

WITCH HUNTING :As a Social Obstacles for Society with special reference to Assam

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INTRODUCTION-

Problems are not new phenomena to India. There were problems in India before independence. Some of the problems which we find in India are commonly found in many other developing countries, while some are peculiar in India. A society gradually evolves in to a modern society with a rational outlook and scientific temper. People are not sentimentally attached to traditional forms of social structure and values and are easily adaptive to change, oriented to welcome innovations and ready to move on a new path. They are not dogmatic, gullible and superstitious. Our society have some social barriers which are effect the social development.. Like other social problems, Witch hunting is also a major social obstacles for Assam. The practice of witch hunting has plagued Assam for generations. According to local beliefs, a witch or Dainee in Assamese is a man or women who have magical powers that bring misfortune upon the community. For as long as the belief has existed, the superstition has been exploited the settle personal scores. Vulnerable men, women and children, the elderly and the mentally ill have been branded as witches and condemned to death. The practice of witch hunting is prevalent among the communities of Rabha, Hajong, Mishing, Bodo, Adivasi and geographically in Goalpara, Kokarajhar, Chirang, Baksha, Sonitpur, Udalguri, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Karbi –Anglong, Nalbari and some other districts of Assam. The main causes of witch hunting are eagerly desires of property, older family enormity, older quarrels etc. The planner of witch hunting may be family member or other people of the villages. In reality, the planner is not a single person but it is a small group of people.

OBJECTIVE –

In this paper I tried to focus on Witch hunting as a obstacles for society. The main objectives of this paper are -

1. To study the witch hunting as a obstacles for society.
2. To understand the causes behind the witch hunting .
3. To examine the effect of witch hunting on the present society and find out some remedial measures on it.

AREA OF THE STUDY –

The title of this paper is “Witch hunting : As a Social Obstacles for Society. Among the different states of India, I have only selected Assam as a sample state of these studies. Witch hunting incident is happened in Goalpara, Kokarajhar, Chirang, Baksha, Sonitpur, Udalguri, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Karbi-Anglong, Nalbari and some other districts of Assam and the practice is prevalent among the communities of Rabha, Hajong, Mishing, Bodo, and Adivasi people. The period of this study has selected in between the time of 2008 to 2013.

METHODOLOGY-

The methodology adopted for the study is descriptive. The study is mainly based on secondary sources. The sources are books, newspaper, news channels, journals, internet and website.

WHITCH HUNTING AS A SOCIAL OBSTACLE — Witch hunting cases in Assam between 2008 to 2013.

The following incidents highlights that the practice of witch hunt is still practised in several villages in Assam and the people mostly women have been reportedly killed , by beheading, being burnt alive or stabbed to death after being labelled as ‘ witches’ over the last few years.

1. Debajani Bora , National spottswoman Javelin-thrower became the victim of a ‘witch-hunt’ in her village in Assam, and was severely tortured by a mob. Ms. Bora , the native of Cherekali, a remote village of Karbianglong hill district was make living as a farm worker and lives with her husband and three children .She was tied up and beaten inside a community hall by locals, who thought she was responsible for several deaths in the village. In the last few months, a number of deaths occurred in their village. Some people , including a jilted lover committed suicide, while some died as a result of alcoholism. The locals thought a witch was at work. So, on that day, a special rituals were arranged at the village ‘naamghar’ . During the chanting of hymns and mantras, the naamgharia Radha Laskar suddenly pounced on her, grabbing her from behind and started yelling that she was the witch responsible for the death and diseases. They put her inside a couple of fishing nets and started raining blows. She saved her life by managing to flee but not before sustaining injuries on the chest and back.

Karbi Anglong police chief Mugdha Jyoti Mahanta said that one woman was arrested and also said that Ms. Bora may have targeted for personal reasons.

2. Purni Orang, 65 years old woman was lived at 1 No Bhimajuli , a remote village of Sonitpur district closed to the Assam-Arunachal boarder under Biswanath subdivision. She was not a poor but comparatively rich among the neighbour. Her family had a 26 bigha paddy field and more than hundreds bigha small tea garden. Her husband Mukul Orang and her four son are energetic and enterprising person. But , in 22th july'2015, this Purni orang had killed by mob . Purni orang was beheaded by a mob instigated by another woman- Anima Ranghangpi –who claimed to be possessed by Goddess Lakshmi. Ranghangpi declared Purni Orang a “witch” and ordered her execution. On that day , the mob dragged purni orang from her house by her hair and presented her before Anima Ranghangpi on the river bank. Ranghangpi asked the crowd to behead the woman.

Police had arrested 16 people along with Anima Ranghangpi.

3. Savitri hajowari lives in a village Fakirpara under PS Dhupdhora, dist. Goalpara. One day one neighbour's daughter was sick. Savitri was suspected by the neighbour to be a witch charmer to create sickness in the village and this suspicion was raised by neighbour Dhaneswar Basumatari. Dhaneswar abused Savitri for the sickness of his daughter and asked her to cure his daughter within three days. She was threatened that if she is unable to cure her with the stipulated time, Savitri and her husband would be burnt alive and the children will have to leave the village. Savitri started looking for good physician and while looking for a particular address she happened to meet two members of the Sangha established by AMSS. Savitri narrated the incident to them and acting on the advice of the members of Sangha, Savitri filed a case to the DIG and DC of Goalpara. They ordered an enquiry and accordingly the OC of Dhupdhara PS intervened in the matter and directed the villagers not to harass Savitri. The villagers apologized to Savitri and thus she was saved from death.

So many organization, persons and Mahila sammiti worked against witch hunting. Among these Birubala Rabha , a household name in Assam now is synonymous with fighting against the menace of witch-hunting . She has been working restlessly since 1980,s put an end to this malpractice. It will began when her son , Dharmeswar, was called a witch owing to his mental illness and was put through period of misery. This is when she decided to change the course of events. She realised that so long as witch-hunting is a part of society, basic amenities, such as healthcare, shall be denied to people who require it.

13th August'2015 , The Assam state assembly passed a Bill, 2015 for eliminate rising cases of superstition leading to murder of so called “witches”. According to this act, Now it recognises all cases of witch-hunting as non-billable , cognizable and non-compoundable. Victims will be jailed for seven years and fined up to Rs. 5 lakh for identifying and calling a person as “witch”, as per the bill. This will be clubbed with a murder charge as per the Indian penal code if some one is killed as a result of this superstition.

FINDINGS-

On the basis of above data analysis, we present the following findings-

1.The main causes of witch hunting are eagerly desirous of property, older family enmity, older quarrels etc. The planner of witch hunting may be family members or other people of the villages. In reality , the planner is not a single person but it is a small group of people.

2.The process of making a women into witch, is in such a way that the opportunist groups published that the any witch had done the latest accident in the village or anybody practice evil spirit. Generally, the villages of witch hunting are backwards in the means of education, health, transport etc, and so the rate of dead is high due to illness. The opportunist take a chance on this.

3.On the other hand not only women declared as witch but also men also declared as witch. Basically witch hunting incident occurred in the month of March to Jun or July. In this time maximum poor village people have no money or other essential things.

4.It seems to be witch hunting occurred by the opportunist population who have gone under prejudice .But in reality , this is not true, otherwise it take a long time to occurred a witch hunting. It is a long time planning in every witch hunting incident .

5 .After identified a women as a witch , the women , faced some problems. The accused women and her family are isolated. The accused women is compelled to leave the village and take refuge in other place.

REMEDEAL MEASURES-

On the basis of acquired results , following recommendations are made for the improvement of witch hunting problem --

1. Though there is a Bill for punishment of witch hunting victims but there is no provision to punish the opportunist group. The opportunist group should be identified and give hard punishment to them.

2.It is important to give shelter, medical and rehabilitation to the women who have identified as a 'witch'.

3. It is also important that the child of witch should be free from fear and terror and give shelter and education to them.

4. Much awareness program should be organized at the affected area.

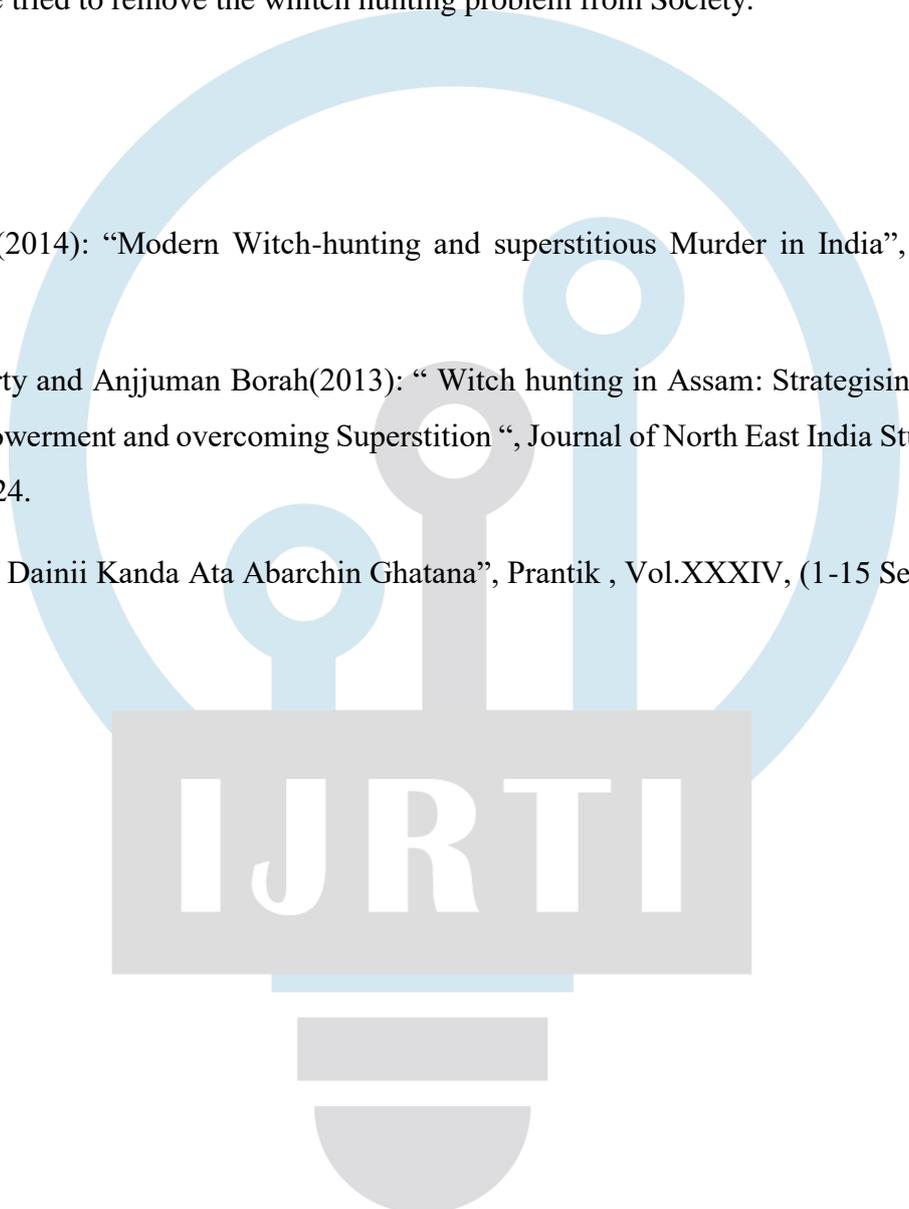
CONCLUSION-

It is clear from the above discussion that Witch hunting is a social obstacles for society .The belief in witch-hunting is so stronger in certain areas that it makes families alienate their 'witch members'. So, at the rudimentary level much awareness program should be initiate to change the

mindset of the people so that such women will get justice and can re-adjust themselves in the society and make an attempt to live life again. Primary health centre should be established in the remote area and Police must alert on that area. Witch hunting is mainly effect the women. Women is the half part of society.If the half part of people are faced that problem,we can developed our society.So all the people are tried to remove the witch hunting problem from Society.

Reference-

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