolonged illness does not come round or is not identified by them, they feel that their problem is handiwork of witches. Some diseases like becoming mad, epilepsy, having much nightmare, traumatism, child or baby death, abnormal baby crying, serial death etc. are some causes for suspect of witch.

- **Infant illness and death:** The infant suffering from serious illness and frequent crying are very sensitive conditions for suspect of presence of black magic practitioner. Moreover if the child dies suddenly in village then the villagers begin to detect to find out the witch.⁵
- **Serial death:** Sometimes in the village serial death of few people takes place. In fact it leads to illiterate villagers towards the suspect of presence of witch in the village.

⁴ Brajendra Kr. Brahma (78) informant, Ex. President BSS, interviewed in January, 2014.

⁵ Boro, Rupaisri, Kwmsi Pwtainai Arw Dainani Jwnwm, in "*Nwjwr*" vol.6, No.2, March, 2011, ed: Deobar Ramchiary, Hiren Medhi, Baksa, Assam, pp.43-44.

- **Sudden death:** The sudden death of some villagers without knowing medical reason leads the villagers to suspect the presence black magic practitioner.
- **Abnormal Symptom:** Some abnormal symptoms like becoming mad, epilepsy, having much nightmare, traumatism, abnormal baby crying, etc. are some causes for suspect of witch.

GAP OF MEDICAL TREATMENT: The medical treatment by doctor of ailing people of remote village remains gap due to various reasons. Firstly, the poor economic condition does not encourage them to complete the whole process of medical treatment. The advice for ultra sound, multi test, scanning, modern diagnosis etc. by doctor are not followed because of economic crisis.⁶

Secondly, the communicative language problem does not encourage to continuous treatment by doctor. The patient or family members of patient can not express their health problem to the doctor of other caste. They do not know the technical terms of various healths complain. Because, majority of them are illiterates. The doctors also do not know the local language. In addition to this, the doctors talk very less with those people, because of communication problem. So, the proper treatment of such patients is not possible. Thirdly, the shyness and lack of exposure make them hesitation to approach the doctors in the town. The district hospital is situated at very far from their village. So, arriving to the town for treatment is very difficult for them.

Fourthly, the wrong faith on the ability of *Ojhas* to cure the health problem also leads to gap of medical treatment. The *Ojhas* take opportunity of such situation for exploitation of their moments.

Fifthly, not availability of dispensary with doctors, medicine and new facilities for diagnosis of patients is also leads to gap of medical treatment.

⁶. Brahma, Pratibha, Brahma, Preetam and Narzary, Raju Kr., "Witch hunt: Crisis, Conscience and Way Forward" in "*Bibungthi-the opinion*" Vol.01 No.02, November, 2011, ed: Pratibha Brahma, Burlungbuthur Publication Board, Kokrajhar, Assam pp.18-20.

5.3 STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

Earlier days the suspected witches were punished severely but freed to live in the society. The village court did not kill directly the suspected witch without proper charges or reasons. If suspected witch was found with sufficient evidence, then he/she had to face death sentence in the village. They were punished by the villagers because of the suspected witches were involved in human eating or suffering to somebody. Basically the superstitious reason prompts the villagers to hunt the suspected witch. In modern days the suspected witches are killed on many vested reasons by vested persons. The social, political, economic and religious reasons are common behind the killing of witch. A saint or ordinary person might be killed on allegation of practicing black magic but the main reasons are may be social, political, economic or religious.

5.3.1 SOCIAL IMPACT FOR WITCH HUNTING

Social life: The Bodo society set up in based on strong social bond. The Bodo people are closer and maintain links with the forest. Their main livelihood is based on cultivation and thus it is in nature agrarian. Their life in village has the interrelational depending upon each other in times of need. There are some occasions, community work and observations in this society which characterised the strong social bond among them. They help each other with physical work during the cultivation as a social relationship. The marriage, social and religious rituals, rites and custom in death etc. are performed with the help of each other. But, sometimes the social enmity and hatred developed among them which lead to dire consequences.

There are common social causes for the hunting of witch in the village. As for example, the personal enmity, jealousy over other, social forces etc. are social factors for the hunting of witch. The social reasons have been a great factor behind the killing of witch. In remote village the jealousy occurs when somebody prosper in life. The rich are not secured among much poor villager. The good local physician and dealing in herbal medicine are no longer liked by the uneducated villager. The quarreling events also lead to killing of human in the name of witch by enemy seizing advantage. If there are two or many local physician in a village then there is also chance of incident of witch hunting being happened in that place. The property related quarrel also leads to killing of witch.

The fortune tellers also play great negative role in fulfilling their goals by killing the enemy. Many incidents are being happened on the basis of social conspiracy by opportunist. And also the village court is influenced by the clever person and gives judgment that many suspected witches possess real power to kill villagers.⁷

5.3.2 POLITICAL IMPACT FOR WITCH HUNTING

The political participation is a common part of any villager whether directly or indirectly. Human beings are by nature political. Human beings are being influenced by political waves. In modern developed politics the people are being governed by vote politics.

However, in contemporary period, the political reasons for the hunting of witch cannot be ruled out. The enemy arisen out of political rivalry has become one of common factor in some parts of tribal areas to kill the opponent in the name of witchcraft practice. Due to the trend of political party defection the political rivalry, political jealousy and enemy arise very easily. The vote bank politics complicate and aggravate the political relationship among them.⁸

The present day's politicians use politics as a shortcut to wealth and fame. At the same time, they also want short cut to success in their political career. And for the politicians desperately looking for instant success, what else can be the shortest route other than black magic or occult power.⁹

Government would not launch witch hunt against its political opponents, but the law would take its own course, V. Naidu (political leader) says.¹⁰

So, the political conspiracy, political jealousy, political murder etc. are factors for the hunting of witch. Although the socio-superstitious are main reasons for the killing of

⁷. Brajendra Kr. Brahma (78), informant, Ex. President BSS interviewed in January, 2014.

⁸. Meghalaya Governor Appeals for Tolerance Among Bodo groups, in *Assam Tribune*, Assam, dated July 23, 2008, p.8.

⁹. Pathak, Geetartha, The Politics of Superstition, in *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated 28th October, 2013, p.6.

¹⁰. No Witch Hunt Against Opponents: Naidu, in *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, Assam, dated May 31, 2014, p.16.

witch, but the political reasons are behind the hunting of witch. The opponent enemies are killed branding as a witch to keep public voiceless and hide.¹¹

5.3.2.1 POLITICIZING TREND OF WITCH HUNTING IN BODO SOCIETY

- **In terms of reason:** Political conspiracy, political jealousy, political murder etc. are political reasons for the hunting of witch. The political participation has become a common part of any villager whether directly or indirectly in recent period. However the human beings are by nature political. Human beings are being influenced by political waves without caring just and unjust. In modern developed politics the people are driven by electoral politics.

However, in contemporary period, the political reasons for the hunting of witch cannot be ruled out particularly in tribal society. The enemy arisen out of political rivalry has become one of common factor in some parts of tribal areas to kill the opponent in the name of witch practice. Due to the trend of political party defection the political rivalry, political jealousy and enemy arise very easily. The electoral scenario complicates and aggravates the grassroot political relationship among them.

Although the socio-superstitious are main reasons for the killing of witch, but in politically motivated society, the political reasons are also to be considered as prime factors behind the hunting of witch.

- **In terms of Political Issue:** the witch hunting on suspicion in recent times has become one of the political issues in Bodo political society. The frequent hunting of witch has stirred the minds of many Bodo political personalities. In fact these burning issues have become a serious concern to the legislative house. Though the witch belief and hunting are basically social issues, it has got spread to politics. Indeed we find many political personalities giving comments on this issue.

¹¹. Dwimalu (2011), op.,cit., pp.38-41.

As for example, Forest Minister of Assam, Rockybul Hussain (2012), said that witch hunting is a great social menace and for that the government has taken the rising incidents of witch hunting seriously. The government is concerned about the issue. So, the government has given strict instruction to police officers of the rank of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and Officer in Charge (OC) to treat the issue sensitively in their respective jurisdictions.

Moreover, Hussain appealed to all the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) to initiate awareness campaigns in their respective areas.¹²

Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Chief H. Mohilary flagged off the rally against social evils which was organized by All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF) on April 4, 2012 at Gossaigaon in Kokrajhar district.¹³

Mohilary told that they had submitted a proposal to the state government for setting up of medical camps in the northern belt of the Brahmaputra, especially in tribal dominated areas, to remove superstition and problems like witch hunting.¹⁴

- **Gathering support base:** Since the witch hunting incident has got a fine place in Bodo politics, gathering support base out of this issue has started. This issue has been taken up and mobilization has also got momentum. Large numbers of public rally led by political parties are seen in the street. Along with NGOs social organization etc. also started protest rally against the witch hunting. But if we analyze the motive behind the protest rally, the political motive is more than prime issue.
- **Political retaliation:** The practice of retaliation whether violence or non violence is one of the parts of human nature. In contemporary periods the witch hunting is taken as shield for hiding political murder. Political violence is getting

¹². Government Concerned About Witch Hunting in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, Assam, dated 30th March, 2012, p.1.

¹³. ABWWF Rally Against Social Evils in *The Bodoland Guardian*, Kokrajhar, Assam, dated April 9, 2012, p.1.

¹⁴. Mohilary Condemns- in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, Assam, dated June 22, 2011, p.10.

increased everywhere in the world. But political violence cannot be done openly because of alertness of security and judicial forces. In many places of Kokrajhar district, still there is faith on black magic, that's why the police or enquiry committee has fewer roles to deal with such incidents.

5.3.3 ECONOMICAL (PROPERTY) IMPACT FOR WITCH HUNTING

The intention to grab property is also one of the prime reasons for witch hunting. The relatives or in laws are always in attempt to grab the property belongs to widow or single helpless kith and kins. So, witch killing was always a pre planned activity. Field study shows that the widow (if any) is not longer loved by her in laws at home. Even the in laws are always in attempt to seize her property because widow becomes peripheral.¹⁵ So, the relatives or near ones might got together and plan to murder that helpless person. So, the helpless widow or person is branded as witch and responsible for unlucky or ill of somebody in the village. Then the village court began to sit for hearing or trial. At that moment the verdict of trial become one sided.

However, the opportunist take advantage of the situation and accordingly the suspected couple is killed brutally at night on charge of practicing black magic. Gradually, the near ones one after another began to seize the available property belongs to that suspected fellow. Property may be of in terms of land, money, valuable assets etc.¹⁶

For an example an old man (name undisclosed) 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

¹⁵. Choudhury, Dr. Jagadindra Ray, Fight Against Superstition, in *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati dated September 22, 2013, p.6

¹⁶. Dr. Birubala Rabha (65) informant, Crusader Against Witch Hunting, interviewed in July 4th, 2015.

black magic, because he has the knowledge of preparing amulets as local physician in the village. Thus he was killed mercilessly during night in the year of 2001 by enraged villagers without trial.¹⁷

5.3.4 RELIGIOUS IMPACT FOR WITCH HUNTING

The conversion of religion into other choiced faith has been getting progress in tribal and backward society. It is believed that conversion of religion make change of his/her whole mode of living and tradition. This development of change attitude and mode of living brings poor adjustment with other fellow co-villagers. However, this poor adjustment causes angry to villagers also fearing that the converted people might destroy rich cultural tradition. Even, the relatives also feel angry and restless on converted person, because it seems betraying the family tradition. In fact, the enraged villagers get together and began to plan murder of them. So, the converted people are to be branded as practitioner of black magic and responsible of misery of some villagers.

So, the suspected person is killed in the name of practicing witchcraft but the real secret reason is due to conversion of religion. So, false witch hunting might occurred due to religion. Analysis and deep study reveals that the couple was mercilessly murdered due to conversion into other religion.¹⁸

5.3.5 UNEMPLOYMENT, LACK OF WORK CULTURE AND SPREAD OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRIMES

The large scale jobless or unemployment problem in the society has been growing as the population growth. The industrialization and changing of lifestyle of developed countries have affected the people of underdeveloped countries. However, the people in the backward countries and communities began to neglect the work culture. Rather they began to immitate the luxury lifestyle of western countries but they could not fulfill. In fact, the workless people naturally feel to commit crimes in the society. Their

¹⁷. Information from victims, visited at certain area of Serfanguri of Kokrajhar district in October, 2015.

¹⁸. Information from victims, visited at certain area of Soraibil of Kokrajhar district in July, 2015.

conscience is so fickle towards any crime in the society. These factors lead to frequent witch hunts in the backward society.¹⁹

5.3.6 MUCH DRINKS OF COUNTRY WINE (*JOU*), DRUGS: EASY OF BRUTAL ACTION OVER EVIL CONSCIENCES

People who take the country wine and get half conscious easily. Under the influence of wine they get energy and encourage to commit any evil action to their enemy. The spread of consumption of drugs, alcohol among youths have encouraged them towards the anti social activities.²⁰

5.3.7 AGITATION, POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND VIOLENCE ACTS

Although the British left India sub continent in 1947, the Bodos were not granted freedom by them. The political domination over the Bodo community has aroused political consciousness pushing them into autonomy movement. Since that period the Bodos had been subject to discrimination, oppression, exploitation etc. in all fronts.

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma a renowned leader in 1929 first formally met Simon Commission at Shillong. He raised many demands as separate political arrangement and regiment of Bodo people etc.

In 1952, 16th November the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* (BSS) an apex literary body was formed. Since that period under the guidance of *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, the Roman script movement was launched in Assam.

Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA) and Movement:

The sentiments out of lost of native Bodo kingdom drive out the Bodo intellectuals to form political association. As a result, in the early 1960s the Plains Tribal Council of Assam, a political party representing Bodos and other plains tribals of Assam realized

¹⁹. Urkhao Gwra Brahma (45), informant, Political Leader, interviewed on 17th July, 2012.

²⁰. Workshop on Witch-Hunting, Crime Against Women in Kokrajhar, dated 30th April, 2012, *The Bodoland Guardian*, Kokrajhar, p.3.

that they were not secured unless and until getting separate autonomy. In 1967, PTCA demanded a separate territory called *Udayachal* to be carved out of Assam.

All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and Movement:

The All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) was formed in 1960s. This student organization was founded with strong base support and accordingly very tough struggle was led by this organization. The Bodoland Movement for an independent state of Bodoland can be traced back to its inception of 1960s. In 1980s a strong and efficient leader named Upendra Nath Brahma led the Bodo movement against the ruling authority. The prime objective of those movements was regaining its lost homeland since British period.

In 20th January, 1993 Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was accorded to Bodo people. But that accord could not meet the aspiration of agitators. So autonomy movement again started and as a result, Bodoland Territorial council (BTC) was signed in 10th February, 2003. However, the student organization was not satisfied with the new agreement. So, they have been again undertaking movement for separate state till date.²¹

The long period movement whether through democratic or violence reigning socio-political instability resulting fratricidal killing for the cause of motherhood. The fratricidal killing further complexed the situation instead of getting unity. In most Bodo scholars feel that witch killings have been increased after the Bodo agitation of 1985, and so conclude that people are taking advantage of hate feelings against witch to settle old scourges, thereby leveling false allegations against innocent people.²² The power of youths was misguided for violence acts. The volunteers or youths began to feel easy in finishing their enemy. As a result the opportunists exploit the situation for their vested interest. So, murdering of witch on simple suspect has become very easy by the misleading power of people.

²¹. Konwar, Narayan (2006), *Society and Politics in Assam*, Book Land, Guwahati, Assam, pp.90-91.

²². Daimari, Anjali, The Idea of Evil Among the Bodos, in *Construction of Evil in North East India*, ed, Biswas, Prasenjit and Thomas, C.Joshua, 2012, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.p.113

5.4 TYPES OF ATTACK ON WITCHCRAFT

The hunting of suspected witch has been happening in Bodo society since times immemorial. The suspected person is killed in cold blood by the enraged groups which produce various natures of attack. The following types of attack on witches could be seen.

- **MIDNIGHT MURDER:** A suspected person is attacked to spot death if his/her amount of guilt is quite enough before the village court.²³
- **DAMAGING AND SEIZING THEIR PROPERTY:** A suspected person to be witch might not be killed by the villagers if his or her amount of guilt is if considerable. But his or her property might be damaged or ransacked by the villagers.
- **BOYCOTT SYSTEM IN THE VILLAGE:** Some suspected witches are boycotted by the villagers. No villagers neither the boycotted family could meet any villagers in their village.
- **EXPULSION FROM THE VILLAGE:** Some suspected witches are expelled or banished from the village based on guilt done by suspected witch.
- **MENTAL TORTURE:** The suspected witches are mentally tortured by the co-villagers due to offence done by them.²⁴

5.5 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING: IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

The strong rural social system compels the women to surrender themselves to the patriarchal values because of which, they have been ignored and denied opportunities for participating and sharing the benefits of education and development.²⁵ The Bodo people by tradition settle at rural area. Their society is based on rural society. The

²³. Mochahari, Monjib, Midnight's Killers, "*Bibungthi-the opinion*" Vol.01 No.02, November, 2011, ed: Pratibha Brahma, Burlungbuthur Publication Board, Kokrajhar, Assam pp.18-20. p. 37.

²⁴. Jiron Basumatary (45) informant, Leader, ABSU, Kokrajhar, interviewed in July, 2014.

²⁵. Lahkar, Sumi, How Good is the Anti Witch Hunting Bill, in *Assam Tribune*, dated October 9, 2015, p.6.

villagers should co-exist peacefully among each other. They have to depend upon each other in times of crisis and danger. So, socially, politically, economically etc. they help each other in times of need. This tradition has been continued amongst the Bodos still today.

However, the belief on witchcraft practice or art is found in Bodo society. In ancient period the Bodo people had kept faith on witchcraft practice. So, if any village witnesses the practice of witchcraft which caused to ill luck of other fellow villagers then the peaceful atmosphere of that village is disturbed. The people of that village are divided into many segments.

The belief on practice of witchcraft leads to hunting of suspected person. The village court used to sit for trial on suspected witch. If suspected person is found guilty by village court then he/she is allowed to be killed or punished. So, the witch hunts on suspected person have been causing harm to society of Bodo and other backward community. The social peace and congenial environment has been obstructed by the witch hunts. A man or woman is suspected as witch on many reasons and he/she is killed or assaulted severely which is concern of the society. The suspected witch whether male or female is attacked brutally by the villagers being directed by village court.

There are no traces of evidence as to how many ‘witches’ are there in the state, but the records prove that a large number of women have been victimized in the name of witch hunt. The witch hunt is a centuries old tool of prejudice against society, in particular women. Indeed witch hunt is a curse to the society. The brutal murders on the allegations of practicing witch craft not only shatters a family, but also disrupts the traditional set up of the society.²⁶

²⁶. Anju, Witch hunt: Myths and Realities, “*Bibungthi-the opinion*” Vol.01 No.02, November, 2011, ed: Pratibha Brahma, Burlungbuthur Publication Board, Kokrajhar, Assam pp.18-20. pp.24-25

5.6 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING: IMPACTS ON POLITICS

The witch hunts those have been occurring in Bodo society since immemorial period affects severely on political and economic area of Bodo society. The witch hunts have been causing division in political area. The political murders have been taking place secretly in the light of witch hunts. The innocent people are killed in cold blood on suspect of practicing black magic. The belief on witchcraft among the Bodo people provides a golden opportunity to conspirator for intentional murder of their enemy. Political rivalry in grass root level to some extent leads to murder of opponent in the name of witch hunting.²⁷

Articles 3 to 21 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which provides the right to take part in government and to equal access to public service are deprived by witch hunting.

Again the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of Universal Declaration which ensures right to life, freedom of religion, freedom from torture and equality before law are affected by witch hunting.²⁸

5.7 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING: IMPACTS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

Besides, the belief on witchcraft practice affects the economic matters of many people. The property has become one of the prime reasons for the hunting of witch. To seize the property some concerned people are suspected and killed brutally during midnight. So, the helpless people like widow, a pair of old man and woman without issues, having no kith and kin in the village etc. have no security economically. In fact, relatives of same family members may conspire to murder in the name of witch to grab property which leads to violation of socio-economic security of victims.²⁹

²⁷. Manashi Misra (40) informant, Journalist, Freelance & activist of AMSS, Guwahati, interviewed in June 30th 2016.

²⁸. Yasin, Adil Ul & Upadhyay, Archana (2006), *Human Rights*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, p.46-49.

²⁹. Kalita, Pulin, Draft Witch Hunting Prevention Bill: a critique, in *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated May 22, 2015, p.6.

5.8 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING: IMPACTS ON RELIGION

The religious reason has also become a great factor behind the killing of witch. The conversion into other religion is not tolerated in some villages. The converted people are killed mercilessly in the name of witch hunting. This kind of killing in the name of witch hunts has divided the same community into many segments or strata. So, the religious murder has been occurring secretly in Bodo society in the light of witch hunts. The religious principles or credentials are being harmed by that kind of activities. In fact, the converted religious minority are not secured of life in some parts of the greater area. The rights to religion under article 25-28 of Indian Constitution are not implemented in some parts of our region.³⁰

SET BACK TO *BATHOU* RELIGION:

The great followers of *Bathou* religion have anticipated that the ongoing hunting of witch will be very bad sign to *Bathou* religion of Bodos. The massive hunting of witch will encourage the process of conversion into other religion. *Prasenjit Brahma* (eminent follower of *Bathou* religion) says that the ensuing hunting of suspected witch has been harming the *Bathou* religious tradition. Since the *Bathou* rituals are based on *mantras* and exorcist (*Ojha*) are very essential to recite the required *mantras*. But many exorcist or promoter of religious rituals have started to be away from being feared of attack on charge of witch. So nobody will dare to perform the religious promoter or exorcist at any cost. On the other hand the rituals of *Bathou* religion cannot be run without the association of exorcist. He disclosed that many rituals of Bodos such as *Salami* (*pre-religious rituals of Garja or Kherai puja*), *Kerai* (a great and whole night *puja* performing), have began to be disappeared due to want of exorcist.³¹

5.9 WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: Human rights are inherent and inalienable rights which are due to an individual by virtue of his/her being a human being. These rights

³⁰. Ghai, K.K (2010), *Indian Government and Politics*, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, p.130.

³¹. Witch-Hunt Draws Flak From Organizations in *The Sentinel*, dated 5th May, 2011, Guwahati, Assam, p.11.

are necessary to ensure the dignity of every person as a human being irrespective of one's race, religion, nationality, language, sex or any other factor. The concept of human rights is based on the assumption that human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. These are moral claims which are inalienable and inherent in all human individuals by virtue of their humanity alone.

The *United Nations Centre for Human Rights* defines human rights "as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings".

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was adopted in 1948 has 30 articles to provide protection of human rights.

Article 3 to 21 of UDHR provides the following clauses:-

- I. The right to life, liberty and security of person;
- II. Freedom from slavery and servitude;
- III. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- IV. The right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, the right to an effective judicial remedy;
- V. Freedom of opinion and expression;
- VI. The right to social security;
- VII. The right to a standard of living adequate for health and well being;
- VIII. The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.³² The situation seems grim when the state does not intervene on the side of the victim to uphold a person's fundamental right of freedom of expression.³³

The issue of witch hunting is one of the prime causes of human rights violation. The man and woman who is suspected and persecuted on the charge of witch practice have to face merciless treatment in the society. Such man or woman loses right to life in secure at home, right to roam in freedom, freedom of speaks etc. So, the witch hunting is considered one of the greatest human rights violators. So, to stop the menace of witch

³². Yasin, Adil Ul & Upadhyay, Archana (2006), op.cit.,pp. 1-3, 45-46.

³³. Sultana, Parvin, of Faith, Superstition and Rationalism, in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated September 29, 2015, p.6.

hunting, the society and state should have to offer joint effort. The administration, judicial mechanism etc, has the great role in eradication of this menace of witch hunts. The law protects our life but it cannot solve all the social problems. Since, it has been standing as burning problem to the universe, so all the conscious people of world need to work for elimination of this social menace.³⁴

Digamber Narzary, Human Rights Activist

He was of the view that the belief on witch power is traditional and had no scientific reason. The clever people now days misused the term of witch hunting to fulfill the personal interest. There are many reasons for the hunting of witch. As for example: the land dispute, election centric rivalry, personal enmity etc. are the hidden factors for witch hunts. The *mantra* does not have any power to harm magically. The supernatural acts have no definition and no place anywhere. The Supreme Court even cannot try the supernatural acts.

He told that how a girl of witch victimised turned to sex worker under compulsion of poor condition. The history tells like that a couple with two children was suspected to be witch in the village at a period. The villagers had planned to murder them after the village court's verdict. The couple with no way had to fled from the village and somehow managed to acquire a plot of land in the Bengal among Nepali concentrated communities. The girl child grew in course of time at that place but unfortunately she was lured by a Nepali boy to be trafficked at Saudi Arabia. After many years the girl became old and lost beauty day by day. But she has been staying in such trafficking society and started to lure other girls from same community for prostitution. She could not turn back from the trafficking society.

To him administration system has failed to root out the witch related incident. The witch related incidents have much harmful consequences to the victimised family. The government must implement the strict law positively. The criminal must be punished and the victims must get justice. The medical facilities and spread of education are urgent need and the government should help in this concern.

Interviewed on July 25, 2016 at Kadamtola, Kokrajhar.

³⁴. Pathak, Phanidhar, (2013), *Daini*, Chandra Prakashan, Pan Bazar, Guwahati, Assam, P.61.

5.10 WITCH HUNTS AS A DETRIMENTAL TO THE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT OF BODOS

The spurt of witch hunts in Bodo society has been obstructing the peace and development of Bodos. The witch hunts has become as cancer of Bodo society. The innocent people are being slaughtered like animal on suspect of practicing black magic. The social unity has been collapsed. The village life based on mutual cooperation in times of need is getting disappeared.

In fact, in modern science and technological age the belief on witchcraft implies blind faith without scientific proof. However, the belief on witchcraft is fully superstitious belief. The backward people are very closely associated with the superstitious and blind faith.

So, the ongoing witch hunts in Bodo and other backward society implies the illiterates and backwardness in terms of intellectual ratings. In a nutshell, the continuation of witch hunts has been obstructing the peace and development of among the people.

5.11 RESPONSE FOR ERADICATION OF WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING

NEED OF ERADICATION OF WITCH PRACTICE AND HUNTING

In modern scientific age the belief on witchcraft is superstitious belief. This menace has added the amount of burden to the society. However, this menace has been disturbing the social bond among us leading social and political tension.

The developmental works or programs could not be done in village levels or backward place due to tense situation arising out of witch hunts. The menace of witch hunts must be eliminated at any cost by our society.

The need of eradication of witchcraft practice and hunting is very urgent. A civilized society should be free from the beliefs of witch and hunts.

INITIATIVES FOR ERADICATION OF WITCH HUNTING

It is a good sign that many formal organizations have taken initiatives for eradication of witch hunts. They have realized that the unjustified hunting of suspected witch is a gross violation of human rights which deters peace and development of society. The initiatives for eradication of witch hunts have been taken out by various organizations as given below:

5.11.1 INITIATIVES BY ABSU (ALL BODO STUDENT UNION)

The belief on the power of witch is regarded as superstitious belief in the eyes of this student organization. The ABSU since its formation has been terming the magical power as blind faith. This student organization has been working hard for eradication of this evil practices. The awareness programme, mass rallies, workshop etc. to eliminate the faith on black magic have been being done by ABSU. It is praiseworthy that ABSU is to great extent successful in rescuing the victims of witch hunting incidents in many places of Kokrajhar district.³⁵

5.11.2 INITIATIVES BY ABWJF

The All Bodo Women's Justice Forum (ABWJF) is also one of the leading organizations to curb the witch practice and hunting. This organization does not belief on the power of black magic. Number of meetings, workshop, rallies etc. have been held by this organization to eliminate the social evil. The workers of this organization used to go at interior and backward places to rescue the victims of witch hunting. Rights activist and President of the Bodo Women Justice Forum, Anjali Daimary, said: "The administration has a big role to play in finding an immediate remedy. Civil society will continue their programmes of creating awareness among the people which is a long process, but the administration and the police need to take prompt action. Killing innocent people and branding them as witches have sent shockwaves through the Bodo belt."³⁶

³⁵. ABSU Rally Against Witch Killings in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, Assam, dated 20th April, 2011, p.1.

³⁶. Spurt in Witch-Hunting Cases in Assam in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, Assam, dated 25th May 2011, p.3.

5.11.3 INITIATIVES BY ABWWF (ALL BODO WOMEN WELFARE FEDERARION)

The service rendered by ABWWF to eliminate the practice and hunting of witch is very tremendous and commendable. Numbers of efforts have been done by this organization to curb this social evil. This organization have carried out mass rally and held numbers of workshop for the purpose of uprooting this social evil. *Pramila Rani Brahma*, MLA, as a founder of this organization since inception has been taking keen interest in eliminating the evil practices and belief.

5.11.4 INITIATIVES BY BSS

Bodo Sahitya Sabha, a apex literary organization has been working to eliminate the witchcraft practice in Bodo society. This organization terms the practice of witchcraft as superstitious faith. And this blind faith has been obstructing the social progress of Bodo society to a great extent. The workers of this organization used to devote much for curbing this social evil practice.³⁷

5.11.5 INITIATIVES BY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Project Prahari: This project was first launched in 1st August, 2001 by Assam Police under the guidance of additional DGP, Assam, Kula Saikia, an IPS, posted in Kokrajhar as a Western Range Deputy Inspector General of Police to eliminate the witch hunting in Assam. This project was extremely successful in the initial years and the incidents of witch hunting witnessed a drastic reduction in many villages located in Kokrajhar, Chirang, Goalpara, Udalguri, Baksa and Sonitpur districts.

The frequent witch hunting in Kokrajhar district has caused much tension in the minds of civilized people of Assam. Kokrajhar District Police and Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW) jointly held public meeting (14 June, 2012). This meeting drew remarkable response of the people. Mridula Saharia, Chairperson of Assam State Women Commission (ASWC), herself took very great initiative to hold and organize project *Prahari*.

³⁷. Workshop on Witch-Hunting, Crime Against Women in Kokrajhar in *The Bodoland Guardian*, Kokrajhar, dated 30th April, 2012, p.3.

Project Mother: on June 14, 2011 Kokrajhar district police announced launching of project 'Mother', a project for combating witch hunting. The district police have identified 50 vulnerable villages to be covered under the project. The project aims to evolve a mechanism, having a realistic approach towards preventing of the crime and thereby to protect the innocent people, to generate active public support against the offenders and to achieve cooperation in detention, prosecution and punishment in the court of law.³⁸

5.11.6 INITIATIVE BY NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Terming witch hunting as a great social menace, Minister of Assam, *Rockybul Hussain* said that the government has taken the rise in incidents of witch hunting seriously. The government is concerned about the issue. The Minister told that they have already given strict instructions to police officers of the rank of DIG and Officer Incharge to treat this issue sensitively in their respective jurisdictions. He admitted that incidents of witch hunting have increased in Assam in 2011 with Kokrajhar district in lower Assam recording the highest number of witch hunting related deaths in the year. He told that Assam police has also launched Project *Prahari* for participatory development and people friendly policing to fight social maladies and deprivation.³⁹

NORTH EAST RISING (NGO) of Guwahati carried out rally against witch hunting in Kokrajhar district. Mridul Basumatary, President of this NER has told that the main purpose of this rally was to eliminate the menace of witch hunting.

³⁸. Brahma, Pratibha, Brahma, Preetam and Narzary (2011), Raju Kr., op. cit., pp.22-23.

³⁹. Government Concerned about Witch Hunting, in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated March 30, 2012, p.1.

Nakul Narzary, 37, Programme co-ordinator, North East Research & Social Work Networking (NERSWN), Kokrajhar.

They have been working against witch hunting jointly with the Mission Biru Bala since few years back. The belief on witchcraft is traditional and not scientifically based. People suffered from many health problems which are very difficult to detect. Some *Ojhas* take the opportunity in right time to exploit their interest. As for example the people may suffers from psychiatric, hallucination, illusion, mental illness, drug addiction etc. The medicines of the pharmacy cannot cure those health problems. Rather those people used to behave indifferently and become very thin day by day. The physical appearance also got deteriorated and looked abnormal. Health awareness is not available in remote villages. The villagers misinterpret those symptoms as being attacked by witchcraft. During these moments some *Ojhas* used to say that there is handiwork of witch in the village. The gullible villagers believe to what the witch finder says.

Interviewed on 21.7.2016 at NERSWN office, Kokrajhar

Witch hunting is recognized as a shameful act and it leads to gross violation of an individual's right to a life of dignity and socio-economic security, right to participate in community life. Now a day, women are most vulnerable in witch hunting incident everywhere. NGOs of Assam, have been pressurising the government to bring up a state policy to combat the harmful practice of witch hunting.

Further, the NGOs sought immediate rescue of all the family members and providing necessary protection and social reintegration.⁴⁰

⁴⁰. NGO Organizes Peace Rally in Kokrajhar in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, Assam, dated 23rd October, 2011, p.10.

5.11.7 DAINEE BISWAS PRATIRODHI YOUTH MANCH

On September 23, 2006 an organisation namely, *Dainee Biswas Pratirodhi Youth Manch* (DBPYM) was constituted. Since its establishment, the *mancha* has launched a strong awareness campaign among the Bodo villagers against this evil practice.

It is a matter of surprise as well as concern that witch hunting is on the rise again in Assam. The practice of witch hunting reflects the status of women in a society. It is a shame for the civilised society. Numbers of cases of witch hunting have been reported from various parts of the State, particularly from districts like Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Baksa, Kokrajhar, Chirang and Sonitpur. The belief in the existence of witches is deep-rooted, especially in tribal communities. Older women, especially widows, are suspected to have an evil eye and considered unfavourable. These days not only the women but also innocent men are punished in the name of witch hunting. Even if in the tribal societies the prima facie cause of this villainous and barbaric practice emerges to be superstition and lack of education and awareness, various studies have revealed some other causes which are also equally responsible such as the urge to grab property, settle personal grudge, retaliation against resistance to sexual advances and pave the way for polygamous practice.

The *mancha* has been able to rehabilitate many victims of witchcraft. In the long run, it is expected that this organisation will be able to make an objective analysis of the root causes of this practice and evolve remedial measures.⁴¹

⁴¹. Forum Launches Crusade Against Witch Hunting in *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, dated 19th May, 2011, p.10, retrieved from <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1911/state05> on 11.5.2017.

Haricharan Brahma, Secy, Discovery Club

The belief on witchcraft in early period has been continued still by large section of people in Bodo society. In early period the people lived in superstitious society where there was no development of education and science. The belief on witch power is unscientific in modern technological days. He was of the view that the power of *Bann of Ojha* to attack the enemy miraculously is not true in real sense. The education, health, employment opportunity etc. are not developed in the Bodo society. So the villagers are very prone to unscientific activity.

Regarding the ongoing witch hunting in the backward society, he says that there are many secret reasons for murdering of witch. The property issue is one of the prime reasons for witch murder. The rumors are also great role player in murdering witch. The habit of taking of country wine is facilitator for the crime. The sudden death, serial death etc. are the moments for mob to kill the suspected witch. In some villages domination by powerful people is also the factor for witch hunts. The powerful person wants to dominate the whole villagers in all spheres. If some villagers stand against those powerful people then they might be murdered in the name of witch.

Interviewed on 21.7.2016 at office of Discovery Club, Kokrajhar.

Condemning the killings of suspected witch, Bodoland Territorial Council, Deputy Chief, Kampa Borgoyary (April, 2011), said: “These are cold-blooded murders and not only cases of *daina* (witch) hunting. The culprits should be arrested at the earliest and stern punishment meted out to them. We have asked the administration not to look at the killings as witch-hunt-related cases. All killings should be studied separately and action taken. The BTC administration with social organisations is trying to create awareness among the people.”

Assam Minister for Agriculture and Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes, Pramila Rani Brahma (April, 2011), also said, that she has asked the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police to take stern action against the culprits

and not let them go free. Killing is a heinous crime and branding the victims witches after killing aggravates the crime. Police should act promptly and arrest the culprits.

P.K.Dutta (April, 2011), the then Superintendent of Police, Kokrajhar District of Assam, too, admitted that all killings were not the result of witch-hunt and each case was different. “Some cases are religion related while others are results of property dispute. We are investigating the killings. We will take actions against those involved. We have already arrested culprit persons, including village headman. In some cases, the village headmen are also involved. We caution the village headman against such killings in the village.”⁴²

5.11.8 ASSAM MAHILA SAMATA SOCIETY

This society has been working hard for the elimination of witch hunts particularly in Assam. This society along with Mission Birubala has organized numbers of workshop, rescued many victims of witch suspect, helping in medical treatment etc. in order to eliminate witch belief. State Programme Director of *Assam Mahila Samata Society* (AMSS) Gita Rani Bhattacharya (2014) has stressed on distribution of badeges against witch hunts as a part of massive mass campaign.

In Assam, several women’s rights groups spearheaded by Assam Mahila Samata Society have initiated addressing the issue of witch hunting and have been pressing for a law or policy to eradicate this practice.

A State level consultation on witch hunting organized by Assam Mahila Samata Society on December 10, 2010 at Indian Institute of Bank Management and adopted certain recommendation after extensive discussion on the issues related to the crime of witch hunting. As for example some recommendations to curb the witch hunting are:

I. There should be continuous effort from the concerned department.

⁴². Dharna Against Serial Killings in Kokrajhar, in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, Assam, dated April 22, 2011, p.10.

- II. Trauma counseling centres and retreat centre should be set up.
- III. To set up *Nari Adalat* (Women's Court) at the *Panchayat* (local body or Assembly) level or village development council level.
- IV. Enactment of a special law specifically on witch hunting.
- V. Bring up a state policy by involving grassroots organizations to combat witch hunting and associated violence.
- VI. The legal system should be well responsive and sensitive towards women.
- VII. Study on customary practices against women.
- VIII. To involve *Panchayati Raj* (local self government).
- IX. Health education through a vigorous campaign at the witch hunting prone area.
- X. Mind set change through early intervention in the school level Rescue, shelter and rehabilitate the survivors. Shelter homes are to be provided with adequate facilities. Protect and socially reintegrate the survivors. Street play, strong media role and involvement of *Gram Panchayat* (village Assembly) /Village Council Development Committee (VCDC)/ Village Defence Party (VDP).
- XI. Women's group/ Women federation/Youth club for community level intervention. Opening a helpline Emergency service to accused women by police and health department.
- XII. Proper documentation and monitoring of the cases.⁴³

5.11.9 ASSAM STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

This Commission has urged the state government to immediately formulate a law to combat the menace, as the number of cases is on the rise. The Commission has also undertaken a project titled 'Targeted Intervention and Prevention of Witch hunting in Affected Areas of Assam'. As a part of this project, the ASCW had also organised a 'Sensitisation Programme for Police Personnel on Witch-Hunting' on July 19, 2013. The police personnel were sensitized on the issue of witch hunting and the existing provisions of law, along with the roles and responsibilities of the police.⁴⁴

43. The Practice of Witch Hunting: A Call for its Abolition, retrieved from <http://www.assammahilasamakya.org/hunting.html> on May 12, 2017.

The Targeted Intervention and Prevention of Witch Hunting in Affected areas of Assam have launched a survey and various awareness drives, besides sensitization programmes to fight this social evil. The Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW) had taken initiative to conduct survey in many places of witch related incidents. The ASCW has undertaken the initiative with an aim to eliminate witch hunting, increase the level of awareness especially regarding health aspect, and raise the level of government scheme.

ASCW Member Secretary, Monideepa Borkakaty (2013) said there have been various incidents wherein both men and women have been brutally killed by villagers accusing them of being witches. The Commission has been taking several steps as visiting the affected places, sensitizing people, NGOs and the local administration.⁴⁵

Manashi Misra, Journalist, Freelance & activist of AMSS

She was of the view that the murder in the name of suspect of witch to somebody particularly in the backward areas has adversely affected the social peace and brotherhood in Assam. The witchcraft no doubt is very old tradition but this tradition has been misused by the vested people for their nasty gain.

The socio-economic condition of victimized people shows some characters. As for example, very poor, widow, helpless etc. The victimized people even cannot approach the legal procedure due to financial condition and ignorance.

The grassroots political rivalry may be one of the factors for hunting of witch. The political activity and rivalry also develops in the grassroots level.

She has strong belief about the idea of forming *Sangha* (village level group) beginning from the village level to district level. The multi level Sangha will form the bigger federation in the state. She wants free trial for witch related victimized kith and kins to get justice. She also in support of establishing *Nari Adalat* (Women's Court) to provides impartial and speedy justice to poor women. The Police Department has the vital role to play with federating committee in accomplishing the objective of mission.

Interviewed on 30.6.2016 at AMSS office, Guwahati.

⁴⁵. Assam State Commission for Women Launches Drive Against Witch Hunting, in *Times of India, Guwahati, Assam*, retrieved from timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013/10/20/archivist/year-2013 on May 12, 2017.

5.11.10 ROLE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The National Human Rights Commission of India constituted in October 1993 has also serious concerns about the witch hunting in Assam. This Commission is committed to intervene in any issue of human rights violation for safeguards of human rights provided by constitution and statutory law. It has sought a report within four weeks from the police in Kokrajhar district of Assam on several incidents of suspected witch hunting there in 2011.⁴⁶

5.11.11 CRUSADE AGAINST WITCH HUNTS BY BIRUBALA RABHA

Birubala Rabha has been leading a crusade to wipe out superstitions leading to witch hunting in Assam. A resident of Thakurbia village along the Assam and Meghalaya border, Birubala Rabha came to limelight in 2005 for her relentless efforts to save scores of lives from being hacked to death on suspicion of practicing witchcraft.

Birubala along with the Assam Mahila Samata Society (AMSS), have under taken many cases of practicing witchcraft and atrocities on women in Assam and Meghalaya. Her untire efforts for elimination of witchcraft has been encouraging the people of Kokrajhar to act against witch hunt.

Under the leadership of Birubala Rabha many awareness meetings were conducted in schools, remote areas and colleges. In 2013 at Sikarigaon, Majuli district of Assam 35 victims were rescued together with the help of students union of Missing (tribal group of Assam) community. Birubala Rabha has realized that without a special law in the state the menace of witch cannot be curbed down. She also frequently insists on stricter laws, arrangement of awareness programmes about modern health facilities, education and inclusion of lessons in the syllabus of school and colleges against superstitions.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ . NHRC seeks action taken report on Assam witch hunting cases, retrieved from archive.indianexpress.com/news on June 2, 2017.

⁴⁷ . Das, Dr. Natyabir, Dr. Birubala Rabha the Mascot of Humanity, in *Bibungthi-the opinion*, vol.01 No.10, 10th June, 2015, ed: Pratibha Brahma, Burlungbuthur Publication, Kokrajhar, Assam ,p.40.



Dr. (Honorary) Biru Bala Rabha

She is an emerging popular crusader of anti witch hunting in Assam and hailing from Thakurvilla of Meghalaya and Assam border of Goalpara District. She herself was a victim of suspect of witch is about 60s in her age and has been rendering tremendous effort since long years to curb the menace of witch hunting in Assam.

Afterwards she began to feel acute mental agony by the frequent news of witch hunting in Assam. She was much worried about the incidents of witch murder particularly in backward tribal communities. She has visited many places where there is witch related incident occurred. She could have rescued many victims of witch suspect.

She was of the view that witchcraft is based on mere superstition. The clever people of backward village make conspiracy to fulfill his selfish interest by framing charge on his enemy as a witch. To her, grab of property, personal enmity, political rivalry, jealousy, religious hatred etc. are the main factors for witch hunting in Assam.

She has been working hard through “Mission Biru Bala” platform to root out this menace. She has been awarded honorary doctorate degree by Gauhati University in 2015 and *Sati Sadhani* (last queen of Sutiya Dynasty) award in April, 2017 by Assam Government for her relentless contribution concerning eradication of witch hunting in Assam. She has been invited to attend workshop on witchcraft and human rights experts at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in September, 2017.

Source: interviewed on 8th February, 2016

5.11.12 RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT CONCERNED TO ELIMINATE WITCH HUNTING: LAW SO FAR

India has no special law to deal with the witch hunting, the only alternative for the victim is the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860. The various sections invoked generally in such cases are 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (hurt) etc.

❖ **Bihar was the first state in India to pass the “Prevention of Witch (*Daain*) Practices Act of 1999.**

Penal section 3: Identification of witch (*Daain*): Identifies any person as witch and does any act towards such identification either by words, action or manner is subject to imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 months or with fine of rupees 1000 or with both.

Penal section 4: Damages for causing harm: Cause any kind of physical or mental torture to any women by identifying her as a witch whether deliberately or otherwise is subject to imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months or fine of rupees 2000 or with both.

Penal section 5: Abetment in the identification of witch: Intentionally or inadvertently abets conspires, aids, instigates any other person or person of the society whether in identification of any woman as a witch with an intention to cause by anyone to that to harm are subject to imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 months or with fine of rupees 1000 or with both.⁴⁸

❖ **The Chhatisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nirvaran Act, 2005.**

Section 2: Definitions

1. *Tonahi* means person indicated by any person or persons that he will harm or possesses power to harm or there by he intends to harm any other person or persons or

⁴⁸. The Prevention of Witch (*Daain*) Practices Act, 1999, retrieved from <http://abhishalprakash.blogspot.in> on April 25, 2017.

society or animal or living things by black magic, evil eye or by any other means, whether known as *Dayan*, *Tonaha* or by any other names.

2. Identifier means person who indicates any person as *Tonahi* or induces other person to indicate or by his deed, words, gesture or behavior helps to indicate or knowingly does anything so, thereby on the basis of such indication that person may be harmed or apprehended to be harmed or his security and honour may be adversely affected.

3. *Ojha* may he be known by any other name whatsoever, means person who claims to possess power to control, cure, treat *Tonahi* or any person or animal or living thing alleged to be affected by *Tonahi* and make him powerless, by *jharphook*, *totka*, *tantra mantra* or by any means.

4. Damage includes physical, mental and economic harm and harm to reputation.

Section 4: Whoever identifies any person as *Tonahi* by any means shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years and also with fine.

Section 5: Whoever causes physical or mental harassment or damage to any person identified by him or any person as *Tonahi* shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to 5 years and also with fine.

Section 7: Whoever claims to have power to harm any person or animal or living things by black magic, evil eye or by any other means and publicizes it and tries to disturb the public tranquility or peace or causes annoyance or harms others shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year and also with fine.⁴⁹

❖ Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013.

Definition: Human sacrifice and other inhuman, evil and *aghor*i practices and black magic means the commission of any act, mentioned or described in the Schedule

⁴⁹. The Chhatisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran Act, 2005, retrieved from <https://www.legalcrystal.com/act/13466/the-chhatisgarh-tonahi-pratadna-nivaran-act-2005-complete-act> on May 24, 2017.

appended to this Act, by any person by himself or caused to be committed through or by instigating any other person.

Penalty section: Any act of human sacrifice and other inhuman, evil and *aghori* practices and black magic and any advertisement, practice, propagation or promotion of human sacrifice and other inhuman, evil and *aghori* practices and black magic, in violation of the provisions of this Act, by any person by himself or through any other person shall constitute an offence under the provisions of this Act, and the person guilty of such offence shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to seven years and with fine which shall not be less than five thousand rupees but which may extend to fifty thousand rupees.⁵⁰

❖ Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013

Definition: 1. Witch means a woman, locally known as *Dahani*, *Dayan* or otherwise, who has been identified by any person or persons believing her to be in possession of or is having any evil power for causing any harm to any person or his property.

2. Witchcraft means use of supposed supernatural or magical power with evil intention to call up spirit or cast spell or discover the whereabouts of stolen goods and includes such other similar practices which are locally known as *Guni*, *Jhada Phunka*, *Cot Bidya*, *Bata Bidya*, *Kula Bidya*, *Nakha Darpana* or by any other name.

3. Witch doctor means a person who claims to be a *Gunia*, *Tantrik*, *Kalisi* or by any other name called and claims or is believed to be having supernatural or magical power to control or to cure a witch or by performing rituals to free a woman from evil spirit or bless a woman with a child or performs any ritual on behalf of any person with an intention to harm a person.

4. Witch hunting means any act of omission, commission or conduct on the part of any person-

⁵⁰. Maharashtra Act No. XXX of 2013, retrieved from [http://bombayhighcourt.nic.in/libweb/acts/stateact/2013 acts/pdf on April 26, 2017](http://bombayhighcourt.nic.in/libweb/acts/stateact/2013%20acts/pdf%20on%20April%2026,%202017).

- i. Identifying, accusing or defaming a woman as a witch, or
- ii. Harassing, harming or injuring such woman whether mentally or physically or damaging her property.

Penalty section: 1. Whoever, commits witch hunting or abets, or provokes for witch hunting shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and with fine but which shall not be less than one thousand rupees.

2. Whoever forces any woman, branding her as witch, to drink or eat any inedible substance or any other obnoxious substance or parade her with painted face or body or commits any similar acts which is derogatory to human dignity or displaced from her house, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but may extend to five years and with fine.

3. Whoever practises witchcraft or other similar practices with intent to cause harm or injury to any woman shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to three years or with fine which shall not be less than five thousand rupees or with both.

4. Whoever performs any practice as witch doctor knowingly that such practices shall cause harm or injury to any woman upon whom such practices is being performed, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but may extend to three years or with fine which shall not be less than five thousand rupees or with both.⁵¹

⁵¹. The Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013, retrieved from http://lawodisha.gov.in/files/acts/act_1046377831_1434526151.pdf on April 24, 2017.



Bijit Basumatary, Worker of SSVVT, Kokrajhar.

He has been rendering his contribution towards the rescuing and saving the children of witch victims since long years. The Society to Save Victims of Violence and Terrorism (SSVVT) is the under project of A Survey of Household Water and Sanitation (AASHWAS) sponsored by central government. This project offers scholarship to children of murdered witch for education. Accordingly they have been providing scholarship to selected victimised children.

He was of the view that the on going witch hunting is because of the conspiracy of vested people. In early period the village court try the witch related cases and settled peacefully. During that period the illiterate Bodo villagers have belief upon witchcraft. The witch punishment was done based on suspect. The conspiracy of modern period come out due to land dispute, land grabbing, personal grudge, religious hatred, grass root political opponent etc.

He suggested development of medical facilities, spread of education, special help to drop out and poor students to mitigate the problem.

Interviewed on 12.7.2016 at his residence of Tengapara (Kokrajhar)

❖ **Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act 2015.**

The Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW) has drafted a Bill titled “The prevention of Witch practices Bill, 2011”. The Assam State Assembly passed this Bill in August 13, 2015. As per the law anybody in the name of being a witch would be treated as a cognizable, non bailable and non compoundable offence and punishment for the offence would be minimum 3 years of sentence or even life imprisonment and fine up to 5 lakh rupees. This provision will come as per section 302 of the Indian Penal Code.

The main provision of witch hunting Bill 2015, are-

- I. Jail for 3 years to life for branding a person witch and abeting suicide.
- II. Jail of 3-7 and fine of Rs. 50,000 for whoever, known as *Ojha*, or *Bej* claims to possesses supernatural or magical powers, declares any person ‘Witch’ does any act of healing or performs any rituals of ‘*Jhadphook*’, ‘*Jhora Phooka*’ (exorcism and sorcery) or any other superstitious practice with intention of harming others.
- III. Jail up to 3 years and fine between Rs 10,000 and Rs 50,000 for holding anyone responsible for any misfortune in village, natural disasters, droughts, flood, crop less, illness or death in the village.
- IV. Abetment charge for any public servant willfully refusing to register a case, neglecting investigation or attempting to withhold fact and evidence.⁵²

5.12 ANALYSIS ON BELIEF OF WITCHCRAFT

As per the methodology, as stated in the first chapter, the following issues are analysed after thorough and direct interview with the respondents.

⁵². Borah, Dr. Rinku and Das, Dibakar (2015), Witch- Hunting in Assam: A Curse on the Right of Women in *Uprooting Witchcraft*, ed., Dr. Minuara Begum, Dr. Jyoti Kamal Hazarika, Assam etc. pp.153-154.

➤ **Illiterate villagers' belief on witchcraft in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 156

Table: 5.1

Responses from illiterates	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	37	23.71 %
Little believe	50	32.05 %
Much believe	42	26.92 %
No comment	27	17.30 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by illiterates on witchcraft shows that, 23.71 % people do not believe, 32.05 % people have little belief, 26.92 % people have much belief and 17.30 % people do not give comment.

The above table shows that still the larger illiterate villagers of total respondents have belief on witchcraft. Moreover, a good number of illiterate villagers strongly believe on witchcraft. The study has found that backward areas are far away from awareness and all round development.

Few numbers of respondents do not give responses on witchcraft, as they are ignorant and lack knowledge about the issue.

➤ **Literate respondent of rural area on witchcraft in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 294

Table: 5.2

Responses from literate respondents	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	88	29.93 %
Little believe	123	41.83 %
Much believe	40	13.60 %
No comment	43	14.62 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by literates on witchcraft shows that, 29.93 % people do not believe, 41.83 % people have little belief, 13.60 % people have much belief and 14.62 % people do not give comment.

The table shows that still the larger number of educated people of total respondents have little belief on witchcraft. And second largest number of people strongly believes on witchcraft. The study has found that although the people are educated but they are not sensitized about the impact of witchcraft. On the other hand the belief on witchcraft is deeply rooted in tribal society, so the people are not ready to discard such age old faith.

Few numbers of respondents gave no comment because of fear and poor awareness.

➤ **Literate urban respondents on witchcraft in Bodo society**

Total respondents= 28

Table: 5.3

Responses from literate urban residents	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	12	42.85 %
Little believe	11	39.28 %
Much believe	3	10.71 %
No comment	2	7.14 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by literate urban respondents on witchcraft shows that, 42.85 % people do not believe, 39.28 % people have little belief, 10.71 % people have much belief and 7.14 % people do not give comment.

Surprisingly, large number of literate respondents (39.28% + 10.71%=49.99%) of urban area believe on witchcraft. The study has found that the Bodo people have to depend upon the *Ojha* for socio-religious rituals and festivals. Without the *mantras* of *Ojha*, the

Bodo religious rituals can not be performed. *Ojha* is considered to have some supernatural power in the society since immemorable period. So, the large numbers of literate people also believe on *Ojha*, *mantra* and witchcraft.

➤ **Family members, relatives of victim and survived victims on witchcraft in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 10

Table: 5.4

Responses from victims	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	09	90%
Little believe	Nil	Nil
Much believe	Nil	Nil
No comment	01	10%

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by family members, relatives of victim and survived victim on witchcraft shows that, 90 % people do not believe, and 10 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that the direct family and extended family members do not want to acknowledge their belief on witchcraft. Naturally, members of same family do not go against their own parents, grand father or grand mother and brothers or sisters. Because, belief on witchcraft of their same family members will obstructs with the legal claim.

➤ **Intellectual's belief on witchcraft in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 40

Table: 5.5

Responses from intellectuals	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	34	85 %
Little believe	05	12.5 %
Much believe	Nil	Nil
No comment	01	2.5 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by intellectuals on witchcraft shows that, 85 % people do not believe, 12.5 % people have little belief, and 2.5 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that larger number of intellectuals do not believe on witchcraft. The intellectuals have got awareness about the harmful impact of witchcraft. The witch hunting incident has been creating a grave social burden upon intellectuals. The intellectuals by dint of their farsighted knowledge are in the way of discarding the belief on witchcraft.

However, still a few intellectuals believe on witchcraft. Since, the belief on witchcraft is very old and continues to exist in Bodo society, it is very difficult for many people to discard abruptly.

➤ **People of having low income in Bodo society on witchcraft.**

Total respondents= 365

Table: 5.6

Responses from having low income	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	96	26.30%
Little believe	133	36.43 %
Much believe	77	21.09%
No comment	59	16.16 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by people having low income on witchcraft shows that, 26.30 % people do not believe, 36.43 % people have little belief, 21.09 % people have much belief and 16.16 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that larger number of people believe on witchcraft. The low income implies the backwardness in every spheres of life. They do not get sufficient awareness about the evils of witchcraft. They are led by village headman and village headman is subject to village norms. So, naturally they believe on any age old practice or tradition.

➤ **People of having middle income in Bodo society on witchcraft.**

Total respondents= 65

Table: 5.7

Responses from having middle income	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	15	23.07 %
Little believe	33	50.76 %
Much believe	06	9.23 %
No comment	11	16.92 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by people having middle income on witchcraft shows that, 23.07 % people do not believe, 50.76 % people have little belief, 9.23 % people have much belief and 16.92 % people do not give comment.

The study reveals that larger number of people of having middle income believe on witchcraft. It is found that the role of *Ojha* is unavoidable element in socio-religious rituals of Bodo society. In performing the rituals the people believe and expect some supernatural acts to be promoted by *Ojha*. So, the *Ojha* is part and parcel of any religious ritual of Bodo's social life. Moreover, there is traditional belief that the *Ojha* can turn into witch. Also there is not enough awareness about the evils of witchcraft.

Therefore, the majority of Bodo people could not discard the belief on age old tradition of witchcraft.

➤ **People of having satisfactory income in Bodo society on witchcraft.**

Total respondents= 20

Table: 5.8

Responses from having satisfactory income	No. of People	P/C
Do not believe	13	65.00 %
Little believe	07	35.00 %
Much believe	Nil	Nil
No comment	Nil	Nil

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on belief by people having satisfactory income on witchcraft shows that, 65 % people do not believe, and 35 % people have little belief.

The study reveals that a few numbers of people having satisfactory income have little belief on witchcraft.

It is found that the strong faith on magical acts of *Ojha* in religious rituals of Bodo society discourage some people to discard the faith on witchcraft.

5.13 ANALYSIS ON CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

➤ **Illiterate villagers on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 156

Table: 5.9

Responses from illiterate	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	60	38.46 %
(II) Social and Economic	26	16.66 %
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	31	19.87 %
No Comment	39	25.00 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by illiterate backward villagers on causes shows that, 38.46 % people say superstition, 16.66 % people say social and economic, 19.87 % people believe on all causes and 25.00 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that the larger number of people say that superstition is the main cause of witch hunting. Backwardness and superstition go side by side. Larger tribal concentrated areas of Kokrajhar district are backward. Those backward areas are easily prone to superstition. Many people of backward areas think that the disease, sudden death, misfortune etc. are caused by witchcraft. So, to get rid of witch, the angry mob murders the suspected witch.

However, large number of people believes that social and economic factors are main causes for hunting of witch. The clever people persuade the gullible villagers to kill their personal enemy in the name of witch hunting.

Moreover, many people do not give comment on witchcraft because of fear and lack of awareness about the evils of witchcraft.

➤ **Literate respondents on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**

Total respondents= 294

Table: 5.10

Responses from literate	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	110	37.41 %
(II) Social and Economic	51	17.34 %
(III) Political	87	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	70	23.80 %
No Comment	63	21.42 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by literate respondents on causes shows that, 37.41 % people say superstition, 17.34 % people say social and economic, 23.80 % people believe on all causes and 21.42 % people do not give comment.

The study reveals that the larger number of literate people say that superstition is the main cause of witch hunting in Bodo society. The literate people have somewhat awareness about the menace of witchcraft. Many literate people do not believe in the existence of witchcraft in the world.

However, in modern age, social and economic are main factors for hunting of witch as some people say. The vested people persuade the illiterate villagers to finish their personal enemy in the name of witch hunting.

In addition to this, in modern period, the political rivalry is one of the main causes for witch hunting as large number of people says.

Now a day, political competition has become order of the day.

In this study many people say that there are multiple factors for witch hunting. The present day society is very complex. People have to maintain tense relation among themselves for private gains.

Moreover, many people do not give comment on witchcraft because they do not want to involve in responsible aspect.

➤ **Literate urban respondents on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society**
Total respondents =28

Table: 5.11

Responses from literate urban residents	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	09	32.14 %
(II) Social and Economic	05	17.85 %
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	13	46.42 %
No Comment	01	3.57 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by literate urban respondents on causes shows that, 32.14 % people say superstition, 17.85 % people say social and economic, 46.42 % people believe on all causes and 3.57 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that larger numbers of people say that there are multiple factors for witch hunting. They hold that superstition plays as a main reason for witch hunting particularly in backward areas. The social enmity among the villagers is also a factor. The property dispute among the heirs is also a factor for witch hunting.

Some respondent remain away from the comments on witchcraft, because of fear, they do not want to involve in such violent issue.

➤ **Family members, relatives of victim and survived victim on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**

Total respondents =10

Table: 5.12

Responses from victims	No. of victims	P/C
(I) Superstitious	02	20%
(II) Social and Economic	03	30%
(III) Political	01	10%
Both I & II	03	30%
All above	01	10%

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by family members, relatives of victim and survived victim on causes show that, 20 % victims say superstition, 30 % victims say social and economic, 10 % victims say political, 30 % victims believe on first and second causes and 10 % victims believe on all causes.

The study has found that larger numbers of victims say that social, political and economic factors are main causes for witch hunting. Social enmity and political rivalry, jealousy are common factors in the society. To seize the property particularly land is also the main factor for witch hunting. The above factors are commonly talked in the society.

Some victims believe that the superstition is the main cause of witch hunting. Naturally, the victims do not believe on witchcraft.

➤ **Intellectuals on causes of witch hunting Bodo society.**

Total respondents = 40

Table: 5.13

Responses from intellectuals	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	5	12.5 %
(II) Social and Economic	Nil	Nil
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	5	12.5 %
All above	29	72.5 %
No Comment	01	2.5 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by intellectuals on causes shows that, 12.5 % people say superstition, 12.5 % people believe on first and second causes, 72.5 % people believe on all causes and 2.5 % people do not give comment.

The study reveals that larger number of intellectuals say that multiple factors lead to witch hunting in Bodo society. The Bodo tribe is still facing backwardness in larger areas, so superstition plays decisive roles. Also the social enmity, occupation of land, seizing of property etc. are part of tradition of Bodo society. In modern period, political competition has been gaining momentum in every society.

One intellectual does not give comment on causes of witch hunting, because everybody has freedom to stay free.

➤ **People of having low income on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**

Total respondents = 365 (excluding intellectuals and victims)

Table: 5.14

Responses from having low income	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	134	36.71 %
(II) Social and Economic	60	16.43 %
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	76	20.82 %
No Comment	95	26.02 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by people of low income on causes shows that, 36.71 % people say superstition, 16.43 % people say social and economic, 20.82 % people believe on all causes and 26.02 % people do not give comment.

The study has found that the people having of low income believe that superstition is the main cause of witch hunting in Bodo society. The word superstition or blind faith is very common in backward areas. Social hatredness, jealousy and greedy for property are common appearances in the village.

Many respondents do not say about the causes of witch hunting, because they fear of being involved in the controversy.

➤ **People of middle income on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**
Total respondents = 65

Table: 5.15

Responses from having middle income	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	28	43.07 %
(II) Social and Economic	12	18.46 %
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	16	24.61 %
No Comment	09	13.84 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by people of middle income on causes shows that, 43.07 % people say superstition, 18.46 % people say social and economic, 24.61 % people believe on all causes and 13.84 % people do not give comment.

The larger numbers of respondents having middle income believe on impact of superstition as a prime cause of witch hunting. Many people of having middle income want to discard the social evil or unreasonable practices. Middle class people because of having education, always want to reform the society.

Some people believe say that the term witch hunting has been misused by vested people for personal gains. Now a day the social, political and economic conflict and confrontation among the citizens are common features of the society.

Some respondents do not want to give comment because they are not affected directly by this menace.

➤ **People of satisfactory income on causes of witch hunting in Bodo society.**
Total respondents = 20

Table: 5.16

Responses from having satisfactory income	No. of People	P/C
(I) Superstitious	08	40.00 %
(II) Social and Economic	05	25.00 %
(III) Political	Nil	Nil
Both I & II	Nil	Nil
All above	06	30.00 %
No Comment	01	5.00 %

Source: Field Survey

The above table of analysis on witch hunting by people of satisfactory income on causes shows that, 40 % people say superstition is the main cause of witch hunting, 25 % people says social and economic, 30 % people believe on all causes and 5 % people do not give comment.

The larger numbers of respondents say that the superstition is the single prime reason particularly in remote areas for incidents of witch hunting. The people of having satisfactory income naturally are aware about the blind faith and its negative impact in the society. Larger people having satisfactory income are educated, and they are able to differentiate between right and wrong.

25% respondents of this category of people say that social and economic factors lead to witch hunting in modern period. Obviously, the socio-economic and political crimes are increasing in the society, so the vested people exploit the opportunity to kill the enemy in the name of witch hunting. Such nature of incidents is frequently reflected in the society through awareness.

Few respondents of this category of people remain away from any comment on witch hunting. Because, they are intentionally do not want to say and fear of being involved in controversy.