

PREFACE

The research work is undertaken on “Witch Hunting in Bodo Society of Kokrajhar District, Assam: A Socio-Political Study”.

Witchcraft has been defined as the power of a person to do harm or influence the target through sorcery. The sorcery is believed to be based on supernatural or magical powers to harm the target. The meaning of witchcraft in Bodo term refers casting spell (*Rainai*) of black magic or sorcery to influence the enemy. The practitioner of black magic releases his/her *mantra* that is nourished by evil spirit. The *mantra* prepared with evil spirit that attacks the targeted person is called power of black magic as popular’s belief.

The age old witch practice and the hunting of witch are both undoubtedly serious problems in Bodo society. The Bodo folks had the belief on the practice of witchcraft. The practice of witch has been creating acute fear psychosis in the minds of many interior villagers. The so called witches always try to create panic waves in society to get illiterate villagers feared and remained under them. The illiterate villagers unknowingly remain in fear of artful exorcists. The free living atmosphere and brotherhood of village is obstructed by the practice of witchcraft.

In addition to this, the belief on witchcraft has been accompanied by the hunting of witch. The fear of witch by the illiterate villagers leads to hunting of witch by mob or group. Because, the witchcraft is by nature negative or destructive so, the folks do not allow the witch to live in the village.

However, in the era of scientific development the evil practice which is not based on reason is still prevailing. Rather, the belief on witchcraft is regarded as superstition in the eyes of science.

Moreover, the unprecedented hunting of witch in the scientific age has been affecting the society adversely causing lost of many lives. Many innocent exorcists or traditional healers are killed on suspicion of witch. The massive witch hunting like without proper

trial has been leading to gross violation of human rights. The right to live in peace and order, social and economic security, right to life etc. are violated by the frequent witch hunting.

This research work studies the multiple reasons for the hunting of witch in Bodo society since long years. The belief on various prevailing magical *mantras* of rituals of Bodo society is covered in this study. The beliefs on supernatural acts and its influences are focused.

Under this research work the first chapter deals with the introduction about the Bodo tribe, area of study, hypotheses, objective, methodology and review of literature.

The second chapter deals with the historical analysis about the witchcraft.

The third chapter deals with the elaborate study about superstitions, witchcraft and witch hunting.

The fourth chapter deals with the focusing of witch practice and hunting in Kokrajhar district.

The fifth chapter deals with the analytical discussion about socio-economic and political impact of witch hunting.

The sixth chapter deals with the findings, conclusion of research and suggestions for elimination of unabated witch hunting in the society.

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