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The intersectional issue of language, identity and gender has been a potent factor in determining the developmental indices of a particular region especially necessary for assessing the multidimensional women narratives of the North East India often muffled by mainland parameters of recording misogyny and racism. In literary paradigms 'lived experiences' in quest for identity are intersectional in nature in correlation to the observed practices of deterrent social forces that make women subservient in discourses of power. Gender interventions in India's North East cannot be studied in isolation without deliberations on the complex socio-political interlaced of language, culture, ecology and economy. This book makes a partial attempt to address some of these issues through the elaborate editorial chapter and the fifteen contributory essays spread out through the two parts of the

book divided as i) Society and Culture & ii) Ecology and Economy. Overall the book aims at laying a brick for carving an eco-feminist base to the study of gender issues of the North East from an interdisciplinary platform of intersecting literature, ecology and social sciences.



EXCELLER BOOKS
A GLOBAL PRESS



ISBN 978-93-90746-25-5



9 789390 746255

Non-fiction \$12 ₹350

www.excellerbooks.com

Language, Ecology & Gender in North East India

Edited by
Dr. Sabreen Ahmed

Interface: Language, Ecology and Gender in North East India

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ISBN: 978-93-90746-25-5

First published in India in 2021 by Exceller Books

Address: G1, Dream Apartment, Degree College Road, Belgharia,
Kolkata, 700056, India



EXCELLER BOOKS
A GLOBAL PRESS

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DEDICATION

To all the resilient women of India's North East

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4| Witch Hunting, Patriarchy and Religious Sanction: The Case of Bodos of Assam

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Abstract

Witchcraft in many societies is an accepted reality. Idea of evil which is expressed in terms of witchcraft is a part of the belief system of one's world view in many societies. One of the most disturbing periods in the history of Western Christianity, particularly with respect to issues to women and sexuality, was the widespread witch persecution of the early modern era. This practice continues to exist in different societies and serve different purposes. Among the various communities affected by this evil practice, the Bodos, a plains tribe of Assam is one. This paper will try to understand the continued practice of witch-hunting in the Bodo community and see how it is more related to patriarchy than to superstition and tribalism.

Keywords: *Bodos, Assam, Witch Hunting, Patriarchy, Tribalism*

4.1. Introduction

Witchcraft in many societies is an accepted reality. Idea of evil which is expressed in terms of witchcraft is a part of the belief system of one's world view in many societies. One of the most disturbing periods in the history of Western Christianity, particularly with respect to issues to women and sexuality, was the widespread witch persecution of the early modern era. Between 1450 and 1750 in various parts of Europe and European colonies, religious and secular authorities undertook a sustained effort to identify and eliminate practitioners of witchcraft. The vast majority