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# The Persecution of Witches or a Murder of Humanity

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ADITYA DAS<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*Assam is a northern-eastern Indian state. It is also well-known for its rich culture, biodiversity, tea gardens, and tribal communities. Geographically, Assam is so abundant that, in ancient India, several tribal groups traveled from other regions of the world and settled here, scilicet the Mongolians, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Iranians, and Aryans. Assam is home to 18 prominent tribes, many of which inhabit mountainous regions. For the socio-economic development of such tribes, the Government of India and the Assam State Government have introduced many schemes to improve their standing in society; consequently, we can say with pride that most of such tribes are literate. However, despite their education, many still believe in black magic, spiritual enchantment, and witchcraft. We often learn via the news that a woman was slain by hawking stones or burnt alive because society believed she was a witch; it can even be termed as "A flawless strategy to annihilate humanity." The issue is whether they have observed actual sorcery or were induced to accept such claims of black magic. It is difficult to imagine women killed for such outlandish motives in the 21st century. In India, such violence is more prevalent in rural regions than urban ones. The question is why it is done, the underlying objective, and whether any Acts have been enacted to safeguard women. This paper serves as a response to such inquiries. Witch-hunting is reported across many states in India, but this paper will partially be state-centric; it will cover the other states of India but primarily will focus on North – Eastern States.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Amanda Yates Garcia, an American Witch, quoted, "*Witches exist throughout space and time. Witchcraft brings together the magical people throughout the world for the shared goals of justice, liberation, and celebration of the life force of the earth*".<sup>2</sup> To put it simply, Amanda is a practicing witch. You read that right; she makes a living as a witch and is alive. The irony is that she probably would not be alive now if she had continued her professional pathway back in India. The Millions, The Los Angeles Times, The London Times, CNN, and many other

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<sup>2</sup> Amanda Yates Garcia, *Quotes and Sayings About Witches & Witchcraft*, Available at <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a35302526/best-witch-quotes/> [Accessed 23-06-2022].

media platforms featured her work and voiced their support for her. The only reason a reference to an American witch was even made is to draw attention to the position of women in the West. It is frequently retained that Indians embrace many elements of Western culture, including cuisine, attire, lifestyle, and more. However, the position of women in India is still debatable compared to the West; the banner advertising equal opportunity and feminism is ubiquitous, starting from the streets to social media, but whether it is practiced in its subtle sense is questionable. We cannot repudiate that women's safety remains an issue. Even if we assume that only those living in rural regions have an archaic way of thinking, then at the same time, we get to hear about a case where in Delhi, a four months old baby girl was abducted and sold for Rs. 40,000 to a 'tantric' for human sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

## **II. DECODING THE HISTORY OF WITCHES & WITCHCRAFT AROUND THE GLOBE**

On the western historical front, the initial appearance of witches is hazy. However, according to extensive study, their earliest appearance via records can be found in the Bible - 1 Samuel, which can be dated back to the era between 931 BC and 721 BC.<sup>4</sup> During the Catholic era, witches were described as those who performed witchcraft, mainly invoking evil spirits for mischief. It is pertinent to note that natural healers also did witchcraft at the time. However, as time passed, it became synonymous with 'Devil's work.' During the Catholic era, the term 'Malleus Maleficarum' was synonymous with witch-hunting. In contemporary parlance, 'Malleus Maleficarum' may be regarded as an uncodified rule book that guides how to identify a witch and hunt or interrogate one. With the term interrogation, we must journey back to the mid-1400s since the strings of 'Malleus Maleficarum' are associated with that period, which was also when the witch hysteria occurred. During that period in Europe, women, particularly single women, widows, and those on the margins of culture, were indicted of witchcraft and tormented by scorching alive or dangling. Then, between 1500 and 1660, about 80,000 women accused of witchcraft were slaughtered throughout Europe.<sup>5</sup>

This mass murder continues with the Salem Witch Trials, which began in 1692 when residents of Salem village claimed that two young girls, ages 9 and 11, were possessed by the devil. These claims were supported by a description of the girls' fits and uncontrollable screams. More similar events were reported, and all reported girls were hanged. Modern research has shown

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<sup>3</sup> Nitisha Kashyap, NEWS18, *4-Month-Old Baby Sold for Rs 40,000 for Human Sacrifice in Delhi*, Available at <https://www.news18.com/news/india/4-month-old-baby-sold-for-rs-40000-for-human-sacrifice-in-delhi-1230863.html>, [Accessed 23-06-2022].

<sup>4</sup> HISTORY.COM EDITORS, *History of Witches*, <https://www.history.com/topics/folklore/history-of-witches>, [Accessed 25-06-2022].

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

that none of these females were possessed by the devil; instead, they were poisoned by a fungus that triggered seizures and hallucinations. The Salem village massacre demonstrates that those unfortunate girls were not witches but were condemned to death due to an approvingly superstitious civilization. Not only the residents of Salem Village but also the women of Windsor, Connecticut, were executed as a consequence of these trials. However, the standing of women in Virginia was less dire at the time, and regulations were legislated to thwart individuals from falsely indicting women of being witches. This does not signify that witch trials did not transpire, but none of the indicted were executed.<sup>6</sup>

The yore of witches and witchcraft in India appears to commune to the epoch of British colonial reign. During that historical period, the existence of witches came under scrutiny, exhorting those in command to embark on a probe into the issue to collect details and record them for future reference. The executives and evangelists also examined the issue. Furthermore, their investigations led them to tribal. Back then, there were no hardcore ordinances to govern them, so the tribal groups did hunt witches as they believed that by doing so, they were getting rid of evil spirits.

Nonetheless, the British individuals were not keen to tolerate such vicious traditions, so to impede such brutal practices, the colonial administration endeavored to eradicate the rites and rituals of tribals. However, the tumble of the East India Company was ascertained as an opportunity for these tribals, as they witnessed the colonial downfall as a prospect and resumed witch-hunting. Despite being rescued by colonial administrations, individuals labeled as witches by society were apprehended and mercilessly slaughtered by tribals.

Although modern witch-hunting takes a different tack than its medieval and ancient counterparts, it is still practiced in a minority of Indian states, predominantly in pastoral areas and among less-educated tribal statuses. Nevertheless, this is only partially factual, as most citizens comprehend that neither witches nor witchcraft exists but the witch-hunting acts for them as an instrument of delight. These individuals occupy preeminent positions in such locations and thus use that position to coax others; the introductory rationale for compartmentalizing such women as witches and hounding them differs from subject to subject.

Witches and witch hunts have a protracted history in Assam, dating back to the early 1980s. However, its guileless existence may be noticed at Mayong village in North East India, renowned as India's capital of black magic and home of many witches and witch doctors. Mayong's streets are filled with enigmatic buzzes about the presence of witches and dark magic.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

Not just Mayong but even the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD), KarbiAnglong, and Goalpara acknowledge the existence of witches and witchcraft and support witch-hunting. Over time, innumerable happenings of women dying due to witch-hunting have been documented in these areas. Identical happenings have transpired in some regions of Upper Assam as well.<sup>7</sup>

Arthur Conan Doyle, a British writer, stated, “*Where there is no imagination, there is no horror.*” The utterance fits perfectly in the circumstance of witch-hunting as by going through the history, it does feel that a mere imagination had to lead to women's being the victims of witch-hunting in the past.

### III. TRANSITION IN THE DEFINITION OF WITCHES & WITCHCRAFT

The definition of witches and witchcraft tends to change with time and differ from one geographical location to another. What does not change is the gender of the victims. The definition of witchcraft in Black’s Law Dictionary - “*Under English Sts. 33 Hen. VIII, c. 8, and 1 Jac. I, c. 12, the offense of witchcraft, or supposed intercourse with evil spirits, was punishable with death*”.<sup>8</sup> A bare reading of the definition indicated that it is not an accurate definition of witchcraft as it fails to explain it but instead concentrates on the retribution of witches. However, the ‘UK Parliament defined witchcraft as “*a perceived facility to summon evil spirits and demons to do harm to others, was linked to religion to the extent that the medieval Church had powers to punish those who dabbled in magic and sorcery. Its priests were able to exorcise those who had become possessed by malign spirits*””.<sup>9</sup>

Under Section 2(g) of The Assam Witch Hunting(Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2015 “Witch” is defined as “*any person who has been supposedly identified, called, stigmatized, defamed or accused as Daini, Daina, Dakini, Dakan, Bhoot, Bhootuni, or any other such name by person or persons under the grip of unrealistic and unfounded impression that such person has the power to harm anyone or society at large, in any manner*”.<sup>10</sup>

Under Section 2(h) of The Assam Witch Hunting(Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2015 “Witch hunting” means “*the identifying, calling, stigmatizing, defaming or accusing any person as witch by any other person by words, or by signs or by indications or conducts or*

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<sup>7</sup> Pari Saikia, Tehelka, In Assam once a witch always a witch, Available at <http://tehelka.com/in-assam-once-a-witch-always-a-witch/> [Accessed 26-06-2022].

<sup>8</sup> *Witchcraft*, Black’s Law Dictionary, (10th ed. 2014)

<sup>9</sup> UK Parliament, Religion and belief: Overview, Witchcraft, Available at <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/religion/overview/witchcraft/> [Accessed 28-06-2022].

<sup>10</sup> The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2015, ASSAM ACT NO. XXI OF 2018 (INDIA)

*actions or in any manner, thereby causing or abetting physical and/ or mental harm or execution of a witch which may involve mass hysteria, lynching or any other activities”.*<sup>11</sup>

#### **IV. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR WITCH-HUNTING?**

The cause for witch hunts differs from context to scenario, and there might be various reasons why someone is labeled a witch. In rare circumstances, the actual cause may be unknown. One feasible explanation can be that a family member may seek spiritual counseling from an ojas or tantric due to the unexpected sickness of a family member who has been suffering for a prolonged period and shows no symptoms of convalescence. It is pertinent to note that in village areas if someone gets ill and that person after obtaining medical attention is not convalescing because medical facilities are not yet strong enough in pastoral areas. People in pastoral zones fail to comprehend that, and this is when these ‘dhongi tantric’ get an opportunity to make a fool out of these people. They do not stop here; they will tend to do spiritual enchantments in front of the family. They gradually reach that juncture when they describe that somebody has possessed that person or take that to another level by exaggerating that somebody from the household or a neighbor has performed black magic. Thus, the individual is ill, guiding to an indictment of witchcraft and labeling someone as a witch.

Another set of explanations might be a recent tragedy, such as the sudden demise of a family member. Such a circumstance is disheartening for the entire family. However, those who are close to the family may, in the name of comforting, bring out an unwelcome notion that will obstruct the thinking of the people in front of them, such as "someone has performed black magic on your family," and that person will believe it to be true. Occurrences mainly exploit a person's belief in witchcraft and witches.

A person's belief in witches and witchcraft may also get impacted if there is any animosity or disagreement between the victim's family and the family that made the witchcraft accusation. Moreover, if a cataclysm transpires and the victim was there at the time, it becomes simpler to indict witchcraft. It is evident that women are labeled as witches more often than males and that once a woman is labeled as a witch, she is reproached for various deplorable or unanticipated occurrences. Even enviousness might serve as a spur for witch-hunting, as it has been recorded in certain situations that the victim indicted of witchcraft or identified as a witch was doing well in her life and flourishing, but her triumph functioned as a rose spike for someone, who then disseminated rumors that she is a witch in order to get rid of her. Labeling a woman as a witch may also be attributable to economic factors such as land conflicts and property division. The

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

most uncomplicated route to get rid of a woman is to dub her a witch and spread rumors that she does black magic so that the people around her begin to distrust her motives and eventually expel her from society or cast her out.

If a woman is a self-sufficient and single earner, or if she is open-minded and loud for her rights while also fighting for the rights of others, dominating individuals in such regions may aim to label her as a witch. Because specific individuals in a particular region still believe that education is not essential for women. The reason is that they deem education will pave the route for independence and equip them with the capacity to discern whether or not they are exploited. Furthermore, despite their best efforts, if a woman chooses to seek an education and speak out for social change or equality, she may become a target of predators who will do everything in their capacity to persuade others that she is a witch who performs black magic. Furthermore, if she is not banished from society, she may cause mayhem across the precinct, and substandard or superstitious individuals may fall for it and accept such implausible things.

Once a woman is labeled a witch, she is subjected to verbal abuse and public humiliation. She would spend the rest of her life terrified of being tracked down and murdered. According to studies, victims may be subjected to rape or even murder and may be compelled to perform different tests to prove that she is not a witch. In order to demonstrate that she is not a witch, the victims are forced to sit on a spiked stool, clutch metal balls, or devour an entire betel nut. Such unscientific techniques demonstrate that criminals are primarily interested in the misery of victims. Apart from that, some victims are forced to live on the outskirts of the village and live in isolation.

Ironically, Isolation as a punishment is not accessible to all victims. Some of the victims are executed by lynch mobs. For instance, in the Chirang district of Assam, two families were pulled from their houses and viciously attacked. Then, in the hamlet of Bhurbasti, two families were again attacked based on rumors of black magic; however, they were protected by police authorities since someone reported the incident in time, but the families in the Chirang district were not that fortunate, and they lost their life in mob lynching. Then again, a 68-year-old woman was brutally murdered in Golaghat, Assam, due to suspicions of witchcraft.<sup>12</sup> In Odisha, a guiltless tribal woman and her children were murdered by perpetrators indicting them for witchcraft, but the Odisha police took prompt action, and six accused were apprehended and prosecuted for murder.<sup>13</sup> Then, in Rajasthan, a 23-year-old woman fell ill at regular intervals

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<sup>12</sup> *Supra* note 5

<sup>13</sup> Hindustan Times, Suspected of witchcraft, woman, her 4 kids killed in Odisha; 6 accused arrested, Available at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/suspected-of-witchcraft-woman-her-4-kids-killed-in-odisha-6->

for a very prolonged period and was not convalescing, so her family took her to a tantric. In the name of treatment, the tantric asked the victim to come alone into their room, where they molested her. When her family intervened and asked them to release her, the tantric burned her hands and declared her a witch. The involvement even led to a brawl between the family and the tantric, in which members of the tantric's group assaulted family members.<sup>14</sup> These unfortunate occurrences will haunt us and compel us to question when and where humanity perished.

## **V. RESPONSE FROM FAMILY AND SOCIETY TO BEING LABELED AS A WITCH**

An educated society will never impose such biased judgments upon women, leading them to a miserable life if they survive. Studies show that there are mixed responses from the family. In some cases, the victim's husband was supportive towards her but suffered night blindness and knowing that the villagers attacked her at night when they learned that her husband would be helpless and could efficiently prosecute her.

Another series of events implied that the victim's husband and sole kid supported and lobbied for her but were unable to protect her owing to the large number of others who opposed them. In another instance, the victim's spouse was coerced and blackmailed into acting against her. Consequently, the victim's spouse did not trust her, nor did her children. There are two possible explanations for this: first, the family doubted her from the beginning, and the threats were just a cover-up for their distrust of the victims, or second, because villagers threatened the husband, the family feared that if they advocated for the victim, they would face the same consequences. In most cases, the husband is also subjected to barbarity if he defends or sustains his wife if she is labeled a witch. Whereas in a few cases when a husband negates his wife and turns out in such circumstances, the victim's children come out to rescue their mother, even moral and physical assistance may be observed from the victim's parents, the role of in-laws in such cases is restricted. However, on one occurrence, the mother-in-law was seen supporting her son's wife, who had been labeled a witch. She even intervened to save her.

Studies even reveal that sometimes the victims suffer significant injury from mob lynching and had to suffer, whether physical or mental, is not limited to the victim itself. Thus, it extends to the entire family defending her. Not all victims are lucky enough that when attacked by perpetrators are saved by someone close. Sometimes support and help reach late; when they

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accused-arrested/story-QNvLKuoc9SgJcKrfRf7FcN.html [Accessed 28-06-2022].

<sup>14</sup> Hindustan Times, 72 witch-hunting cases in Rajasthan in 2 years, 25 from Bhilwara, Available at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/72-witch-hunting-cases-in-rajasthan-in-2-years-25-from-bhilwara/story-ChXsukqRHApSWVmS7zVHN.html> [Accessed 28-06-2022].

arrive, they are only left with ashes and sorrow. Furthermore, sometimes the instigators are the family members such a case was of a victim whose stepson and stepdaughter spread rumors that the victim performs black magic and is a witch. In contrast, there are stories where the victim's uncle saved her from being killed. It may be extrapolated that humanity's affinity must prevail, not the relationship between the victim and initiator or perpetrator.

## **VI. LAWS ON WITCH-HUNTING**

Several laws and regulations are in place to end witch-hunting and protect the victims of witch-hunting. Central and State Acts, as well as International Conventions and Human Rights Guidelines, protect women against witch hunts. When discussing Central laws protecting women from witch-hunting, it is essential to cite that there is no Central amendment entirely concentrated on witch-hunting nullification, although there are a few States where a witch-hunting prohibition act exists as State amended law.

— Some Central Amendments that indirectly function to protect women from witch-hunting are:

- Constitution of India through Article 14 – ‘Equality before Law’; Article 15(3) – ‘Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children’; Article 15(4) – ‘empowers the state to make special laws for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes’; Article 21 – ‘The Right to Protection of Life and personal liberty’; Article 51A(h) – ‘to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform’;

- Drugs and Magic Remedies (objectionable advertisements) Act, 1954;
- Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993;
- Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes (prevention of atrocities) Act 1989; and
- Indian Penal Code, 1860 through Section 302 – ‘Punishment for murder’; Section 299 – ‘Culpable homicide’; Section 354 – ‘Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty’; Section 375 – ‘Rape’.

— State Amendments that directly function to protect women from witch-hunting are:

- The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection Act) 2015 [ This Act outlaws witch-hunting in the state of Assam; it also specifies the penalty, fine, and establishment of special courts and their authority, function, and ways to safeguard a person from witch-hunting. Punishment means 'Punishment for identifying, calling as a witch, and

abatement; Punishment for causing death; Punishment for leading person to suicide; Punishment for using criminal force and outrage the modesty; Punishment for some forms of torture; Punishment for damaging reputation, dignity; Punishment for attributing misfortune. It even provides sections where it criminalizes and provides Punishment for the disappearance of evidence. It is also vital to note that this legislation is "gender-neutral," meaning it protects both men and women. ]

- Apart from the abovementioned Act there are many other State amendments which prohibits witch-hunting in their respective States. Bihar has ‘ The Prevention of Witch (Daain) Practices Act, 1999’; Jharkhand has ‘The Prevention of Witch (Daain)Practices Act, 2001’; then there is ‘Chhattisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran Act, 2005’; ‘The Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013’; ‘The Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori practices and black magic Act, 2013’; ‘The Karnataka Prevention and Eradication of Inhuman Evil practices and black magic Act, 2017’; ‘The Rajasthan Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2015’.

— In order to prohibit witch-hunting and to protect the rights of women, there are specific international legislation such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women.

## **VII. CASE STUDY**

This part of the paper will try to outline the instances where humanity died and how a woman was labeled as witch by the individuals and society.

— The first case is of a married woman living with her husband and belonging to the Orang community. She and her husband used to work as contractual caretakers for a nursery in Dikal forest in Sonitpur. Initially, she received her salary on time, but due to some issue, the manager was unable to pay her salary, which led to an outstanding salary of Rs. 9000/-. It was the Durga puja season when the victim raised a demand for money, she traveled to her manager's house to collect her outstanding salary, but she only received Rs. 1000/- from the remaining Rs. 9000/- and when demanded the rest, she was refused. On the following day, she again went to her manager's house, but at that time, the manager was not there, so the daughter of the manager asked her to wait outside; she kept on waiting for a very long time and was starving and then she requested for some food but was served a cold tea without sugar seeing this the victim rebuked her and left. When the manager and his wife came to know about it, they entered into

a heated argument with the victim, and then out of sheer frustration, the victim cursed them, saying, 'You will get worms in your mouth.' Then after a few days, the manager's daughter got injured, and according to the manager's wife, small white worms were oozing out of the wound. Then the manager's wife recalled the victim's curse, and the victim was called upon by the manager, beaten up by them, tied to a pillar, and labeled a witch. On the following day, when the victim's husband came to know about the mishap with his wife, he came to rescue her, but they also threatened him. Later, both of them were asked by the villagers to leave the village on their own. After all this, the victim now lives outside the forest camp with no work, and the remaining sum was never paid. Here, we can note that the manager's intention not to pay her was constant from the beginning, and for that purpose, only she was labeled a witch and thrown out of the village. The victim must understand that by showing little courage if she had approached the appropriate authority on time, all the offenders would have been behind bars.<sup>15</sup>

— The second case is of a woman from Adivasi Munda Community and a permanent worker in the tea garden. The victim's family was financially stable and held six bighas of land, and the marital relationship between the husband and the victim was good. Here the instigator is a female and was a close relative of the victim's family. The instigator was not financially stable, and she was jealous of the victim, which served as a purpose for instigation. On one fine evening, the instigator got drunk and said that the victim was a witch and performed black magic, which is why she was so prosperous; the villagers also believed the instigator as earlier, the victim's elder sister was also labeled as a witch and was killed. Later she was assaulted by the instigator and a few other female villagers. Witnessing such instances, the victim's husband took her and moved to a new location to live a peaceful life. Here jealousy served as a purpose, but the victim's husband was supportive. In this case, the victim tried to file a complaint but failed as she was frightened by the threats received.<sup>16</sup>

— The third case is of a woman who lived with her husband in a small village and used to work as a tea leaf picker. She was a very talented woman, which led her to be a member of the women's cell and a member to improve the living condition of others; she had contributed a lot. Similarly, her husband was also a man known for his hardworking nature and thus was promoted to a senior rank in the tea garden. This prosperity was not pleasing others. The situation for them started to turn upside down when she banned liquor consumption the male community started to turn against her. When she asked a man to return her money taken by him way back, that person verbally abused her by saying 'Diani.' A few days later, someone from

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<sup>15</sup> A. Pandey, NE Network & Assam Mahila Samata Society, *Witch Hunting In Assam*, 71 – 72 (2015)

<sup>16</sup> A. Pandey, NE Network & Assam Mahila Samata Society, *Witch Hunting In Assam*, 73 – 74 (2015)

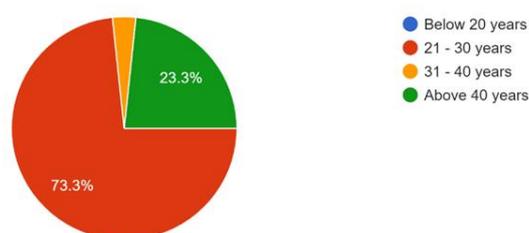
the village complained to high officials of the tea garden that the woman was of bad character, and then she was removed from the women's cell without allowing her to explain herself. It was all done in retribution as the well-being of the husband and wife was not pleased. Later, when a boy in the village became ill and was not recovering then, an Ojha was called by the boy's family. At that time, the ojha claimed that three witches possessed the boy. Now, it became apparent to the villages to target the woman, and she was taken out of her home and beaten up. The villagers asked her to prove that she was not a witch and to seek their forgiveness, or they would burn her alive. In order to save herself, she claimed that she would call her ojha, and then it would be clear whether she was a witch or not. Now that she had paid Ojha, she called to speak in favor of her. Later, the police arrived and arrested all the accused, and she was saved, but her husband had to sell his motorbike to pay Rs. 25,000 to that Ojha. After such an incident, the family left the village and went elsewhere.<sup>17</sup>

## VIII. DATA COLLECTION

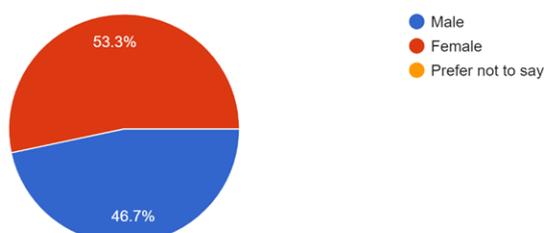
The analysis strives to gauge respondents' familiarity with topics including witch-hunting, witchcraft, and state laws against them. Thirty randomly chosen individuals from Assam were requested to complete the survey, and the findings are shown below.

### • BASIC DETAILS

AGE OF RESPONDENT  
30 responses



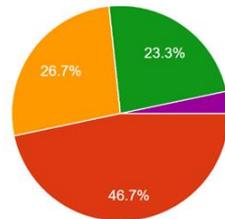
GENDER  
30 responses



<sup>17</sup> Indranee Dutta, National Commission for Women, *Report of the Expert Committee on Economic, Political and Social Status of Women in North East*, 150 (2016)

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

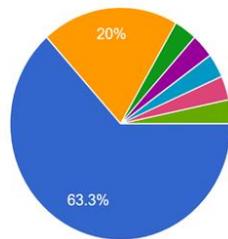
30 responses



- Schooling
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Degree/Diploma
- LLB

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

30 responses

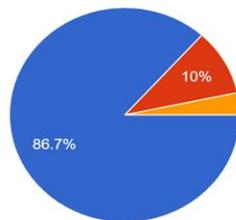


- Student
- Business
- Self-Employed
- House Wife
- Central service
- Lawyer
- Central Government service
- State gove ,education

• **RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Have you ever heard about Witch-Hunting?

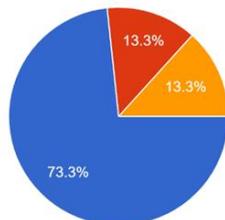
30 responses



- Yes
- No
- Maybe

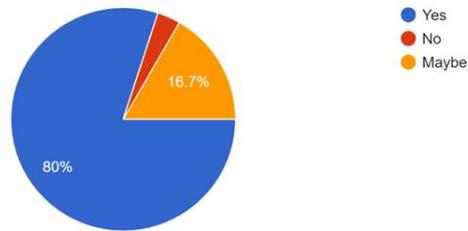
2. Do you believe witch-hunting is prevalent in India?

30 responses

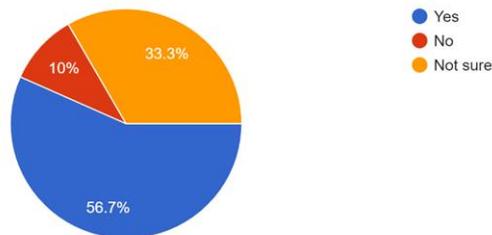


- Yes
- No
- Not sure

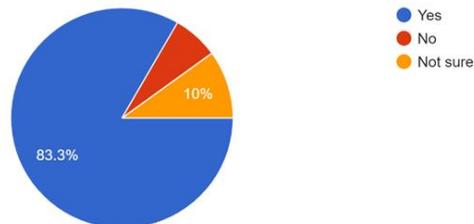
3. Is witch-hunting more common in rural regions than in urban ones?  
30 responses



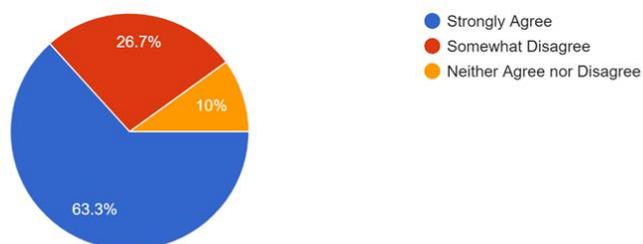
4. Do you believe witch-hunting is frequent in rural communities and tribal belt regions?  
30 responses



5. Is illiteracy the primary cause of such erratic events?  
30 responses

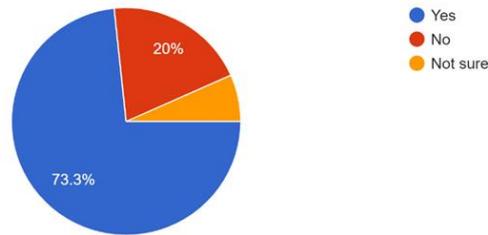


6. Will adequate education assist society in believing that witches and black magic do not exist?  
30 responses



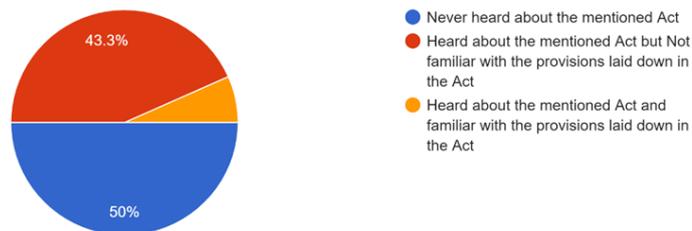
7. Do you feel that most victims of such hunts are women?

30 responses



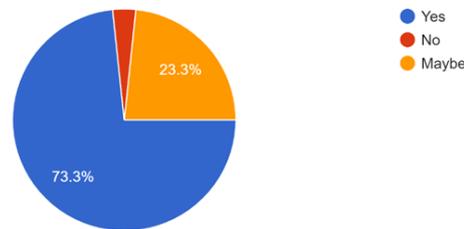
8. Do you know that there is a 'State Enacted Law' named 'The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention, and Protection) Act, 2015' that protec...what the provisions of the aforementioned Act are?

30 responses



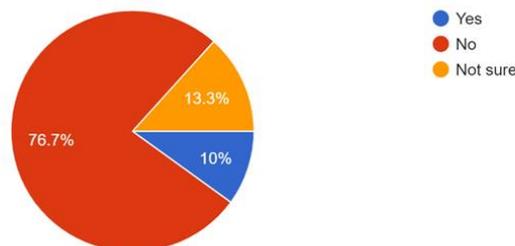
9. Do you feel that 'Central legislation' is required to safeguard women throughout the country from witch-hunting?

30 responses



10. Do you believe in witches and witchcraft?

30 responses



While the data shows that people know central legislation is essential, it also shows that the majority of them have never heard of the state-level law that was passed to prevent witch hunts

in Assam (The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection Act) 2015, despite the fact that it has been in effect since 2015.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

A woman living a peaceful life in rural region or a woman raising her voice for her rights can become a victim of witch-hunting because labeling a woman as a witch in order to silent her works as an immaculate principle for some, and for some, afflicting a victim physically or mentally works as a perfect diet of pleasure but what they fail to comprehend that this marking, tagging or labeling of witch will only bring sorrow to someone's house. Calling by names, be it '*DAINI*,' '*WITCH*,' or even outcasting, will act similarly and affect the victim mentally. Society needs to comprehend that neither in the 17<sup>th</sup> century nor the 21<sup>st</sup> century witches do not exist, as it is all a gameplay of perspective. Not gradually but quickly, adaptations must prevail, humanity must prevail as it is already too delinquent, and still, there are victims of witch-hunting or the victims of flawed and miserable philosophies. There is also a requirement for Central level legislation to implement witch-hunting laws properly. In the end, I would solicit everyone to be prudent about what is transpiring in their surroundings and vocal about their and others' rights.

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