



Know The Assam Witch Hunting

(Prohibition, Prevention
and Protection) Act, 2018

In a patriarchal society, the unequal power relation between men and women puts women in a disadvantageous position in which violence is used as a tool to dominate and keep them under control. Witch hunting is one such tool. Witch hunting is beyond superstition and illiteracy and is not limited to caste, tribe, religion or language. Women are majority targets although a few men have been accused as witches too.

Women have been blamed for personal tragedies, sickness, crop loss and deaths. Self proclaimed Bej or Ojas i.e., witch doctors enjoy impunity endorsed by their community and they see this labelling as a solution to many problems faced by the community. *Tikker, dahinir, ramini, bateloga, dainagorh, daini, dayan, chippi, jokhini* are different names given to women who are labeled as witches. Witch hunting not only affects an individual but also the kith and kin of the targeted person. It is a gender based crime against women that violates her right to a life of safety and dignity. It is used as a tool by which conflicts, tensions and jealousies are used to restore status quo swiftly and absolutely in a manner that evokes little or no opposition or intervention from the community. Even state authorities mandated to protect people remain mute spectators.

On July 19, 2021, government informed the State Legislative Assembly that a total of 100 witch hunting cases have been registered in Assam between January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2021.

Accurate or gender segregated data is not available.

State government will also

- Provide free counseling and medical aid to aggrieved persons and their families.
- Establish protective homes and rehabilitation centers for affected persons.
- Ensure rehabilitation of aggrieved persons through different schemes.
- Grant adequate compensation to victims or their nearest kins.

* Any public servant who violates his/her/their duty will have to face departmental action or a fine upto ₹10,000/- for misconduct.

* If a government officer or any other person undertakes any action in good faith to prevent or stop witch-hunting, then no suit or prosecution shall lie against him/her/them.

The Assam Victim Compensation Scheme, 2012 was amended by the Governor of Assam in 2019 by revising the quantum of compensation awarded in the Scheme. State government shall allot a separate budget for the purpose of the scheme every year. The scheme is operated by Assam State Legal Services Authority through the District Legal Services Authority.

Amount of Compensation in cases of witch hunting:

Loss of life	Min. 7,00,000/- to Max. 8,00,000/-
Bodily injuries (less than 20% to more than 50%)	Min. 3,00,000/- to Max. 8,00,000/-
Psychological injury	Min. 3,00,000/- to Max. 4,00,000/-
Loss of earnings, employment, education	Min. 5,00,000/- to Max. 8,00,000/-

FOR ASSISTANCE DIAL

100 (Assam Police), 181 (Women's Helpline) &
0361 2220150 (Assam State Commission for Women)

Contact your headman/woman, Panchayat and Village Council
Development Committee (VCDC).

For more information, call North East Network 94350 17824 &

..... District.....

This information is available in English, Bodo, Assamese

www.northeastnetwork.org

