

The research work has revealed about the concept, origin, practice of witch or black magic in Bodo society along with other societies of universe. It is found that the belief on supernatural power, magical power, occultism, working of spell etc. are more or less embedded in all the human societies of the world.

6.1 FINDINGS ON EXISTENCE OF WITCH PRACTICE

I. BELIEF ON WITCHCRAFT IS TRADITIONAL BELIEF OF BODO SOCIETY: The belief on power of witchcraft was originated along with the origin of Bodo society. So belief on such practice is not new in Bodo society. Study reveals that in India many religious beliefs have been witnessing the use of *mantra* in different socio-religious observation since time immemorial. Thus *mantra* has been controlling various socio-religious activities or observing rituals with much success. In Bodo society also the chanting of *mantras* 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 evil person learns the evil *mantra* and becomes witch. The older persons both male and female are seen larger in number of practicing of witchcraft. The chanting of *mantra* by religious priest by offering flowers, sacrifice of chicken, four footed animals etc. are done. But the practice of witchcraft is not recognized; rather it is serious punishable offence in Bodo society. Moreover, the hunting of witch is also not recognized in this society. The evil practice is done in secret by witches to take retaliation against enemies or hated persons.

II. THE BELIEF ON WITCHCRAFT IS BASED ON NEGATIVE DIMENSION: Although the belief on witchcraft is very old in Bodo society, but the people used to treat that practice as negative since inception. The purpose of witchcraft is to harm others, it never aims for welfare of others. The witchcraft invites pre hatred, pre curse from the people. Nobody wants to see and living of witch practitioner in the society.

III. SOME RELIGIOUS RITUALS BASED ON SUPERNATURAL POWER: The *mantra* has a pivotal role particularly in *Bathou* religion of Bodo society. The *Kherai* is the religious festival of *Bathou* worshipers which witness the supernatural performance. The *Ojha* (exorcist), *Dhouthini* (female virgin having selected zodiac), *Dhour* (male promoter) are the key performers in *Kherai* festival. The *Ojha* firstly chants the *mantra*

to influence upon the *Dhouthini*. As a result she slowly turns into powerful woman as a holder of supernatural power. She changes her mood, assimilates with gods and imitates the nature of gods and goddess. She holds sword and shield and magically performs with that. In the course of time she tells the dangers, fortune of the villager. She also suggests for observing custom, rituals to get rid of coming dangers.

IV. SUPERNATURAL BELIEFS AND BELIEF ON MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT EXIST IN BODO SOCIETY: The Bodos believe in the existence of spirits, ghosts, witchcraft etc. and they also believe that these super natural elements cause diseases and sufferings to the human beings. With the help of magical power of the Bodo *Ojhas*, one can know the activities of those super natural elements. Some typical supernatural beliefs are:

- *Bira Mwdai* (*Bira God*)
- *Gwthwi Mankhangnai* (Catching by dead spirit)
- *Mayadhob* (Falling down)
- *Bann Hogarnai* (Charmed arrow)

BELIEF ON WHITE MAGIC: So far as the white magic is concerned the number of the *Ojhas*, who are expert in white magic, is not negligible. To protect the people from their troubles the necessity of the *Ojha* who has the knowledge of medicine is very great in the Bodo society even today.

- *Khasini Ganhwnai* (A small piece of thread or amulet bound around the wrist or the neck of patient)
- *Jharinai* (Exorcising)

V. BELIEF ON WITCHCRAFT IS LARGELY SUPPORTED BY PRIMITIVE AND UNEDUCATED PEOPLE: The belief on witchcraft was familiar with the uneducated people during the primitive period. The uneducated folks may believe on magical and witch power in their uncivilized society. In primitive period, the villagers had to depend upon the *Ojhas* for their welfare of life. Naturally, they believed that if

Ojha could do good, he also could do bad. So, the bad works of *Ojhas* developed the concept of witchcraft.

However, some educated people also use the term ‘witch hunting’ knowingly for selfish gains. In fact, the vested educated people try to kill their enemy in the name of witch hunting. The illiterate gullible villagers are misled by such cunning educated people in witch hunting.

VI. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW WITCHES: The witchcraft could be seen into two angles, the old and new dimension. The belief on witchcraft in old period was result of natural belief of folks, because they were lacking education, health development, awareness etc. But, in modern period, the belief on witchcraft is the result of force belief on illiterate villagers misled by cunning people. So, obviously still the gullible villagers are misled by clever people for somebody’s nasty gain. So, the old witch was product of natural belief and new witch is product of force or making.

VII. EXISTENCE OF WITCHCRAFT DEPENDS ON STRONG BELIEF OF FOLKS: In contemporary scientific period the faith upon witchcraft is regarded as superstitious belief. From scientific point of view in modern age the belief in witchcraft is an absolute superstition. The chanting of *mantra* from long distance to attack magically or miraculously the targeted person and its action is mere false. The feeding of poison to targeted person is different thing and it may affects.

Due to unnecessary acute fear a person may fall into traumatic problem or other mental problem. The illiterate remote villager unable to find out the actual reasons of ailment or fevering starts to suspect that there is handiwork of witch behind the illness. The lack of medical facilities and treatment in remote villager turns their attention towards the strong superstitious beliefs.

VIII. UNNATURAL ACTIVITIES OF OJHA OR TRADITIONAL HEALER: The *Ojhas* or traditional healers used to practise some unusual and unnatural rituals for the prospering in their profession. There are some unnatural acts such as collecting the dead

bones from graveyard, hair, displaying of red vermil, sharp object etc. done by *Ojhas*. These activities may frighten the gullible folks. Some *Ojhas* apply undue and secret *mantras* in simple occasion or ceremonies which may create magical situation.

IX. LITTLE LEARNED OF MAGICAL PERFORMANCE: Some *Ojhas* or traditional healer could learn and perform some scientific magic before the eyes of illiterate public. But the magic practitioners do not explain the knowledge and art of such scientific magic to illiterate villagers. As for example, the sticking of stool was a mentionworthy in old period. But, the illiterate villagers used to believe that as power of *Mantra* and *Ojha*.

6.2 FINDINGS ON CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

6.2.1 DIRECT CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

Study about the reasons for hunting of witch reveals various factors as given below. Earlier days the suspected witches were punished severely and 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 evident, 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 hunts the suspected witch. In modern days the suspected witches are killed on many vested reasons by vested persons. The social, political, economical and religious reasons are very common behind the killing of witch. A saint or ordinary person might be killed for charge of practicing black magic but the main reasons are social, political, economic or religious.

I. THE SUPERSTITIOUS JUDGEMENT IS DIRECT CAUSE OF WITCH HUNTING: The detection of witch starts when there is a report of prolonged fevering of any person in the same village unable to cure by the doctors. 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 witch finder or astrologers by their detection activity leads to blame somebody and 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. Interestingly that only an exorcist can detect or forecast the internal handiwork of an exorcist behind the long days suffering patients.

II. ILLITERACY LEADS SUPERSTITIOUS CAUSE FOR WITCH HUNTING:

In contemporary scientific period the faith upon witchcraft is regarded as superstitious belief. Due to faith on superstitious the suspected witches is 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. The rumours of suspect of witch begin to spread and witch hunts take place.

III. NONDIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES LEADS MISINTERPRETATION, SUSPECT AND WITCH HUNTING:

The backward communities or 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, test etc. 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 is not come round or is not identified by them, they feel that their problem is handiwork of witches.

a. 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 the village then the villagers begin to detect to find out the witch.

b. 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.

c. Sudden death: The sudden death of some villagers without knowing medical reason leads the villagers to suspect the presence of black magic practitioner.

d. Abnormal Symptom: Some abnormal symptoms are like becoming mad, epilepsy, having much nightmare, traumatism, abnormal baby crying, etc. are some causes for suspect of witch.

IV. FEAR PSYCHOSIS, NIGHTMARE AND WRONG INTERPRETATION: The physical weakness after suffering of diseases may have the problem of fear psychosis and seeing nightmares which creates illusion. Such patients see horrible nightmares and lost sleep which results health deterioration. Unusually, such patient see some popular *Ojhas* or old people in the dream and chide indiscriminately. The relatives or nearby people used to misinterpret such dreams and begin to suspect somebody as black magic practitioner.

6.2.2 STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

I. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION LEADS TO WITCH HUNTING: Social conflict and confrontation among people has been a part of any community in the society. Social development, social prestige and social exclusion breeds social intolerance among the same community.

Social disunity also generates hatredness and enmity among themselves. Imbalance social development breeds jealousy among the same villagers.

Religious conversion in the same village is also a factor for social hatredness among villagers.

However, social hatredness and jealousy turns into extreme of violence. Witch hunting is one of the forms of extreme social violence. The vested people conspire to kill their enemy in the name of witch hunting.

II. POLITICAL CONSTRUCTION LEADS TO WITCH HUNTING: The vote banks politics creates political conflict and rivalry in any society. To play politics is seen as emerging trend in remote areas also. In election of political representatives to assembly, parliament or any local council, the grass roots members are seen in engaged.

However, political conflict and rivalry among different parties brings political violence. Due to intolerant political factors, opponent worker or supporter is killed in the name of witch hunting.

6.2.2.1 POLITICAL AWAKENING OF BODOS: In 1967 two organizations as Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and All Bodo Student's Union (ABSU) were formed to register their political demand. But, subsequently, these two organizations began to develop a big clash owing to difference of their ideology and demand. As a result, fratricidal killings took place in large numbers among Bodos. Supporters of these two organizations were engaged in retaliation of their enemy for few years.

The extremism problem has been a part of Bodo's political realm. The seed of extremism can be traced back to 1980s in Bodo's political society.

Gradually, the groups of extremism began to split into many factions due to many factors. Factional clash and killing took place in large numbers in many places.

However, the concerned government was to a great extent successful in suppressing the separatist groups. Due to pressure from the government and civil society many extremists have come to the table of peace dialogue to have solution of their demand. But, still there are many anti talk factions in Bodo's political domain.

6.2.2.2 BODO ACCORD AND POLITICAL RIVALRY: All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) launched a vigorous Bodo movement since 1987 for separate homeland. As a result of Bodo movement, an accord as Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was signed in 1993. But unfortunately, the accord could not fulfill the aspirations of Bodos. So, subsequently, another movement was started to attain the separate state of Bodoland. As a result, in 2003 an accord as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was concluded. Still, large sections of Bodos have been struggling for separate state of Bodoland.

The two political accords accommodated political opportunities to Bodos to play politics. But, the elections of representative to two local administration generated political rivalries and clash among Bodos. The political rivalry sometimes turned into an extreme form as election related incident. The political rivalry led to some fratricidal killing in Bodo society.

However, the study found that the hunting of targeted person due to political conspiracy in the name of witch hunting is very less.

III. ECONOMICAL CONSTRUCTION LEADS TO WITCH HUNTING: Property in terms of money, land, jewellery etc. has been a part of dispute and murder among the extended family members. Direct family and extended family members are always at eye on the ancestral property. As life depends upon the money to a great extent, the property becomes single most need of the people. So, people commit crimes easily because of grab of property.

Study reveals that, widows are most vulnerable to murder due to property dispute. Widows are harassed, tortured because of grabbing property. Even the weak male husband is also harassed and tortured for property.

However, due to property dispute the helpless fellow is murdered in the name of witch hunting in modern society to hide their actual motives of murder.

IV. RELIGIOUS CAUSES LEAD TO WITCH HUNTING: The conversion from one religion to other religion has been getting progress in tribal and backward society. It is believed that conversion of religion make change of his 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 he/she seems betraying the family tradition. In fact, the enraged villagers get together and began to plan murder of him. 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 such incidents have taken place in the society.

V. UNEMPLOYMENT, LACK OF WORK CULTURE LEAD 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 conscience is so fickle towards any crime in the society. These factors lead to frequent witch hunting in the backward society.

VI. MUCH DRINKS OF COUNTRY WINE (JOU), DRUGS LEAD TO EASY OF BRUTAL ACTION OVER EVIL CONSCIENCES: People who take the country wine and they get half conscious easily. Under the influence of wine the 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. For example:

TRAGEDY OF APRIL: The month of April is observed as local New Year festival which is called *Bwisagu*. This festival has some important characteristics. In this month the cultivators used to remain in leisure. Because the entire major works of cultivators come to an end in this month. So, the cultivators and domestic workers used to enjoy in their life. They go for marriage according to their wishes. Along with that the Bodo society has the tradition of enjoying the country wine in this month for heart content. It may be mentioned that clever people would mislead the gullible youth for murder taking the advantage of intoxicated people. The case study reveals that maximum witch related incidents took place in the month of April or other celebration moment. Because, during such celebration of festivals, the people take the country wine or liquor and lose the difference of right and wrong which make easy for criminal.

VII. AGITATION, POLITICAL INSTABILITY LEADS TO VIOLENCE ACTS:

The long period movement whether through democratic or violence reigning socio-political unstability resulting fratricidal killing for the cause of motherhood. The fratricidal killing further complexed the situation instead of getting unity. 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 misled power of youths.

VIII. METAPHOR FOR DIVERTING AND HIDING CRIMES: In modern period the term witchcraft has been applied as a metaphor for diverting the crimes. The so called witch hunting technique may not be limited only to backward tribes but other communities may follow such technique. Now, the murder of enemy in the name of witch hunting has been getting scope in political competition.

6.3 CONSEQUENCE OF WITCH HUNTING

WITCH HUNTS AS UNJUST AND IT LEADS TO VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: The witch hunting on suspect is based on injustice which leads to violation of human rights in the society. The right to live in peace and order is disturbed by the unhealthy belief and practice. The belief and practice have the relation with the witch hunts. The witch hunting is the ultimate test of belief and practice of black art. The witch hunt on suspect is one of the greatest factors for gross violation of human rights. The unabated witch hunting in the society has been witnessing a shame for humanity in the present society. It violates following rights:

- Right to life,
- Entitled to live in peace and order atmosphere,
- Socio-economic security,
- Right to freedom.

6.4 FINDINGS ON THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

6.4.1 MARXIST CLASS THEORY OF POWER AND FEMINISM

Marxism presents the class theory of power. It regards a class more than a group of organised people. For the Marxists, class is, in itself a power.

The Marxists hold the view that power is a class concept; that it arose with the development of antagonistic classes in the society; that it is a phenomenon of a class society; that it has been the monopoly of an economically dominated class in the class society; that the workers, in the capitalist society, would organise themselves and capture power so to abolish it altogether by establishing the classless society; that power would, ultimately, cease to function in the classless society.

To Marx, the state is creation by the rich class of society. In any society the people can be classified into two main divisions, viz., rich and poor. Thus the state is used as instrument for domination and exploitation of poor classes by the rich class. The power of state is symbolized by the military power of a state.

The rich class needs state power for their protection of physical as well as property. After the research work in the fields, it has found some characteristics of the victimized people regarding the class concept of Karl Marx. It shows that till date and in the study area the Marxist theories are applied in true sense.

I. Class of very Poor: To Marx in any society, there are only two classes of people. They are rich and poor class. The capitalist or industrialist class always attempt to exploit the poor class. The poor class due to weakness and helpless are not in position to challenge the rich class. So, they are exploited, dominated and victimized by the rich class. The poor are victimized in the name of witch and the present study found that it is done by the upper class.

II. Class of Backwardness of Village: To Marx, in the present state system, the poor becomes poorer and rich become richer. The backward class can never uplift them into higher position. Because, the rich class always try to pose obstacle in their way of development. The people of backward villages are dominated, exploited, neglected and overlooked by the rich layer. It is found that the remote areas remain as backward have been exploited by a few rich people.

III. Class of Illiterate and Semi Literate: The poor class of people are discriminated and underestimated by the rich class. They are deprived of rights and facilities. The poor class of people becomes illiterates or semi literate who has to discontinue their education because of non availability of schools or schools having low quality.

IV. Class of Helpless: Since, the state is controlled by the rich class, it does not care to the poor class. The state power is means for protecting the rich class not poor class. So,

the poor class becomes helpless in the times of danger. The government administration is concentrated only in urban areas which can easily be influenced by the rich.

V. Class of Widow: The labour, woman, widow etc. are of less worth in the present state system. The economic might is the only concern and worthy for determination in the society. So, such category of people does not enjoy the rights and power of state. Rather, they are helpless and always at danger of their life and property at their own home.

6.4.2 MARXISM IN THE CONTEXT OF BODOS: Marxist class theory is applicable in whole universe. To Marx, there are only two classes in any society as rich and poor classes. The rich class always exploit over the poor class. The rich class easily influences the state machinery to suit their self interest. In fact, the state is misused as an instrument for exploitation over the poor class.

In Bodo society also, people can be classified into two classes as rich and poor in the context of Marxism. The research has found that the class of rich people of less numbers believes on witchcraft. Study reveals that few numbers of rich people may misuse the term witch hunting for their personal gains and exploitation over poor class.

The poor class of people of more numbers believes on witchcraft. The study found that the poor class of people because of ignorance due to lack of education are prone to belief of witchcraft. Thus they form a group of gullible folk who are being exploited by advantageous class of society. Rather, they are far from the help of government machinery in walks of life.

6.4.3 FEMINISM AND WITCH HUNTING

The Marxist feminists deplore the fact that women, like most men in any class society, are oppressed and would continue being oppressed by the capitalist system of production, only communism would relieve them, like the exploited men as well of their exploitation. The Marxian theory of class described as in economic terms does not regard women as a class worth considering in any system of production. To say as the

Marxists do that women would be emancipated once there develops a classless society. They do not see or understand any non economic sources of oppression and that is why they regard women like most men as exploited by the possessing classes. In the Marxian frame, the whole issue of women's exploitation in different types of society has not been explored fully.

- **DOMINATION:** To Marx, the women are worthless in the class theory of state. So, the women are dominated by the rich class of people.
- **OPPRESSION:** To Marx, since the women are worthless, they are oppressed by rich class in all spheres of life.
- **PHYSICALLY EXPLOITATION:** The women are physically exploited by the powerful class of people.
- **EASY PRONE TO VICTIM:** Since the women are helpless, so they are very easy to fall as victim in the danger situation.
- **SUBORDINATE PART OF SOCIETY:** In the class theory of state, the women are regarded as mere subordinate part of society. They are not entrusted with any important duty in the power theory of state.

To Seema Jayachandran (2014) of Northwestern University, Chicago (USA) Poor countries by no means have a monopoly on gender inequality. Men earn more than women in essentially all societies. However, disparities in health, education, and bargaining power within marriage tend to be larger in countries with low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

In education, financial investment is more in case of male to female by their parents. Turning to health, in general women have a longer life expectancy than men, but this female advantage is somewhat smaller in poor countries. Women have higher age adjusted mortality relative to men in poor countries than in rich ones.

Women in developing countries have less control over their lives than those in developed countries. There is particularly little freedom of choice for women in India.

Women in developing countries face worse relative to men compared to women in developed countries on a variety of measures ranging from college enrollment to control over one's life.

Many cultures practice patrilocality whereby a married couple lives near or with the husband's parents. When a woman gets married, she essentially ceases to be a member of her birth family and joins her husband's family. Under this system, parents potentially reap more of the returns to investments in a son's health and education because he will remain a part of their family, whereas a daughter will physically and financially leave the household upon marriage.

In India widows traditionally do not inherit their husbands' ancestral property, they rely on their sons as their conduit for holding onto the family property and maintaining their standard of living in widowhood.¹

From the research it is found that women in the study area too are dominated and suppressed in all spheres of life in male dominated society. The woman has to suffer along with her husband in false allegation. The helpless and widow women and widow are easily prey to witch allegation by her in laws and other neighbours for seizing of property. The so called witchcraft is one of the best techniques to allege and kill the helpless woman for vested interest. In fact, this kind of incidents has been occurring in the society.

6.5 ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The frequent witch hunting in the society has been violating the basic human rights of human being. The innocent people are being killed on mere suspicion of black magic practitioner. The right to life in peace and order, freedom, dignity, property, social

¹. The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries, retrieved from http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf on May 14, 2017.

security etc. is drastically violated by these gory incidents. In fact, the witch hunting has been taking place in large scale in the society.

In earlier period, the trial by Kangaroo court on alleged and suspected witch was the first step for witch persecution. The verdict of Kangaroo court determined the nature of punishment. If there is no sufficient evidence against the witch, the accused were fed cow dung, human excreta, vulture etc. in village court to make disfunction and propitiate him or her in the village. Afterwards he/she could live as a normal villager. But in modern days, the hunting of suspected witch has been happening without proper trial of suspected fellow which is very unjust. The suspected person is killed in cold blood by the enraged groups which produce various natures of attack. The following types of assail on witches could be seen in modern days.

- **GRUESOME MURDER:** A suspected person is hacked to spot death if his/her amount of guilt is quite enough before the village court. However, since past few years the trend of witch hunts has undergone big change. The suspected witches are dragged out from the house in dark night and killed mercilessly before trial in village court. The dead bodies are buried improperly in sandbank nearby empty places.
- **DAMAGING AND SEIZING THEIR PROPERTY:** Property acquisition is one of greatest reasons to brand and murder the witch on suspect. 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. However, in this kind of incident, the relatives might be involved for claiming property.
- **BOYCOTT SYSTEM IN THE VILLAGE:** The practice of boycott system to suspected witches was prevailing in early days. Thus the suspected witches are boycotted by the villagers as a punishment of crime after hearing in Kangaroo court. No villagers could meet or communicate with the boycotted family.

- **EXPULSION FROM THE VILLAGE:** It was also prevailing that the suspected witches are expelled or banished or coerced to flee from the village forever depending upon the guilt committed by suspected witch.
- **MENTAL TORTURE:** After learning about the practicing of black magic by someone else in village, the branded witches are left alone. However, the suspected witches are mentally tortured by the co-villagers due to offence committed by them.

WITCH HUNTING AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The belief and practice of witch has a close relation with the witch hunts. The witch practitioner attempts unsuccessfully to harm the target enemy because they have faith over the magical power. In fact they are also in superstition about the power of witchcraft. The practice of black art creates terror to the backward villagers which arouses the wrath of villagers. In fact, the mythological faith on magical power turns into real in backward human society.

However, the nominal black art practice and hunting of suspected quacks together lead to violation of human rights. It causes adverse affect on right to life, freedom, peace and order, socio-economic security etc.

I. VIOLATES RIGHT TO LIFE AND DIGNITY: The villagers begin to suspect of having black magic practitioner, when people die, infant dies, facing serious disease, ill luck etc. in the village. It results to suspect somebody to have practiced black magic in the village. As a result the suspected witch is killed and lives of family members are at danger.

Article 21 of fundamental rights of Indian Constitution deals with right to live with human dignity for all people of India.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 3 to 21 ensures right to life, liberty and security of person.

Fundamental duties mentioned in part IVA of Indian constitution provide duties to every Indian to renounce evil practices and derogatory to the dignity of women.

II. ENTITLED TO LIVE IN PEACE AND ORDER ATMOSPHERE: Every people are entitled to live in peace and order atmosphere in the society. But witch hunting leads to violation of these basic rights. The vulnerable people have to pass the nights without sleep because of fear on suspect.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 28 to 30 recognize that everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the human rights set forth in the Declaration may be fully realized.

III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY: The attack on suspected witch leads to violation of right to socio-economic security. The suspected witch is ostracized or their property is seized by the vested people. They are socially boycotted and ill treated by co-villagers leading insecure and loss of social life.

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) of Indian Constitution article 38 to 43 provides social, economic and political security to every citizens of India. It says that the state shall try to secure the welfare of the people by securing a social order characterized by justice in social, economic and political. And the state shall provide adequate means of livelihood to all citizens, men as well as women.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 22 to 27 deals with right to social security.

IV. RIGHT TO FREEDOM VIOLATED: Every people are entitled to enjoy right to various freedoms by the constitution. He or she can pursue any profession or work best to them, conscience, expression, free of imposition in life etc.

Articles 19 to 22 of fundamental rights of Indian Constitution deal with right to freedom. The rights of freedom include:

- Freedom of speech and expression,

- Freedom of assembly,
- Freedom to form associations,
- Freedom of movement,
- Freedom to reside and settle,
- Freedom of profession, occupation, trade or business.

V. SOCIAL EXCLUSION: Social displacement is the common feature of persecution of witch. The suspected witches are disliked by the same villagers even by relatives. The study has found that when rumours spread about somebody as a witch in the village, the villagers start to hate over the suspected witch. As a result, the villagers do not keep any relation with suspected witch.

Moreover, when the suspected witch is killed, the remaining family members of witch also face social exclusion in the community life, which leads to violation of human rights.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 22 to 27 ensures the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

6.6 HYPOTHESES AND RESULT

The above two hypotheses of this research have become true after the findings of research. However, from the first hypothesis, the superstition is the first prime reason for hunting of witch. Secondly, the socio-economic factors and thirdly the political conspiracy lead to murder of witch.

After the study, it is found that truly superstition is the first prime cause followed by socio-economic and political factors for witch hunting among Bodos.

Table no. 5.9 shows that out of total 156 respondents of illiterate villagers on causes of witch hunting, 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.

Table no. 5.10 shows that out of total 294 respondents of literate on witch hunting on causes reveals 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.

Table no. 5.11 shows that out of total 28 respondents of literate urban on witch hunting reveals 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.

Table no. 5.12 shows that out of total 10 respondents of family members, relatives of victim and survived victim on causes of witch hunting reveals 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.

Table no. 5.13 shows that out of total 40 respondents of intellectuals on causes of witch hunting reveals 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.

Table no. 5.14 shows that out of total 365 respondents of having low income on causes of witch hunting reveals 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.

Table no. 5.15 shows that out of total 65 respondents of having middle income on causes of witch hunting reveals 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.

Table no. 5.16 shows that out of total 20 respondents of having satisfactory income on causes of witch hunting reveals that, 40 % people say superstition, 25 % people say

social and economic, 30 % people believe on all causes and 5 % people do not give comment.

From the second hypothesis, we have found that the witch hunting is based on injustice and obviously leads to gross violation of basic human rights.

The witch hunting is based on injustice, as it denies fair trial to victim. The study has found that the unauthorised village court decide the verdict on persecution of witch. The trial in such court seems bias in nature. There is also lack of witness or propaganda in favour of suspected witch in furious public meeting. So, certainly witch hunting leads to gross violation of human rights.

Article 32 of Indian constitution guarantees the right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of the rights.

Right to live with human dignity is guaranteed in article number 21 of Indian constitution as a fundamental right. Fundamental duties of Indian constitution also lay down to renounce evil practices and derogatory to the dignity of women.

Articles 3 to 21 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ensure several basic human rights. As for example:

- The right to life, liberty and security of person.
 - Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Again it provide the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, the right to an effective judicial remedy, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, the right to a fair trial and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW) lays down some important measures to protect women's rights. As for example:

- To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle.
- Elimination of discrimination in areas of economic and social life. States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights.
- Accord to women equality with men before the law and in civil matters. States parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Witch practice and hunting has been prevailing in large scale particularly in Bodo society. This social evil practice has been violating basic human rights in the society. The Bodos belong to Mongoloids group of people and linguistically Sino Tibetan speech family and sub group of Tibeto Burmese. Now they are influential social groups in Assam. The objectives of research was to study about the dimension of witch practice and hunting, to find out the actual motives of witch hunting, to help to eradicate the witch hunting and protection of human rights.

The hypotheses of research are:

I. The faith on witch practice and hunting in Bodo society are result of both superstitious belief and socio-economic and political conspiracies.

II. Witch hunting in Bodo society is injustice and certainly leads to gross violation of human rights.

The research holds much significance because it tries to examine the old serious problem of Bodo society. It focuses the various reasons and conspiracies behind the unabated hunting of witch.

This chapter deals with historical analysis of witch practice and hunting of Bodo society. Along with the Bodo society it has focused the witch practice and hunting of others societies. It has also focussed the evil spirit, devils, and satanic forces of various faiths.

Witchcraft was developed along with the human society itself. No society of this universe can claim itself to be totally free of supernatural beliefs. Whatever it may high or lower society or strata, the superstitious belief or faith is found more or less. The practices of witchcraft followed by hunting incidents have been occurring in Assam particularly in Kokrajhar district since immemorial period. The Bodo society is also not free from the superstitious belief and faith since early period.

Satan became a power to be reckoned with at a relatively late date in western culture. The Satan implies the devil or evil spirits in most of the Christian states.

The study reveals that *mantra* has been occupying a predominant place in many cultures and rituals of communities of India. The chanting of *mantras* is very essential and instrumental in performing of religious rituals in some societies of Indian communities. The *mantras* can be classified into two broad categories, viz. *mantras* for constructive and *mantras* for destructive. The *mantras* for evil purposes are aiming to harm or destroy opponents or enemies. The employer of these evil *mantras* to destroy their enemy can be regarded as witch. The magical activities or performances were seen in Ramayan and Mahabharat epics of India.

In Bodo society the *mantras* are applied mainly in six purposes. These are:

- In religious rituals,
- For curing of ailment, disease, ill health etc.
- For charm the loved one,
- For welfare of business and trade,

- For dominating and destroying the enemy,
- For losing sense of enemy.

Bodo society as tribal based is not also free from the practice of witchcraft tradition. It was associated with the civilization of Bodo culture and tradition. Tribal societies and communities have traditional faith in witchcraft, which is a magico-religious practice that was prevalent among most of the tribal societies in the world. Most of tribes and communities in Assam are purely agrarian in nature and follow some kind of semi-primitive religious practices and witchcraft is deep rooted to their tradition and socio-religious life, even today.

The practice and hunting of witch are age old practice in Bodo society. It has been accompanying the civilization of Bodo society. Since the chanting of *mantras* to observe religious rituals are used, the practice of witchcraft has been occurring in Bodo society. The tribal people have faith upon the black magic or sorcery. *Ojhas* or religious priest performs the religious performance. It is believed that the *Ojhas*, religious priest if he/she learns the evil *mantra* than he becomes witch. The hunting of witch also has been following the witch practice. The village court conducts detection with the help of astrologers or quacks and if finds sufficient evidence against suspected person then he/she is fed cow dung, vulture's stool etc. to make functionless (*Badua*) of his/her evil *mantras* during old days. But in modern days this kind of punishment is being replaced by direct killing secretly in the night.

The study has found that the procedure for trial on accused witch can be classified into two phases. In fact, the traditional nature of trial on suspected witch was much difference in modern days witch hunt. In early days the suspected witch was tried in village court and punishment depends on his/her nature of guilt. However, they were not directly murdered as seen in modern days.

The Bodos believe in the existence of spirits, ghosts, witchcraft etc. and they also believe that these super natural elements cause diseases and sufferings to the human beings. Some supernatural beliefs are: *Bira Mwdai* (*Bira* god), *Gwthwi Mankhangnai*

(catching by dead spirit), *Mayadhob* (falling down), *Bann Hogarnai* (charmed arrow).

There are some white magics to protect the people from their troubles, so the necessity of the *Ojha* (medicine man in positive sense) is very essential in the Bodo society even today. The *Ojhas* understand well when and what diseases attack the people because of the ill motives of the gods and goddesses. As for example: *Khasini Ganhwnai*, *Jharinai* etc.

Thus witchcraft can be defined as the power of a person to do harm or influence nature through sorcery. The sorcery is based on use of supernatural or magical powers. The meaning of witchcraft refers casting of black magic or sorcery to influence the targeted enemy. In another connotation the practice of witchcraft is casting a spell or sorcery on enemy whom he/she hates with the help of *mantra* inviting the evil spirit. The evil or demonic spirit attacks the targeted person.

Religion in its widest sense includes on the one hand the conception which men entertain of the divine or supernatural powers and on the other, that sense of the dependence of human welfare on those powers which finds its expression in various forms of worship. Mythology is connected with the former side of religion as furnishing the whole body of myths or stories which are told about Gods and heroes and which describe their character and origin, their actions and surroundings. Such myths have their source in the attempt of the human mind, in a primitive and unscientific age, to explain the various forces and phenomena of nature with which man is confronted. They represent in fact the conjectural science of a primitive mental condition.

This chapter deals with witch practice and hunting in Kokrajhar district.

The study found the following characteristics of witchcraft.

- Witch works only within village,
- Older person learns witchcraft,
- Witchcraft has relation with devil,
- Witches are very civic in look,

- Witches overtly engaged in traditional healing,
- Witches are very sensitive in simple quarrel,
- Witches retaliate through *mantra*,
- Witches work supernatural rituals at night.

The research study has found that the witches have some supernatural powers as popular belief. As example:

- The witch has the ability to cast a spell, a spell being the word used to signify the means employed to carry out a magical action.
- The witch has enchanting power over the living things including human beings.
- The witch has power to cause sick or misfortune to targeted person.
- The witch has power to cause insane to targeted person.
- The witch can change his/ her shape, as many cultures believe.
- Witches are believed to have the power of making themselves invisible, by means of a *mantra* helped by devil.
- It is beloved that the witch has power to cause blight by means of the evil eye.

In Bodo society the following varieties of witches are believed to be as existing.

- Neighbor Witch,
- Supernatural or night Witch,
- Exorcist Witch,
- Physician witch.
- Nominal Witch.

6.7.1 SPELLS (*MUHINI*) IN BODO SOCIETY

Spells are magical charm or incantation to bring about specific results. 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 are: *Mwider Muhini* (Elephant spell), *Daorai Muhini* (Peacock spell), *Raj Muhini*

(Prince spell), *Jaolia Muhini* (Insane spell), *Somai Muhini* (Charming spell).

Study reveals about various forms and nature of attacks by witches:

- *Lengra Bann* (Lame mantra),
- *Nwrjia Bann* (Feeble mantra),
- *Or Bann* (Fire or blight mantra),
- *Jaolia Bann* (Mad mantra),
- *Tingkli Bann* (Pot mantra),
- *Lwnti Bann* (Small pox mantra),
- *Kanaidwing Bann* (Hair mantra),
- *Saya Maya Bann* (Shadow image mantra),
- *Kasula Bann* (Cough mantra),
- *Nindra Bann* (Lethargy mantra),
- *Bwrla Bann* (Arrow mantra).

6.7.2 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 witchcraft 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 unrealistic. The developed people consider it as a mere superstition or blind faith. In human rights context, the right to life, dignity of life etc. 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. Peaceful co-existence begins to disappear in the society.

This chapter deals with the socio-economic and political impact of witch hunting among Bodos.

The research study has found some superstitious beliefs in Bodo society as follows.

- **Finding out (*Naikangnai*) of witch and hunting:** Witch doctor is unavoidable part in finding out the secret practice of witch. Prolonged illness and ill incidents are circumstances for conducting rituals for detection of witchcraft. The identification of witch in the village depends upon the witch doctors. As a result, identified witch is punished according to customary law of the village.
- **Villagers as superstitious:** In remote areas the villagers naturally becomes ignorance because of lack of education. The mass ignorance of interior areas leads to superstitious belief. Since they have been following the tradition of ignorance life, the belief on witch power occupies their mind. They have belief and fear that the *Ojhas* are able to learn the evil *mantra* for becoming witch.
- ***Ojhas* as superstition:** *Ojhas* of interior areas also are prone to superstitious belief because they also poor and illiterate. 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*. For earning of money from foolish villagers, as an occupation somebody may learn witchcraft. However, such *Ojhas* unsuccessfully attempt to cast spell to their enemy to harm.

The study reveals the types of impact of social, political and economic for witch hunting among Bodos.

Social conflict and confrontation among people has been a part of any community in the society. Social development, social prestige and social exclusion breeds social intolerance among the same community.

Social disunity also generates hatredness and enmity among themselves. Imbalance social development breeds jealousy among the same villagers. Social friction between same villagers can be considered as a source of any violence and witch allegation to personal enemy.

Religious conversion in the same village is also a factor for social hatredness among villagers.

However, social hatredness and jealousy turns into extreme of violence. Witch hunting is one of the forms of extreme social violence. The vested people conspire to kill their enemy in the name of witch hunting.

The vote banks politics creates political conflict and rivalry in any society. To play politics is seen as emerging trend in remote areas also. In election of political representatives to assembly, parliament or any local council, the grass roots members are seen in engaged.

However, political conflict and rivalry among different parties brings political violence. Due to intolerant political factors, opponent worker or supporter is killed in the name of witch hunting.

Property in terms of money, land, jewellery etc. has been a part of dispute and murder among the extended family members. Direct family and extended family members are always at eye on the ancestral property. As life depends upon the money to a great extent, the property becomes single most need of the people. So, people commit crimes easily because of grab of property.

Study reveals that, widows are most vulnerable to murder due to property dispute. Widows are harassed, tortured because of grabbing property. Even the weak male husband is also harassed and tortured.

However, due to property dispute the helpless fellow is murdered in the name of witch hunting in modern society to hide their actual motives of murder.

The table numbers 5.9 to 5.16 shows the social, political and economic factors as causes for witch hunting among Bodos.

The last chapter deals with findings and conclusion of research work.

- Witchcraft is traditional belief among Bodos. The term witchcraft had been prevailing as an oral tradition since inception among Bodos. The persecution of witch was also a part of age old tradition. Witchcraft is based on application of chanting of *mantras* to harm the opponent or enemy. Still in Bodo society the chanting of *mantras* are predominant in various socio-religious rituals or festivals. But the *mantras* can be divided into good and evil purposes. The person who learns the harmful *mantra* he/she becomes witch.
- Witchcraft in Bodo society is never taken for constructive purposes; rather it is treated as a part of unsocial practice. Witch practice was never a usual act among Bodos since primitive period. The circumstances as jealousy, hatredness, bitter competition among the villager led the following of witch practice. Any villager may hire *Ojha* or purchase the ingredients of medicine in order to destroy their enemy. However, witchcraft invites pre hatred, pre curse from the folks. Nobody wants to see and living of witch practitioner in the society.
- There are some religious rituals which are based on supernatural power among Bodos. The *mantra* has a pivotal role particularly in some religious rituals of Bodo society. As for example, the *Kherai* is the religious festival of *Bathou* religion of Bodos which display some supernatural performances. The *Ojha*, *Dhouthini* (female virgin having selected zodiac), *Dhour* (male promoter) are the key performers in *Kherai* festival. The *Ojha* firstly chants the *mantra* to influence upon the *Dhouthini*. As a result she slowly turns into powerful woman as a holder of supernatural power.
- There are some beliefs on supernatural and magical acts in Bodo society. Large numbers of Bodos believe in the existence of spirits, ghosts, witchcraft etc. since early period. And they also believe that these super natural elements cause diseases and misfortunes to the human beings. So, *Ojhas* are inevitable part in social life of Bodos. It is believed that only *Ojhas* can deal with the magical

mantras. *Ojhas* are required in times of religious rituals and in ward off evil spirit.

Research study has found some typical beliefs among Bodos. As for example:

- *Bira Mwdai* (*Bira* god),
- *Gwthwi Mankhangnai* (catching by dead spirit),
- *Mayadhob* (falling down),
- *Ban Hogarnai* (charmed arrow).

WHITE MAGIC: So far as the white magic is concerned the number of the *Ojhas*, who are expert in white magic, is not negligible. To protect the people from their troubles the necessity of the *Ojha* (medicine man) is very predominant in the Bodo society even today.

- *Khasini Ganhwnai* (A small piece of thread or amulet bound around the wrist or the neck of a patient),
 - *Jharinai* (exorcising by *Ojha*),
- Belief on witchcraft developed during primitive age among uneducated people. The true belief on supernatural or witchcraft was not product of scientific education. The study has found that during primitive period, where there was no all round development, the villagers had to depend upon the *Ojhas* for their welfare of life. Naturally, they believed that if *Ojha* could do good, he/she also could do bad. So, the harmful works of *Ojhas* developed the concept of witchcraft.

However, till date it is believed by a number of people both educated and uneducated for their selfish interest.

- The tradition of witchcraft can be studied into two classifications as old and new witches. The study reveals that the belief on witchcraft in old period was result of natural belief of folks, because they were ignorance, lack of health development, lack of awareness etc. But, in modern period, the belief on witchcraft is the result of force belief on illiterate villagers misled by cunning people. So, obviously still the gullible villagers are misled by clever people for their personal gain.
- Strong belief of folks is the basis of existing witchcraft among Bodos. The natural belief on witchcraft by illiterate remote villager and intentional belief of vested people make basis for existence of witchcraft.
- Some unnatural activities of *Ojha* or traditioner healer may persuade the ignorance villagers towards witchcraft. As for example, *Ojhas* or traditional healers used to practise some unusual and unnatural rituals for the prospering in their profession among Bodos. There are some unnatural acts such as collecting the dead bones from graveyard, hair, displaying of red vermilion, sharp object etc. done by *Ojhas* which are feared by villagers.
- Some *Ojhas* or traditional healer could learn and perform some scientific magic before the eyes of illiterate public. But the magic practitioners do not explain the knowledge and technique of such scientific magic to illiterate villagers. As for example, the sticking of stool was a mentionworthy in old period. But, the illiterate villagers used to believe that as a power of *mantra* and *Ojha*.

6.8 DIRECT CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

- The superstitious judgement was the main part of village among Bodos since early period. The outbreak of diseases, occurring of ill incidents in the village leads to suspect of witch in the village. Subsequently, witch doctor is allowed to find out the witch through rituals. As a result, the suspected witch is tried in village court to punish him/her.

- Illiteracy and ignorance leads to superstitious belief which leads to witch hunts. They believe in the witch doctors and miracles because they were completely in the dark regarding human anatomy, germs and diseases. In fact, ignorant villagers consider the misfortune or ill incidents as caused by witch. Even large numbers of literates are superstitious and believe on witchcraft particularly when a disease cannot be cured.
- To a great extent nondiagnosis of diseases leads to misinterpretation on causes of diseases. The remote villages do not have enough medical facilities to test and examine their health problems. In fact, the ignorant people believe that the witchcraft is the prime reasons for their health problem and misfortune in the village. Their living condition is so unhygienic where they are easy prone to various diseases.
- Fear psychosis, nightmare among people leads to wrong interpretation in their life. The study reveals that the physical weakness after long suffering of diseases may have the problem of fear psychosis and seeing nightmares which creates illusion. Such patients see horrible nightmares and lost sleep which results health deterioration. Wrong interpretation of nightmare leads to suspect of presence of witch practitioner in the village.

6.9 STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF WITCH HUNTING

- Social conflict and confrontation among people has been a part of any community in the society. Social development, social prestige and social exclusion breeds social intolerance among the same community. Social disunity also generates hatredness and enmity among themselves. Imbalance social development breeds jealousy among the same villagers.

Religious conversion in the same village is also a factor for social hatredness among villagers.

However, social hatredness and jealousy turns into extreme of violence. Witch

hunting is one of the forms of extreme social violence. The vested people try to conspire to kill their enemy in the name of witch hunting.

- The vote banks politics creates political conflict and rivalry in any society. To play politics is seen as emerging trend in remote areas also. In election of political representatives to assembly, parliament or any local council, the grass roots members are seen in engaged.

However, political conflict and rivalry among different parties brings political violence. Due to intolerant political factors, opponent worker or supporter is killed in the name of witch hunting.

- Property in terms of money, land, jewellery etc. has been a part of dispute and murder among the extended family members. Direct family and extended family members are always at eye on the ancestral property. As life depends upon the money to a great extent, the property becomes single most need of the people. So, people commit crimes easily because of grab of property.

Study reveals that, widows are most vulnerable to murder due to property dispute. Widows are harassed, tortured because of grabbing property. Even the weak male husband is also harassed and tortured.

However, due to property dispute the helpless fellow is murdered in the name of witch hunting in modern society to hide their actual motives of murder.

- The large scale joblessness or unemployment problem in the society has been creating socio-economic and political crimes. Industrialization and changing of lifestyle of developed countries have affected the people of underdeveloped countries. In fact, the workless people naturally feel to commit crimes in the society for easy money in their life.

- Much drink of country wine and drugs among people lead to easy brutal action over evil consciences. Now a day particularly the youths have become easy prone to wine and drugs addiction. Under the influence of wine they get energy and it encourage them to commit any evil action upon their enemy.
- Agitation, political instability of certain period among Bodos led to violence acts. Study reveals that the long period movement whether through democratic or violence reigning socio-political unstability resulting fratricidal killing for the cause of motherland. The fratricidal killing further complexed the situation and vested people try to fulfill personal scourge.

6.10 MARXIST CLASS THEORY OF POWER AND FEMINISM

Marxist class theory is applicable in whole universe. To Marx, there are only two classes in any society as rich and poor classes. The rich class always exploit over the poor class. The rich class easily influences the state machinery to suit their self interest. In fact, the state is misused as an instrument for exploitation over the poor class.

In Bodo society also, people can be classified into two classes as rich and poor in the context of Marxism. The research has found that the class of rich people of less numbers believes on witchcraft. Study reveals that few numbers of rich people may misuse the term witch hunting for their personal gains and exploitation over poor class.

The poor class of people of more numbers believes on witchcraft. The study found that the poor class of people because of ignorance due to lack of education are prone to belief of witchcraft. Thus they form a group of gullible folk who are being exploited by advantageous class of society. Rather, they are far from the help of government machinery in walks of life. So witch hunting among Bodos is a kind of exploitation by powerful class in the society.

6.10.1 FEMINISM: The Marxist feminists deplore the fact that women, like most men in any class society, are oppressed and would continue being oppressed by the

capitalist system of production. The Marxian theory of class described as in economic terms does not regard women as a class worth considering in any system of production.

Since the Marxian theory is applicable in whole universe, it can be applied in Bodo society. Bodo society can be classified into two classes as rich and poor. Women are treated as exploited class in any capitalist society.

Although article 14 of Indian constitution provides right to equality between man and woman in all respects, but inequality still prevails. Some natures of exploitation over women are as follows:

- Women are worthless in the class theory of state. So, the women are dominated by the rich class of people.
- Since the women are worthless, they are oppressed by rich class in all spheres of life.
- The women are physically exploited by the powerful class of people.
- Since the women are helpless, so they are very easy to fall as victim in the danger situation.

The study reveals that any woman may be branded as witch as a form of exploitation by the powerful class in the society. Study has found that widows are easily targeted for branding as a witch for the purpose of grabbing property. The helpless women are killed in the name of witch hunting for property seizing.

6.10.2 ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: Human rights violation has been a dominant concern among intellectuals everywhere in the world. In context of human rights, suspect, harass and persecution of the suspected witch leads to gross violation of human rights. The right to life in peace and order, freedom, dignity, property, social security etc. are drastically violated by witch related incidents.

Although article 21 of fundamental rights of Indian constitution deals with right to live with human dignity for all people of India. Fundamental duties mentioned in part IVA

of Indian constitution provide duties to every Indian to renounce evil practices and derogatory to the dignity of women.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 3 to 21 ensures right to life, liberty and security of person.

Every people are entitled to live in peace and order atmosphere in the society. Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 28 to 30 recognize that everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the human rights set forth in the Declaration may be fully realized.

But witch hunting leads to violation of these basic rights. The vulnerable people have to remain in constant fear due to suspect of witch by villagers.

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) of Indian constitution article 38 to 43 provides social, economic and political security to every citizens of India. It says that the state shall try to secure the welfare of the people by securing a social order characterized by justice in social, economic and political. And the state shall provide adequate means of livelihood to all citizens, men as well as women.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 22 to 27 deals with right to social security.

The witch hunting among Bodos has been leading to violation of socio-economic and political securities as provided by Constitution of India.

Articles 19 to 22 of Fundamental Rights of Indian Constitution deal with right to freedom. But the witch hunting violates following freedoms laid in Indian constitution:

- Freedom of speech and expression,
- Freedom of assembly,
- Freedom to form associations,
- Freedom of movement,
- Freedom to reside and settle,

- Freedom of profession, occupation, trade or business.

The suspected witch has to face social exclusion and displacement by hatred of villagers. The remaining family members of deceased witch, also face social exclusion in the community life, which leads to violation of human rights.

The right to participate in the cultural life of the community ensured by Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, (UDHR) through the articles 22 to 27 are violated.

The frequent witch hunting violates the provision for protection of women's rights laid down by Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW) As for example it violates:

- Elimination of discrimination in areas of economic and social life between men and women.
- Accord to women equality with men before the law and in civil matters.

6.11 LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

The research study has following limitations:

- The study area of research is limited only to Kokrajhar district of Assam.
- The sample of community is Bodos only; the study excludes other tribal communities of the state.
- Numbers of respondents is less which may not be generalized for the whole state and whole community living in India.

The future researcher on this issue, the area of study can be broadened. Many numbers of communities can be taken for collection of responses and study. Large numbers of respondents can be taken for further deep study.

6.12 CHALLENGES TO ERADICATION OF WITCH HUNTING

The tradition of witchcraft and witch hunting are very old. In contemporary period, the belief on witchcraft is regarded as superstition and evil faith. It has totally negative role as it leads to gross violation of human rights. In our society, the backward society faces some challenges in eradicating of witch hunting. As for example:

- I. Lack of particular law to deal with the witch related crimes.
- II. Lack of witness to give evidence against the witch killers.
- III. The witch related incidents takes place in backward remote village.
- IV. The villagers lack awareness about the superstition of black magic, so the witch hunting case does not come into light.
- V. Some clever leaders of society mislead the illiterate villagers towards witch hunting for personal gains.

6.13 SUGGESTION

After the study of dimension of witch hunting, there are some probable suggestions to mitigate the problem of witch hunting in Bodo society. These suggestions could be followed by concerned local administrators, academicians, civil society, NGOs, law makers etc.

- **GENERAL EDUCATION:** First of all the general education should reach to all the interior villagers. No doubt, the spread of education is long term policy. Education will enlighten the illiterate villagers towards scientific knowledge. The learning of knowledge through education will change the poor mindset and uplift them into standard life. The spread of education will provide government and private job to many unemployed youths and moral development. The education will eliminate the poor condition of livelihood and accelerate social reform. When the people remain in busy in job or other works, they have no time to think about evil and criminal activities in the society. So the government

should establish various educational institutions with sufficient staffs for the villagers. As for example: Right to Education Act. 2009 (RTE), Adult Education (1988) etc.

- **ACADEMIC LEVEL:** The issue relating to evil practice and belief on witchcraft could be introduced in academic courses to some extent. The blind faith without scientific reasons should be explained to the students through the academic courses. The belief on witchcraft and witch power could be placed under the blind faith. The blind faith may results dire in consequences in the society.

The *Sati* (self immolation) system, female infanticide, widow unmariage etc. were the blind faiths prevailing in early India. Those evil practices could result savage consequences in the society. Many women were burned alive according to *Sati* system. Many widows were passing with sleepless night and mental agony.

However, the above blind faiths were introduced in the academic courses after the reform movement by Raja Ram Mahon Roy (social reformer of India).

The witch practice is also one of the blind faiths prevailing in most of the backward tribes of India. In recent times, in some states the incidents of witch hunting got increased which result in violation of human rights. So, the introduction of witchcraft in the academic courses may produce fruitful results.

- **MISSION BASED AWARENESS:** The mission based awareness programme about witch practice as an evil and superstitious issue should be launched. The awareness programme in every village can be done by government policy with the help of NGOs, civil society, academicians, government representatives and local people. The entire expenditure for the awareness should be borne by the government fund. The awareness programme should aim at that the black magic practitioner is also superstition and untrue. They also do not know whether their evil practice has real power or not. Rather they have the blind faith over their

learned magical *mantra*. So their unsuccessful practice and play creates dire consequences in society.

The blind faith which has no scientific based should be discussed among the public. The history of some blind faiths and evil practices in other society in early period should be explained to illiterate public. The growing school going children should be encouraged towards the quit of old blind faith through awareness programme.

The religious leaders can bring awareness about the religious knowledge to the masses. The religious *mantras* having religious importants should be explained to public. The religious *mantra* never harms the people in the society. The witch is symbol of evil and hatred but it has no supernatural power to kill somebody. But, the illiterate people used to consider the witch power as real in the society.

In mission based awareness, there should be representatives from the government of concerned state as Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) and *Panchayat* to play vital role in curbing this menace. The government should explain about the blind faiths and its consequences. The laws which deal with the witch hunting and punishment should be explained by these representatives. The role and stand of government in dealing with witch crime should be explained to public.

- **AWARENESS ON HERBAL CHEMICAL:** Because of non availability of medical facility in interior villages, people used to apply herbals collected from forest in dealing with diseases. Some herbals have curing chemical and some have poisonus chemicals. Wrongly applying the ingredient chemical of herbals may cause the patients as mad, even death in the villages. But in early days, the *Ojha* would take the credit of curing the patients by his *mantra*. So, the awareness about the effective and proper ingredients of herbal should be brought to illiterate villagers.

- **PICTORIAL GUIDE:** The awareness through pictorial display in many places should be done by the government action plan. The pictorial guide and leaflet will displays the witch power as a blind faith. The innocent people are murdered in the name of witch practitioner. The witch hunting leads gross violation of human rights. The witchcraft is based on unscientific belief. For example: As provided by Assam Mahila Samata Society (AMSS), NGO, North East Research & Social Work Networking (NERSWN) of Kokrajhar.

- **INVESTIGATION:** The local or state government should find ways to curb the witch practice and hunting. Separate state investigation department can be set up. The separate investigation agency will unearth the reasons for whole incident of witch related cases. Based on the charsheet report the culprits could be inflicted exemplary punishment. The strong investigation department can bring speedy mitigation of witch hunting in Assam.

- **BAN ON OJHAS WHO DETECT WITCH:** The practice of witch detector as fortune tellers, quacks, *Ojhas* etc. particularly for witch finding must be banned by government. The government should grant same punishment with witch hunter to that *Ojhas* if found detecting witch practice.

- **MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT:** Lack of proper medical treatment in the remote villages is one of the prime factors for on going hunting of witch. The public dispensary faces shortage of medicine, labotory instruments and absence of doctors. The poor villagers being poor condition can not go for ultra sound, labotory test for diagnosis of diseases. As treatment can not be done rightly without proper detection of ailments. Ultimately finding no option the villagers have to depend upon the local quacks or physician. If the ailing people die it may bring the suspect of witch practice. So the medical development in the remote villages must be brought to deal with the various diseases. Mobile medical unit must visit every village once in a month to help the poor people and eliminate the chance of superstition.

Health care and health awareness: Health related care unit should explain all kinds of diseases and its symptoms to illiterate public. The awareness regarding the health care should encourage effectively the villagers to approach medical treatment on any health problem. Because, the traditional healer may claim his capacity of curing disease and the patient may die. The habit of approaching the medical treatment and conscious about the symptoms of various diseases may discourage the belief on witchcraft.

Role of medical staffs: The medical staffs as doctors, nurses and other staffs should maintain patients friendly in dealing with health problems. The illiterate villagers have language problem in expressing the internal problem. So, they feel shy to approach the doctors of other community. So, the concerning authority should consider this communication problem of villagers. The dedicated services of medical staffs will discourage the belief on witchcraft to a great extent.

- **VILLAGE DEFENCE COMMITTEE:** The village defence committee appointed by District Commissioner can be set up to guard the villagers against the sinister practice in the village. The defence committee is headed by village headman along with other elder villagers. The committee is supervised by District Commissioner or other Magistrates. The Superintendent of Police should be involved in the defence committee. The committee is accountable to district administration which is accountable to state government. The Village Defence Committee will observe whether there is development of suspect of witch practice to somebody. They will also observe whether there is conduct of detection of witch practice in the village.
- **ROLE OF NGO:** The NGOs have a vital role to play in mitigating the witch hunting in society. The NGOs can visit frequently to the remote villages where there is possibility of occurring witch hunting case. The NGOs can bring awareness programme and visit home to home to persuade the illiterate villagers from blind faith. The government should grant the necessary for that mobilisation work.

- **Separate funded mission:** The state government should keep a separate financial budget for dealing with entire witch hunting issues in sensitive places. The budget will be utilized for educational and medical renovation and development. The mission based awareness will be sponsored by government fund. The witch related victims will be given necessary financial assistance or rehabilitation to discourage witch hunting.

- **Social evils reform programme:** The concerning authority can initiate reform programmes for eliminating social evils practices and beliefs in the society. The belief on witchcraft and hiring the *Ojhas* for finding witches should be treated as social evil practices which should be reformed through multi pronged initiative.

- **ENCOURAGE SELF HELP GROUP:** The government should encourage and extend their help to villagers so that they would form self help group. The self help group aims at socio-economic development of the villagers. Such group ensures economic security and healthy livelihood. It will keep the villagers busy in various productive activities which lead healthy mind and growth. The women self help group ensures socio-economic empowerment to them.

- **STRINGENT LAW:** The government should formulate separate law to deal with witch hunting case in the state. The formulated law should be implemented in letter and spirit. Strict punishment is one of the ways to mitigate the witch hunting cases. The group of culprits must undergo rigorous imprisonment for their inhuman crimes. If exemplary punishment is inflicted to culprits the witch hunting cases will automatically come down. Unfortunately, in Assam special law for dealing with witch hunting is not yet passed.