

## ABSTRACT

Witch-hunting is still prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, among different cultures and societies of the world. It involves the accusation of witchcraft and killing or banishment of the witch. But the belief in witchcraft and the practice of witch-hunting differs on contextual basis. It is observed that the people living in rural areas are the most experienced ones as it exists among them. In India, the recent media reports that the highest number of witch-hunting cases that have been recorded by the police stations of Assam is found to be from the Bodo community. So, the present study focuses on the issue of witch-hunting among the Bodos of Assam. Understanding and analyzing its nature requires an extensive field study and therefore fieldwork has been done in the Bodo villages of three districts, namely Udalguri, Chirang and Kokrajhar of Assam. Different aspects of the issue have been studied with an aim to make the people aware of the beliefs and practices associated with witch-hunting and its contexts. Interviews carried out with the victims, the perpetrators and the villagers are taken into account to understand insiders' perspective.

It is seen that in order to curb witch-hunting from the society, several projects and movements are led by different groups and organizations in Assam. It came up with the passing of the Assam Government's 'Bill' against witch-hunting in 2015. So, this research also tries to look upon what were and why have the remedial measures been taken. It focuses on exploring the challenges and awareness of the outsiders (living in the same state but has little experience) and understands the difference between outsiders' and insiders' perspective of witch-hunting. Based on the two different perspectives, the study analyses their discourses lying with power relations.

**Keywords:** Witch, Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, Belief, Practice, Insider, Outsider, Victim and Perpetrator