

# The Practice of Witch hunting A Call for its Abolition



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**Assam Mahila Samata Society  
(Mahila Samakhya) Assam**

**Ashirwad Bhawan, 3rd Floor, Dr. R.P. Road  
Lastgate, Dispur, Guwahati-6  
Ph.: (0361) 2231879 & Fax: 2231895  
e-mail : [assammahila@yahoo.com](mailto:assammahila@yahoo.com)  
Website : [www.assammahilasamakhya.org](http://www.assammahilasamakhya.org)**

## About Assam Mahila Samata Society (AMSS)

### Who are we?



Assam Mahila Samata society (AMSS) is an autonomus society registered in 1996 under society registration act 1860. In Assam AMSS has been implementing the national Mahila Samakhya (MS) program as envisaged in National Policy on Education 1986 and Program of Action 1992 published by MHRD, GOI,

### Objective



The main objective of the MS program is to encourage, assist and promote collective reflection, decision making and group action by women as a means to their empowerment and for equal participation in the process of learning for social change.

Initiating rural women empowerment process through EDUCATION INITIATIVES, which are based on respect for women's existing knowledge, experience and skills.

### Principle



Collective action is the vehicle of rural women towards empowerment. A foundation laid for empowerment at the grass root level with the organization of Mahila Sanghas (Women's Collectives). Though the sanghas are different in form and size they are committed to address their own issues. As the sanghas grow up, they stride to form federation to co-ordinate pace of empowerment process at different level from village to empowerment process at different level from village to Gram Panchyat CD, Block & District.

## **Acknowledgement**

A consultation on Witch Hunting was organised on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010 (in view of international Human Right's day) with the endeavour of Assam Mahila Samata Society, state office. Representatives from various non-governmental organisations, State women commission, State Human Rights commission, Assam police dept, Social welfare dept. (Assam), researchers, civil society members and various dignitaries attended the consultation whose participatory presence contributed towards the successful completion of the programme. We are obliged to these dignitaries.

We are also thankful to those ladies who shared their real life experiences in the consultation, who are sheer victim of 'Witch hunting'. Their words tremendously contributed towards intensive discussion in the consultation. We are highly grateful to the District implementation Unit, Goalpara, AMSS, including field workers and Sangha/Mahasangha members. The hardship faced by them in last 10 yrs by confronting various challenges and marching forward in a process oriented manner to fight against this evil practice of Witch hunting, right from the grass root level eradication with public participation and various other necessary steps taken with district Administration have contributed towards the illustration put forward by them. Therefore, it is only for these supports that this state consultation on 'Witch Hunting' could be organised.

Lastly we are thankful to Anjuman Ara Begum for her contribution as a rapporteur in presenting a well organised report on the consultation.

**(Gita Rani Bhattacharya)**

State Programme Director

Assam Mahila Samata Society



## **The Practice of Witch hunting : A Call for its Abolition**

*"I was about 50 years old, when they branded me as witch. I didn't know that I am a witch and they caught hold of me and tortured for two days. I was chased out of the house and it took a legal battle of eight long years for me to come back to my home. I sold all my ornaments to fight the case and get back my home<sup>1</sup>.*

In a report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions to the Human Rights Council<sup>2</sup> reported that 'the persecution and killing of individuals accused of practicing so-called "witchcraft" \_ the vast majority of whom are women and children - is a significant phenomenon in many parts of the world, although it has not featured prominently on the radar screen of human rights monitors. This may be due partly to the difficulty of defining "witches" and "witchcraft" across cultures - terms that, quite apart from their connotations in popular culture, may include an array of traditional or faith healing practices and are not easily defined. The fact remains, however, that under the rubric of the amorphous and

manipulable designation of witchcraft, individuals (often those who are somehow different, feared or disliked) are singled out for arbitrary private acts of violence or for Government-sponsored or tolerated acts of violence

### Who is a Witch ?

"In the popular imagination, witchcraft is often associated with the infliction of harm on people or property through the purported exercise of supernatural powers. In sociological and anthropological terms, it can be described as a phenomenon that is invoked to explain misfortune by attributing it to the evil influence of someone, either from within or outside the community. Thus witchcraft has historically been employed to bring about "the death of some obnoxious person, or to awaken the passion of love in those who are the objects of desire, or to call up the dead, or to bring calamity or impotence upon enemies, rivals and fancied oppressors". Ronald Hutton, for example, has identified five characteristics generally shared by those who believe in witches and witchcraft across different cultures and time periods: (a) witches use non-physical means to cause misfortune or injury to others; (b) harm is usually caused to neighbours or kin rather than strangers; (c) strong social disapproval follows, in part because of the element of secrecy and in part because their motives are not wealth or prestige but malice and spite; (d) witches work within long-standing traditions, rather than in one-time only contexts; and (e) other humans can resist witches through persuasion, non-physical means (counter magic), or deterrence including through corporal punishment, exile, fines or execution<sup>3</sup>.

A 'witch' or its Assamese vocabulary 'daini' in Assam is used to identify a male or female is alleged to have magical powers that it used to bring evil to the community. "Witches" are, in most cases women who are alleged use their evil powers to harm others. In fact, however, many of those accused of witchcraft are simply vulnerable women and children, the elderly or the mentally ill, and are sometime the victims of an accuser's personal grudge. In many cases they are killed with impunity. Witch hunting is killing of a 'witch', a superstitious evil practice quite common among the communities Rabha, Hajong, Mishong, Bodo, Adivasi etc. It is also practiced among the Nepalis. A witch in most of the cases is a woman who is alleged to be a practitioner of black magic and causes death to the villagers where she lives. Local Ojhas (sorcerer) 'detects' and identifies witches. Media has reported cases of witch hunting have been reported so far from various states of India viz Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharastra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa apart from Assam. It has been reported that 2,556 women were designated as witches and killed in India between 1987 and 2003. In Bihar alone around 522 cases of witch hunting were registered from 1991 to 2000<sup>4</sup>.

As soon as it is believed that a disease has been caused due to the 'witch craft' practiced by the suspected witch, people try to get rid of the witch or the so-called 'daini' through prayers and offerings. Boiled rice together with a cock reduced to ashes is taken in a banana leaf and keep on the middle of a road as an offering to the 'daini'. People believe that without these prayers and offerings the patient would die. Its only after this, treatment through doctor is done. Sometimes patients die due to delay in appropriate treatment, since offerings and prayers are not the solution of a disease. If the patient dies the belief of existence of a witch becomes deeper and the 'identification' of the witch starts.

1. Experience shared by Khedai Bala Rabha at a state level consultation on "Witch hunting' organized by Assam Mahila Samata Samiti on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2010.

2. (A/HRC/11/2, 27 May 2009, 43-59), available on <http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Handbook%20Chapter%203-Responsibility%20of%20states%20for%20non-state%20killings.pdf> as on December 20, 2010 3. Ronald Hutton, "Anthropological and historical approaches to witchcraft: potential for a new collaboration?", Historical Journal (2004), 413 as quoted in

KILLINGS OF "WITCHES", Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/11/2, 27 May, 2009 4. Goswami, Nishita, "witch hunting: a human rights issue, <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=jan1508/edit3> as on December 20, 2010. These cases are being reported through District Implementation Unit, Goalpara of Assam Mahila Samata Society. Also read Barnali Handique, Witch-hunt victims narrate nightmares, [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1101211/jsp/northeast/story\\_13285725.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1101211/jsp/northeast/story_13285725.jsp) as on December 15, 2010 2. [http://wunrn.com/news/2008/03\\_08/03\\_08/030308\\_culture\\_files/030308\\_culture.pdf](http://wunrn.com/news/2008/03_08/03_08/030308_culture_files/030308_culture.pdf) as on December 10, 2010

7. <http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Handbook%20Chapter%203-Responsibility%20of%20states%20for%20non-state%20killings.pdf> as on December 20, 2010 8. *ibid*

9. The full report is available on [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25years/content/english/CONCLUDING\\_COMMENTS/India/India-CO-3.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw25years/content/english/CONCLUDING_COMMENTS/India/India-CO-3.pdf) as on December 20, 2010 as an infringement of women's human rights.

### **The Process of Identifying a 'Witch'**

There are several ways of identifying a '*daini*' among which two are mentioned below: -

A). Generally, in a village there is a traditional astrologer, who looks into the matter and reveals a woman's name. She is then considered as a '*daini*' or the witch harming the village.

B). The second way of identification of a '*daini*' is by covering the patient with a net. The person is then pricked with thorns and other sharp things until it becomes difficult to bear the pain and finally he or she reveals the name of a woman, who is then accused as the '*daini*'.

### **What happens when a woman is branded as witch?**

Once a woman, man or a family is 'identified' and branded as witch, she will be summoned before the whole community and process of confirmation of her as witch will start. Generally two methods are adopted in Assam. One if there is death of people in the village due to unknown diseases and a woman is suspected and later accepted by everyone as witch. Second method is that woman branded as witch are covered with fish net and tortured brutally with the teeth of pig. Sometime the ill person is also tortured in the same way to forcing to spell out the name of witch. Usually a sick person in his or her state of illness spells out the name of the person against whom they have a personal grudge. During such practice of torture woman usually breaks down and forcefully accepts herself as witch to get rid of the torture. Once confirmed the woman is either killed or chased away from the village. Sri Kulo Saikia, IGP (Border) who worked extensively on the issues of witch hunting during his service in Kokrajhar district shared a disturbing fact. He said that if the woman alleged to be a witch is killed, her body is cut into pieces and buried separately as it is believed that putting together all the parts of the body of the witch may result into rebirth of witch. Though in most the cases women are branded as witches, men are also not spared. Sometime the whole family is wiped out. The pieces of the dead bodies of the 'witches' are buried separately in different places as it is also believed that if they are buried together the witch will take rebirth and harm people.

After a 'daini' is identified, she is punished for her act as in accordance with the rules and regulations of that society. The chief justice of that village gives the guilt's punishment verdict. The punishments are as follows: -

*A. Apart from physical and mental torture, the woman is lynched to death.*

*B. All the belongings and the properties of the woman is taken away by the people and then the woman is driven away from her house. At this moment, the members of the family could hardly interfere as if they interfere there is a possibility for them to meet the same fate.*

### **Prevalence of the practice in Assam**

Such heinous crimes of witch hunting are also reported in other states of India. For example, cases of witch hunting have been reported so far from various states of India viz Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Media sources revealed that 2,556 women were branded as witches and killed in India between 1987 and 2003. In Bihar alone around 522 cases of witch hunting were registered from 1991 to 2000. In Assam, witch hunting is still very common in districts of Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baska, Sonitpur, Udalguri, Tinsukia, Dhemaji etc. Another statistics available is that According to available statistics, 81 cases of witch-hunting were reported in the state between 2006 and 2010. While 57 of these victims were physically tortured, the rest were brutally murdered. This evil practice is mostly prevalent in the backward regions of the state where the level of literacy and healthcare is low. Since 2001, 38 cases of witch-hunting have been reported in Goalpara district alone<sup>5</sup>.

The killing of accused witches was reported as a significant phenomenon in countries like Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Barundi, Uganda, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Ghana, United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa, Angola, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Nepal etc. In Nepal, civil society groups have reported the prevalence of traditional beliefs about witchcraft that largely concern elderly women and widows in rural areas and face public beating and abuse from village elders or leaders.

The practice of witch hunting was also present in countries like Norway, Sweden, USA etc. though there is no recent reporting of such practices. Persecution of witches were common in the sixteenth and seventeenth century according to a research paper entitled, 'Culture, Religion and Gender' by Frances Raday and up until the Salem Witch Trials in 1692 in the USA<sup>6</sup>.

### **Rashmi Rabha**

Rashmi Rabha, a resident of Jurigaon village in West Garo Hills, Meghalaya bordering Assam. She said that her own nephew spread the rumour that she and her 18 year old daughter practicing witchcraft. These resulted in their forceful eviction from her village and her nephew seized all her property after the demise of her husband. The superstitious villagers did not help her and the other render up torturing her physically before chasing her away from the village. "My nephew, who is a teacher, tried to confiscate my property by saying that I and my younger daughter practiced black magic and had harmed the villagers. Not only were we beaten up publicly, my youngest daughter was compelled to give up her job of an Anganwadi worker. I had to take shelter in a relative's house in another village for months along with my daughter, son, son-in-law and grandson," Rashmi said narrating her painful experience. When Rashmi's married eldest daughter protested against this unjust treatment meted out to her mother and siblings, Rashmi's nephew threatened to pronounce her a witch too. She was so much traumatized that created a fear psychosis in her mind and abetted her to

commit suicide. Rashmi is yet to get her land back.

### **Khedai Bala Rabha**

Khedai Bala Rabha of Satabari village in Goalpara has been living in constant fear of being attacked by villagers who accused her of misleading a young woman through black magic. In her case, some individuals had planned to acquire the small piece of land and home left to her by her deceased husband by driving her and her two sons away from the village. "One day, some villagers called me to the village school. When I reached there, they beat me so severely that I became unconscious. My sons arrived at the scene and started pouring water on my head. But the atrocities did not end and I had to leave the village and take shelter at a relative's place for three months. Though we have returned, the villagers have snapped all relations with us and we are socially boycotted," she said.

### **Jonali Rabha**

Jonali Rabha was banished from her village on accusation of being a witch. Being homeless she was forced to take shelter in the village of her birth place, Hatigaon. She informed the Dhirabati Mahila Samata Sangha of Haitgaon. When the members of the Sangha wanted to negotiate with villagers of the Borjhor, the villagers did not reciprocate. Then Jonali along with her brother and members of the Dhirabati Mahila Samata Sangha of Haitgaon discussed the matter and filed a case in the Lakhipur Police station. After an initial disinclination, the officer in charge of the PS interrogated the villagers and asked them to bring Jonali back to the village. The villagers apologized to Jonali who puts certain conditions before the villagers. These conditions were 1. Her mother in law who banished from the village 20 years ago should be brought back. 2. Four years back Jonali had to pay rupees 3001 for the allegation of being a witch. This amount should be returned. 3. The villagers must give a written undertaking that such accusation will not be repeated. 4. Jonali should be allowed to live peacefully in the village. With this settlement Jonali now lives happily in the village.

### **Savitri Hajowari**

Savitri lives in a village Fakirpara under PS Dhupdhoora. One day one neighbor's daughter was sick. Savitri was suspected by the neighbor to be a witch charmer to create sickness in the village and this suspicion was raised by neighbor 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 Dhupdhoora 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.

### **Lansun Rabha**

Lansun Rabha lives in village Deodhani Bhita under the police station Dhupdhoora. She was tagged as witch by her own brother in law for his wife's prolonged sickness. The villagers captured Lansun Rabha, her husband and her three children, tortured them severely physically. She was forced to admit that she was a witch and was fined with 651 rupees. Her family was banished from the village. Her garden and house was destroyed. Although her husband filed a case in the local police station but someone influential from her village briefed the police and so no solution came to them. Lansun discussed the matter with the Jakhnapara Rupam Mahila Sangha and appealed to the DC. Acting on an order of the DC



the police took action and called the villagers to the PS. Lansun was brought back to the village and was given compensation. The villagers gave a written undertaking for not repeating such acts.

### **Bhuleswari Rabha**

Bhuleswari Rabha belongs to a very poor family. In her village one woman was sick for a long period and could not walk. She also behaved like a neurotic patient. Her condition started deteriorating. A local healer (sorcerer) pointed at Bhuleswari as a witch and the villagers drove her away from the village. She stayed in her parent's house for six months. Then her husband took her back. The villagers imposed a compensation of rupees five thousand on the couple. Then AMSS intervened into the matter and prevented such injustice.

### **Anita Rabha**

Anita Rabha lives with three children. In her village a boy got hydrophobia due to dog bite. Anita was suspected to be the witch to cause such a sickness. She was driven out of the village while the sick boy died due to no medical treatment. The police department and AMSS intervened and restored Anita in her village.

### **Sirani Rabha**

Sirani Rabha has fallen sick and two of the villagers had come to see her. She offered the traditional rice beer. One of the guests had high blood pressure and after two days he had felt unconscious while going out. People in the village started suspecting Chirani of witchcraft. After 17 days her husband Girish Rabha died. During the shradha another man fell sick due to drinking and started rebuking Chirani. The villagers held a meeting and sent Chirani away from her village. From her parental house in Baida, Chirani filed a case and with the help of the Police and AMSS she was brought back to the village and restored the family with three children.

### **Jogai Bala Rabha**

In Jogai Bala's village one woman had fallen sick and in a state of delirium she uttered that Jogai had been devouring her. To hear this, the villagers decided to throw out Jogai out of the village. Her elder son then takes her away to Tura in West Garo Hills, Meghalaya and keeps her with him for nine years. The matter was resolved by the AMSS and she was brought back to the village after nine years.

### **Biva Hato**

In Bibha's village she was accused of witchcraft for a girl's sickness. She was severely beaten by the patient's brothers and a Garo Kabiraj (sorcerer). Because of being beaten she was stripped off and her ornaments were lost. All these happened in her husband's absence. When her husband came home after two days she was still under a vigil. Secretly she came out of her village and contacted members of AMSS. She then appealed to the DC and police officers and filed a case too. The police officer took initiatives and interrogated the people who tortured Biva. Later they were released on bail after paying rupees ten thousand. Thus, Biva got a chance to live with her family in one piece.

### **Shanti Khakhlari**

In Shanti's village, a boy had been sick for months. Shanti was suspected to be the witch to cause so. She was tortured

physically and mentally and the villagers tried to drive her away along with her family. On 27/10/2003, fifteen men and 5 women came to Shanti's house and beat her severally. Her son could not tolerate this and filed a case in the local police station for protection. The local police officer gave protection to Shanti on the police station fearing worst circumstances and appealed to the DC for intervention. The DC requested AMSS to settle the matter. Meanwhile the OC arrested some villagers. Then with the initiatives of AMSS, a daylong meeting was held and the villagers were convinced of their wrong believe in witchcraft and they agreed to accept Shanti back to the village. The villagers gave a written undertaking that such incident will not be repeated.

### **Manomaya Rabha**

Manomaya had brought tapioca, root used as food item, at the same time when another woman has brought it. That woman had fallen sick after eating the stuff and suspected Manomaya for witch craft. Instantly the villagers drove her out of the village bag and baggage. Being helpless she approached the headman tried to solve the problem and for that he went to Goalpara with some villagers. But he was threatened by the villagers of Galchira. Then Manomaya approached district Implimentation Unit, Goalpara, AMSS, and DC. A date was fixed for negotiation with the villagers though no one from Galchira attended to the negotiation. After three days again people of both the villages gave written undertaking that they will not torture Manomaya anymore and such incidents will not be repeated. Manomaya was given compensation of rupees one thousand.

### **Ratila Rabha**

Ratila was alleged to have bitten a 6 year old girl of her village and was suspected to be a witch. Some villagers wanted to bury her in a well or in a latrine. Then she was forced to sign some papers and then she was driven out of the village in the evening in auto van. She was dropped on the road of Rongsai at 12 midnight. She walked to her younger brother's house. At that time she came to know Birubala Rabha of AMSS who fight against the witch hunting practice. Ratila met Birubala and both took the help of police but failed to find a solution as the villager's could not be convinced. Birubala kept trying and finally Ratila was restored to her village.

### **Raniswari Rabha**

Raniswari had taken a `*dikshas*' at the Lakhipur Shitala Temple and started worshipping Krishna, Shiva, Shitala deities. There were not practiced in a Rabha society. People took it as an exception and started suspecting her as a practitioner of witch craft. Besides, her step daughter instigated the villagers against her and she was tagged as a witch and was driven away from the village. Birubala Rabha tried to help her. Raniswari lives in Meghalaya. Due to her geographical location a different state administration, Birubala could not solve the problem yet.

### **Impact of this evil practice**

Suspected witches are frequently the victims of `mob violence'. They are usually lynched or driven away from the village. The evident impact of this practice is the denial of right to life to an individual whose rights are otherwise protected by the constitution. Sometime if the woman is not killed by the villagers still the branded family suffers. The family will be socially confined and will be boycotted by the whole village and the community. This will result in loss of livelihood and movement will be restricted. This may also cause in forced migration or displacement and may cause illegal trafficking too **`My daughter committed suicide when she came to know that I am branded as a witch. She thought she will be branded as well and was afraid of the brutal torture as a matter of consequence'**, said Lansun Rabha. . The children



of the branded witches do not receive proper education and hence the next generations of the branded witches are too stigmatized.

### **Witch Hunting and violation of women's human rights**

Human Rights are strictly a state subject and human rights violation can be committed by a state only. Witch hunting is committed by non-state actors. International Human Rights Law remains silent over the atrocities committed by the non-state actors. It has been established that the State has direct responsibility for the actions of non-State actors that operate at the behest of the Government or with its knowledge or acquiescence<sup>7</sup>. In most cases, an isolated private killing is a domestic crime and does not give rise to State responsibility. However, where there is pattern of killings and the Government's response (in terms either of prevention or of accountability) is inadequate, the responsibility of the State is engaged. Under human rights law, the State is not only prohibited from directly violating the right to life, but is also required to ensure the right to life, and must meet its due diligence obligations to take appropriate measures to deter, prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators<sup>8</sup>.

The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women considered problems relating to the persecution of witches on a number of occasions. With regard to India, in 2007, the Committee noted its concern about the practice of witch-hunting, which it characterized as an extreme form of violence against women (CEDAW/C/IND/CO/3)<sup>9</sup>.

### **The Committee suggested in its report as follows**

Para26. In addition to previously expressed concerns about customary practices, such as dowry, sati and the Devadasi system, the Committee is concerned about the practice of witch-hunting which constitutes an extreme form of violence against women.

Para 27. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt appropriate measures to eliminate the practice of witch-hunting, prosecute and punish those involved, and provide for rehabilitation of, and compensation to, victimized women. It recommends that such measures be based on an analysis of its causes, including control over land. The Committee calls upon the State party to create public awareness of forms of violence against women rooted in custom as an infringement of women's human rights.

The Committee recommended that the State party adopt appropriate measures to eliminate the practice, to prosecute and punish those involved, and provide for rehabilitation of, and compensation to, victimized women. It also linked the issue to the struggle for control over land by recommending that the necessary measures be identified on the basis of an analysis of such causes. In 2002, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, also drew attention to these problems in India, Nepal and South Africa;

Initiatives of AMSS in search of a remedy

In Assam, several women's rights groups spearheaded by Assam Mahila Samata Society have initiated addressing the issue of witch hunting and have been pressing for a law or policy to eradicate this practice. The practical problem faced by the activists while dealing with the cases of witch hunting is the lack of availability of witnesses.' When the whole community commits the crime who will give witness against whom?' said Mamoni Saikia, District Programme co-ordinator, DIU, AMSS, Goalpara, who is working on the issues of witch hunting since 1998 and has dealt with 38 cases of witch hunting along with other team members. The AMSS functionaries also informed that police consider these cases as 'normal' cases and don't take prompt action sometimes.

### Report and recommendation of the consultation on witch hunting

A State-level consultation on witch-hunting organized by Assam Mahila Samata Society on December 10, 2010 at Indian Institute of Bank Management and adopted certain recommendation after extensive discussion on the issues related to the crime of witch hunting. The concerns and recommendation is represented here in tabular form. Detailed report can be found in the Annexure.

Result of the practice of witch hunting	Present mechanism /intervention to handle the issue	Residues in present mechanism /intervention /system	Recommendation from the group
<p><b>Isolation:</b> -The accused women &amp; her family are isolated. Human security and fear psychosis and trauma Social boycott Forced Migration Abetment of suicide Security to person and property Rights to life Superstition is carried out from generation to generation</p>	<p>Project Prahari of Assam Police Department. Some organizations are taking field based intervention to resist this practice. (Like AMSS, AIDWA, Some Sah Mozdur Santha, ABSU, WinG, Assam, All Bodo women Justice Forum Assam Network etc) Accused women can fight for her justice under IPC/CRPC.</p>	<p><b>Intervention under Project Prahari</b> is not in a continuous manner and so it is unable to minimize the deep rooted belief.  Such organizations are very few in number. Also there is no clear policy of the Govt. to involve CBOs/Women's groups/NGOs.</p>	<p>There should be continuous efforts from the department.  Trauma counseling centres and retreat centre  <b>Nari Adalata</b> at the Panchayet level or village development council level  <b>Enactment</b> of a special law specifically on witch hunting</p>
<p><b>Forced Displacement:</b> The accused woman is compelled to leave the village &amp; take refuge in other place.</p>	<p>Facilities and immediate responses of Health Department to diseased people of rural/remote area impacts on combating witch hunting issue.  State Women Commission, Assam is taking steps to combat the witch hunting issue.</p>	<p><b>Though accused women can take help</b> from legal system, but she is unable to do that because of her displacement, loss of livelihood, lack of community and family support. It is more like a social rather than criminal issue. Still , the issue is not much considered as a human right violation issue</p>	<p><b>Bring up</b> a state policy by involving grassroots organizations to combat witch hunting and associated violence.  <b>The legal system</b> should be well responsive &amp; sensitive towards women.</p>
<p><b>Break down of family:</b> - When the accused woman is</p>	<p>State Women Commission, Assam is taking steps to combat the witch hunting issue.</p>	<p><b>Lack of proper</b> education, health facilities among people, especially in rural/remote areas, where the issue is rampant</p>	<p>Study on customary practices against women</p>

ousted, her family breaks. The husband may marry another woman & children miss their mother badly.

**Social stigma:** - Accusation as a witch is a social stigma for a woman. **Psychological imbalance:** - Often the accused woman loses her psychological balance & is treated as a mad in the aftermath of accusation. **Loss of property:** - The accused woman loses control over her & her family property. **Loss of livelihood:** - The accused woman is not offered works. She is exempted even if she was employed. Many accused women are to re-struggle for livelihood in middle-age or in old age which is very difficult. **Children's education hampered:** - Children of the accused woman are treated with unfriendly manner. Finding themselves aloof in school they end up as drop outs. This challenges the RTE, which recommends education for all under 14. **Non acceptance:** -

## **Involve panchayati raj**

institution for investigation and monitoring

**Health education** through a vigorous campaign at the witch hunting prone area  
**Mind set change** through early intervention in the school level  
Rescue, shelter & rehabilitate the survivors  
Shelter homes are to be provided with adequate facilities  
Protect & socially reintegrate the survivors  
Street play, strong media role  
Involvement of Gram Panchayat/VCDC/VDP  
Women's group/Women federation/Youth club for community level intervention  
Opening a helpline  
Emergency service to accused women by police & health department.

Proper documentation & monitoring of the cases

Society, even most of the time her parental family refuse to accept the accused woman on any occasion.

**Trafficking:** - The accused woman & their children are often trafficked, which they would never resist because they want to get rid of the mental trauma they are suffering here.

Bihar was first state in India to pass the Prevention of Witch (Dayan) Practices Act of 1999. This was followed by Jharkhand's Anti-Witchcraft Act in 2001 along with the 2005/2006 Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan laws. There is no such law in Assam. Except a project called Project Prahari by Assam Police there is no legal measure to curb this crime. This project too is not a continuous action.

General criminal laws are inadequate to solve this problem as it is not only a criminal offence but also a social offence. Various women's groups in Assam have demanded a proper legislation to eradicate this discriminatory practice against women and her family. Only time will determine if this practice can be eradicated like that of the sati custom.

## **Annexure\_I**

· **Full report of the Consultation**

· **Proposed action plan prepared by AMSS which was submitted to SWC and Social Welfare Deptt for kind action**

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### **First hand Statistics on witch hunting from Goalpara district**

#### **Annexure 1: Report of the one day consultation on witch hunting organized by AMSS**

State level consultation on witch hunting organized by Assam Mahila Samata Society (Mahila Samkhya Programme of GOI) at Indian Institute of Bank Management on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2010. The consultation was attended by about 60 participants consisting of civil society members, victims and their families AMSS functionaries, AMSS federation members, government officials, media personnel and academicians.

Witch hunting is a superstition practiced in northeastern states in particularly in Assam is wide spread among the

communities like Rabha, Hajong, Bodo, Adivasi etc. A witch is believed to be one who practices black magic and as a result brings evil to the community. Most of the victims are women though sometime men are also branded as witch. Welcome address for the meeting was delivered by Gitarani Bhattacharya, State Programme Director, AMSS. In her inaugural address, Gita Bhattacharya welcomed the participants and said, 'AMSS while working at the grass root level found the issues of witch-hunting as one of the primary superstitions among the people in certain districts of Assam. This practice violates basic human rights and is a discrimination against women. We found that until and unless the practice eradicated the basic values of life will not reach the women and they will never enjoy the basic human rights. Mobilizing women into platforms i.e. to evolve women collectives (Sangha) at village level is a major task of AMSS. Thereby AMSS facilitating sangha women to realize such kind of practice as a superstition nothing else. Based on sangha's pace AMSS had started to take up various activities like formal/informal discussion, workshop, training etc. to evolve participatory approach to address the issue. Since the belief is deep rooted . It was very difficult to motivate the community as well as the workers. Over the years AMSS developed a cadre among the Sangha member at the grass root level through which it has been possible to address this issue. Biru Bala Rabha<sup>10</sup> is one of the Sangha members wedge who has been playing an active role to eradicate the practice

10. Biru Bala Rabha (a Sangha member of AMSS) was nominated for "Nobel Peace Prize, 2005" by an international association called "1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize, 2005" as the recognition of her effort to eliminate age old witch hunting among the Rabha community of Balijana Block of Goalpara District.along with other Sangha members of DIU, AMSS Goalpara. Today we would like to discuss our experiences while working on this issue. Today different speakers and victims will speak in this occasion'.

Victims of witch hunting shared their ordeals. They are Khedai Bala Rabha, Lansun Rabha, Rashmi Bala Rabha, Suguni Rabha. Please see the case studies section of the report for the details of their sufferings.

**Mamoni Saikia:-**AMSS started working in Goalpara in 1998 through the creation of different '*sangha*'(village level women's group)'. This created awareness about women rights and aware about the superstitions like witch hunting. Mamoni Saikia District Programme Coordinator, District Implementation Unit of Assam Mahila Samata Society ,Goalpara spoke on the occasion and said, 'When the sangha was created in Goalpara we discussed about the issue of witch hunting and we asked the victims not to shed tears but to protest and take help of law. From 2000, we started addressing cases of witch hunting. We are now dealing with 38 cases which are very severe cases where women were brutally tortured and we try to help them on an emergency basis. We took them police station. Not only in our sangha but our impact is felt all over the Goalpara district. In many cases, women didn't get help from police station. And these women came here. We have 5 victims here including one from Meghalaya. We are also covering West Garos Hills and East Garos Hills. Out of the 38 cases, 32 cases are solved and 6 still pending \_two from Goalpara and four from Garos hills. If someone suffers from diseases or anything else like that then a woman is branded. Even local healers also 'detect' and brand women as witch. Some time due to brutal torture women are forced to confess themselves as witch. Then they are thrown away from the village. In this way innocent women are deprived of their legitimate rights and are deprived of their property and other sources of livelihood. Their family life is destroyed. Today we feel that like AMSS other civil society organizations need to be involved. Even in Meghalaya, police response was very irresponsible and completely negligent of their duty. Even state enforcement officers like officers are not free from the belief of the superstitions like witch hunting. They believe women are witches and suggest derogatory measure against the women instead of helping her to live in her own house'. Mamoni Saikia also shared similar ordeal she faced while working on the issues of witch hunting which she feels are very tragic. She said, 'as Women Human Rights Defender, WHRD, I faced harassment and threat from the villagers. There are many recent cases and women have filed FIRs and police has taken no action. These women are vulnerable and can happen anything to her that may even take their lives. Hence prompt action

from the administration is required'.

### **Kula Saikia,**

ADGP Police Department spoke on the occasion. He said, 'Mamoni Saikia may know more about the practice of the witch hunting. We should not think that witch hunting is not a problem of this place. It is practiced all over the world. It is practiced in Germany, Norway, Sweden and many people were killed in this way. Even in London a girl was drawn in river branding her as witch'.

He added, 'my personal experiences is that in 2002, I was the Superintendent of Police of Kokrajhar, before that I was working in Washington for a year. I found one case of April 2000, Kachugaon PS. Where 5 people killed in Thaibarkuchi village as a result of this witch hunting believe. I saw the documents and it appealed me. I wanted to know who first said that they were witches. I heard that some people came in a vehicle and chased them. They were drawn towards the river and killed into pieces. Pieces were not put together as they may become witches again. In that cases about 25 people were arrested but they all got bail. Even children, too, killed parents on suspicion as witches. My grass root experiences resulted into the project Prahari. "Project Prahari" was launched in August 2001 in a backward tribal village, Thaibarkuchi in Kokrajhar. The project was aimed at fighting witch-hunting by uplifting the socio-economical status of the people.

Personal believe is different from the belief as witch hunting. In witch hunting personal belief becomes the belief of the community and hence it is so wide spread. It is a developmental issue and requires holistic approach. We need a new law to address this issue and we need to work together. Thank you'.

**Justice Sujit Barman Roy**, Chairperson of Assam Human Rights Commission spoke and said, 'I feel sorry for the victims who came from the village level that I am speaking in English. Today is the international human rights day and the society has chosen this day for this consultation on such an important issue and I congratulate the organizers. Since ancient times before the birth of human civilization, people all over the world have a tendency to entertain various evil practices. Even today in big cities, highly educated people are still not completely liberated from such superstitious belief. Example a newly married couple, the husband died in the an accident and the in laws started believing that the bride is auspicious and stated torturing the young daughter in law she is reduced to a maid servant to do all the household chores. The same system works here and manifests into witch hunting. In 1976, UNESCO made an attempt to establish the rights of women. Our constitution recognizes equal rights. We have plenty of laws to fight against this type of menace like witch hunting. Only the authorities confer with the power to fight against this menace apart from educating the community as it is taking place in remote and tribal areas and soon as possible. For this reason to organize such consultation of awareness programme, I request you to organize over the state and we would cooperate with you. I am told that some legislation has been made, new law is not required only the enforcement of the laws is required. These are all penal code offences and police need to work. If someone is killed as witch the section of murder is required. Also the lack of witness is a problem. Only awareness programme in the actual places can cure this. Women Commission should take proactive steps to organize such meeting. If a woman is victimized, she and her family should get minimum shelter and food in government house. It takes lots of evidences to prove a charge of murder. Quality evidence is required for the perpetrator of such crime. Police has to be more proactive. I have no other remedy to suggest. Mere making law without proper implementation of the law is will continue and will never be eradicated. Aristotle states, 'an uncriticised or unexamined live if not worthy of living'.

**Various participants representing different region of the state spoke in the consultation.**



**Josoda Brahma**, from Kokrajhar, Kokrajhar district, Assam: 'Recently on Sept 7, 2010 an incident happened near the town areas in this age of internet. There are also political agendas associated with this issue. People to save themselves use this practice and also try to hide such things. The incident of Sept 7, we went to the police administration and got no desirable help or response. I am so much depressed with the response with the authorities that I don't know how to solve this use. This is evil practice practiced by the whole community and hence leaders of the community to take the side of the village leaders who are sometime associated with the furtherance of the crime. Two prominent political figures are from the same place. But our version of the issues didn't get focused in the media. Something else is reflected. We could save the woman. They were not killed but their hair were cut and humiliated in front of community. True stories and issues are not reported the true issues. Police is also threatened by the villagers. Whole village gets together and they are so strong that even police proved helpless. The process of detection of witches and their punishment is also different from place to place. We need to come out of the consultation and does something concrete'.

**Monomoti Barman**, GOLD ( GOLD, an organization working on trafficking issue), Guwahati, Assam: 'No victim of witch hunting took shelter in our home. It is sad that even in this modern age. If any victim comes to us, we are ready to provide shelter'.

**Sheetal, North East Network, Guwahati, Assam:** 'We have not dealt with any cases but got to hear from media reporting. Right to land is the root cause for the deprivation of women. Health facilities and other education system needs to checked in. and we need a state policy or a law to deal with this evil practice'.

**Roshmi Devi, Goalpara Assam :** 'They started torturing me. Cut my hair. My son went to police station. Police came and saved me. One year I was tortured as witch. No one helped me. AMSS helped me. I used to practice herbal medicine and that's why I was branded as witch. Even police couldn't help me to get rid of. I could go home after a year. I have one son one daughter in law. The village made a law that if anyone talked to me there will be 500 rupees fine. Villagers said that I eat my husband. I am totally isolated now'.

**Mamoni Saikia**, Goalpara, Assam shared the story of Laxmi Rabha; 'Laxmi Rabha and her family was chased away from the village. Mother and daughter Anjana was branded as witches. Villagers alleged that the daughter has learned black magic and *mantra* and taught the mother and hence both are branded as witches. She could not even take shelter in her in laws village. Her daughter's job is also forcibly taken away by others in the village. Whole village is now against her and boycotts her'. Her elder daughter committed suicide with the fear that she will also be branded as witches. There is no proof that she committed suicide because of that issue. However everyone believes so. She was married and has two children too. [for details see the case studies section].

**Champai Rabha**, Goalpara district, Assam and a survivor of witch hunting: 'One villager, in fact my cousin, who fall sick branded me as witch. Some boys came and called me to their house and took me to their house. *Ojha* came for 'identification' and ascertain that I am a witch'.

**Representative of Nikhil Rabha Mahila Parishad, Goalpara:** 'Panchayet level or village council we can do something like Nari adalat which may help little bit to tackle the menace. We are addressing these issues since 1980. We had meeting with men too. During that time no murder took place. Since the women's NGOs are formed men became aggressive and incidents of witch hunting became more. We want imprisonment of the killers of the woman branding as witch. We have formed 'Nari Mukti Adhikar Mancha' to address this issue in Assam and Meghalaya'.

**Nirju Bharali, Assam Mahila Samata Society, Guwahati, Assam :** 'We a system attached with the various bills like

the education bill to address this issue as children of the accused women are sufferer. Two years back even an Ahom family was targeted as well. 30% educated people believes that there exist the evil of witches as per our study of a sample of 2000 people in Goalpara district'.

**Dr. Sewali Kurmi**, Rastriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi, Guwahati, Assam: `During Kali puja, the priest declares who are the witches in the village. Personal grudges prevail in many cases and about 90% victims are women. Adivasi has 97 sub divisions. Santhal Kuni community practices

this evil. This is practiced among the Nepalis as well. Witches are called '*bakshi*' in their language.

**A participant:** `Witches branded in Nepali communities are forced to remains cloth less for particular nights and forced to pray for whole night. It is observed that this evil practice is spreading to other communities as well'.

**Bhabani Rabha, Goalpara, Assam:** `I work with AMSS since 2004. Mamoni Saikia helped us with lots of cases. Some of us were out of the house for 10-12 years . Those cases were solved by the effort of District Implementation Unit of Assam Mahila Samata Society , Goalpara. Many men threatened me to kill branding as witch. If I say that I work with AMSS, I took as witch. Priests are also responsible as they brands who are a witch'.

**Gita Bhattacharya, AMSS, Assam:** Said that when AMSS started its literacy drive women in Goalpara were prohibited to join the literacy centers as the people believed that the books used in these centers would also teach women to fight against the traditional practice of Witch hunting. Because, the sanghas had already started to discuss the issue in their regular meetings.

**Tilottoma Misra, Academician, Guwahati:** `We are hopeful now after all these sharing that silently movement has been staterted at grassroot level to eradicate the issue. Generally traditional definitions are given by men. Witch hunting is taken as a tradition by men and it is taken as identity. Ethnic revivalism has taken witch craft too. Secondly, our constitution has given men and women equal rights. But do we have real quality? As per Hindu succession Act women get almost equal share in property, but how many women can do it. We should take witch hunting as a human rights issue'.

**Junu Bora, Progotisil Nari Santha, Assam:** `I am disappointed to know about the women who suffered. Whole socio economic issues are associated with the issue of witch hunting. Women are also tortured in Tinsukia on superstitious nonsense though not necessarily as witch. Even educated people are not free from this evil belief. It is also true that even police and women are also not free from this issues and the habit of discrimination against women. We have to fight against the whole community even those women whose thought are against the women's well being. There are plenty of laws but there are not helpful to women and women are still continued to be deprived. We women have to take initiatives to solve this issue and we need to strengthen our movement.'

**Joshomoyee Devi, Associat Proffesor, IIBM, Guwahati, Assam:** `Whoever raises voice they are attacked and it is more in case of women. This discrimination against women is so deep rooted it is evident from the process of detection of witches'.

### **Valedictory function**

**Mridula Saharia, State Women's Commission, Assam:** `Today is the international human rights day. This day has

raised awareness about human rights all over the world since 1948. In 1993 GOI human rights act was passed and formed human rights commission. This body reacts as a bridge between people and government on the issues of human rights . Similarly women's commission, too, address the issues of the women. Article 14, 15, 16 of Indian constitution provided equality to women moreover several article of the directive principles of state policy are also for the benefit of women. Women's honour, rights and education health and social advancement in fact all aspect women are required to be empowered. This is the main function of the women's; commission. Why we needed a women's commission? We have seen that even after independence women are still far behind the empowerment. Several acts were passed on women, may be around 50. Even then national women's commission was formed in 1990. Today on this human rights day, even after 60 years of independence the heinous practice of witch hunting is practiced. This is always practiced in border area. Illiteracy and superstitions are the main reason behind this menace. Lack of health awareness too contributed to this problem. Women must get economic social rights but also civil and political rights. We must enjoy the human rights. We have visited victim's family and has reported and sent recommendation to the assembly. We submit report every year. I hope that we can act on the recommendations forwarded to us today. We always forward the recommendations at any time in the year. So I thought we will take this as an interim measure and send the recommendations to the government and push for a law to protect women from the menace of witch hunting. We can work as a bridge between NGOs and government. We also have duties along with rights. So we have to do our duty. We are mothers and women are working from dawn to dusk and this is without any pay. There is no difference between men and women except the biological difference. Mother is first teacher for a child. Women must get the benefits of the different project for their empowerment. Economic empowerment for women is very important. I congratulate AMSS for organizing this consultation. And we will forward the recommendations to the government and we will endeavor for a law on witch hunting in Assam and I promise to take this forward'.

#### **Commissioner, Social Welfare Department: `**

I understood the gravity of the issue of the witch hunting when I visited Kokrajhar. About 200 people are targeted as witches every year. I have witnessed many heinous crimes. Sometime the young boys are forced to do such crimes. So there are reasons like illiteracy and health issue. I have observed after analyzing about 200 cases that there is no health facility in those areas where such killings are taking place. This has resulted into mis-concepts like witch hunting. We have to prevent this. We have campaigned to raise awareness in different places in lower Assam. But still we don't mean to suppress our traditional knowledge. We heard that land grabbing is common. So in such situation single and vulnerable women are targeted as witches to take away their land. I would like to inform you that government of Assam with give a grant to 10 thousand rupees to single women as one time grant. Also single widows will also be granted. If there is 2500 women are affected, we don't know how many women are affected. We don't know how to integrate these women. We need NGOs to help us. We can have a guideline on witch hunting initially and check how it works. Then we can go for legislation in this regard. Sensitization of police force is required. Let's make a policy on witch hunting and see its impact before making a concrete law. We can initiate discussion and work with women's commission and if any individual submit any suggestion, we can take it up and discuss. Thank you'.

After that AMSS handed over the recommendation and the draft policy which had been evolved through the consultation to Chairperson, State Women Commission, Assam and Commissioner, Social Welfare Dept., GOA.

The consultation ended with vote of thanks from AMSS.

#### **Annexure II**

## **Proposed plan**

### **Focus Area :**

**Identification of operational area-** Area needs to be identified in the state by involving different stakeholders for strategic intervention. Stakeholder means Academic institution/ women commission / NGOs / District administration/ Social welfare Department to be involved to carry out a study in the state in some identified pockets. Based on the findings of the study, awareness agenda shall be designed

**Prevention of Witch Hunting-** "Prevention of witch hunting" is a major focus of proposed plan of action central to intervention strategies that need to be developed. Activities to be designed separately for state, district, block and community/village level focusing on prevention of witch hunting which will help to achieve long term result in addressing the issue of witch hunting

**Capacity building of Stakeholders-** Paragraph 26, 27 of CEDAW Report (15<sup>th</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2007) recognize witch hunting as a violation of human rights. Nation should provide shelter to the accused women and create awareness among the community. People involved in witch hunting should get adequate punishment. Hence the focus on interventions of the proposed plan of action should be to build capacities of PRIs/VCDCs, Social Welfare Department, Women Commission, Police Department, Health Department, NGOs/ CBOs and others to take action for prevention and reporting.

**Women's participation in prevention of witch hunting-** Women themselves can play a vital role in addressing witch hunting issues at the community level. Women collectives such as the SHGs, Mahila Samitees, Mahila Sanghas, Women Federation at Gram Panchayat and Block level, Adolescent Girls' club, Mothers' group and the other women groups formed by Govt. organization/NGOs can create protective environment. When women/ girls come together, they share knowledge/information, develop capacities to handle social issues, raise voice for their rights and protection (Mahila Samakhya Programme in Assam cites good example in Goalpara district to demonstrate the strength of women's group in handling witch hunting issue). Hence the action plan proposes that activities to be designed for capacity building of women/ girls' group in identified pockets so that collectives can play vital role in awareness generation and prevention of witch hunting.

### **Capacity building of community level functionaries to build protective environment-**

ASHAs, ANMs, School teacher and President/ Secretary of yubak sangha (Youth club) to be involved in the awareness generation programme so that they can play crucial role towards promotion of protective environment. This plan of action proposes the capacity build programme for these community level functionaries.

### **State law against witch hunting-**

This plan of action proposes to have a state law for elimination of witch hunting. Government of Assam to prepare the same.

The propose plan of action identify the following stakeholders to deal with the issues of witch hunting

- Police Department
- Social welfare Department
- State women commission
- Community level functionaries (ASHA, ANM, Teacher etc.)
- CBOs/NGOs · PRI/VCDC
- District administration
- Women'/adolescent girls' group
- Women cell
- Village Defence Organisation

### Annexure III

#### List of Witch Victims Men & Women, District Implementation Unit, Assam Mahila Samata Society, Goalpara

Sl.No.	Name of Women/ Man	State	District	Block	Panchayat	Village	Date of case beginning	Date of case settled
1	Sirani Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Nihalibhita	20-5-00	30-10-04
2	Anita Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Rongsai	8-3-98	15-4-03
3	Khedaibala Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Chatabari	11-7-01	10-8-01
4	Jonali Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Borjhora Dhaparbhita	19-5-01	1-6-01
5	Late Jogaibala Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Thakurbhila	25-4-90	21-12-02
6	Manomaya Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Joyram kuchi	Galsira	2-11-04	20-11-04
7	Bhuleswari Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Baida	19-7-98	30-8-04
8	Sipati Rabha	Meghalaya	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur	Tikrikilla	Borbatapar	2-5-06	08-05-06
9	Henarani Hajong	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dhamar	Medhipara	15-11-05	10-12-05
			West					

10	Ratila Rabha	Meghalaya	Garo Hills	Lakhipur	Tikrikilla	Shamaguri	07-09-05	05-10-05
11	jotahna Changma	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Rongsai	06-10-04	14-06-05
12	Biva Hato	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Lela	RangsiKukurkata	10-07-03	12-06-03
13	Lanchan Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Rangjuli	Dhanubhanga	Daudhaibhita	03-03-03	31-03-03
14	Sabitri Hajowari	Assam	Goalpara	Rangjuli	Dhanubhanga	Phakirmara	20-04-01	25-04-01
15	Santi Khaklari	Assam	Goalpara	Rangjuli	Rangjuli	RongjuliSarapara	27-10-03	28-10-03
16	Nanda Hajowari (M)	Assam	Goalpara	Rangjuli	Rangjuli	RongjuliSarapara	27-10-03	28-10-03
17	Jamuna Daimari	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Lela	Mandalgram	20-03-06	28-10-03
18	Putuli Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Lela	Mandalgram	20-03-06	28-10-03
19	Ramila Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Baida	14-07-06	25-08-06
20	Sujya Bala Bodo	Assam	Kamrup	Lakhipur	Boko	Boko	03-10-06	10-10-06
21	Sinte Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Lela	Topolakhua	29-04-07	01-05-07
22	Champai Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Balijana	Bodohapur	Meghadum	16-11-06	26-11-06
23	Saraswati Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Hatikhila, Dhuppara	09-07-07	20-07-07
24	Kortan Rabha(M)	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur	Dadan	BagurkunaKerkhapar2Baida	17-10-06	02-11-06
25	Sarad Singh Marak (M)	Assam	Goalpara	Balijana	Rajapara	Gosaidhua	05-12-08	10-04-09
26	Khitish Rabha (M)	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Darangiri	Doramari	14-08-06	30-08-06
27	Jayanti Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Koshdhua	Darangiri	Doramari	14-08-06	30-08-06
	Sarathi							24-10-



28	Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur		Chotosingiri	09-10-06	06
29	Renuka Radha	Assam	Goalpara	Balijana		Borjuli	18-10-08	21-11-08
30	Rina Rabha	Assam	Goalpara	Lakhipur		Deepkai Puranipara	31-12-08	20-01-09
31	Lakhmi Rabha	Assam	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur		Jurigaon	06-07-09	16-05-10
32	Anjana Rabha	Assam	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur		Jurigaon	06-07-09	16-05-10

### Cases not settled

Sl. No	Name of Women/ Man	State	District	Block	Panchayat	Village	Date of case beginning	Date of case settled
33	Raniswari Rabha	Meghalaya	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur	Nagarapara	2No.Naguapara	07-04-06	
34	Sanabala Rabha	Meghalaya	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur	Tikirikilla	TikirikillaMeghalaya	27-11-05	
35	Yamuna Bala Rabha	Meghalaya	West Garo Hills	Lakhipur	Tikirikilla	TikirikillaMeghalaya	29-10-07	
36	Thuljong Rabha	Meghalaya	Pub Garopahar	Lakhipur	Jerduba	Jerduba	08-09-09	
37	Parthi Rabha	Assam	Golapara	Lakhipur	Puranibhita	Kamarguri	24-04-10	
38	Suguni Rabha	Assam	Golapara	Lakhipur	Dadan	Chatabari	20-11-10	

### Glossary

Daini : Witch

Shradha : last rites of the person after his death

Sheetala : a Hindu deity

Ojha : Sorcerer or local healer

Diksha : to become a devotee

Mantra : spiritual verses

### Abbreviation

P.S. : Police Station  
S.P. : Superintendent of Police  
DIU : District Implementation Unit  
VDP : Village Defence Party  
VCDC : Village Council Development Committee  
PRI : Panchayatiraj Institution  
CBO : Community Based Organization  
DC : Deputy Commissioner  
OC : Officer in Charge  
IGP : Inspector General of Police  
MHRD : Ministry of Human Resource Development.