

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Razina Ahmed, Registration Number: 2170137, PhD Scholar at the School of Law, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 29 June 2026 at 11.00 am in Room No. 628, 6th Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **The Legal Framework Relating to Witch-Hunting with Specific Reference to Assam: A Gender Analysis**
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 22 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Witch-hunting in India is a serious gender-based violence based on superstition, social economic vulnerability and age-old patriarchy. Despite the constitutional safeguards afforded under Articles 14, 15 and 21, women, especially the elderly, widowed and socially marginalized women, have continued to fall prey to such forms of violence disproportionately. This study explores the problem of witch-hunting as a socio-legal problem and brings its character as a violation of fundamental rights and international human rights norms, including those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to the fore. The study explores the socio-legal aspects of witch-hunting in particular reference to that of Assam. Assam record large numbers of cases of witch-hunting and peculiar tribal socio-cultural context. Assam has a dedicated law related to witch-hunting, the Assam Witch-Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2015. Adopting a mixed methodology, the study uses both doctrinal studies and empirical fieldwork. The study includes survey data, interviews with representatives of NGOs, police officials and community stakeholders, as well as statistical analysis in an attempt to test hypotheses pertaining to legal inadequacies, social structures and gender bias. The findings reveal that the persistence of witch-hunting is facilitated by the unwieldy structure of legislation at the country level, absence of an omnibus piece of central legislation, poor implementation of the law in place, and deeply rooted gender stereotypes. While the legislation passed in Assam is progressive when it comes to its implementation, it is inconsistent in how it runs. The study identifies the importance of NGOs and urges for legal reform and concerted efforts. The study concludes with a call for an extensive central legal framework, harmonization of the existing state laws, gender-sensitive policing, as well as an increased cooperation between state institutions and civil society actors. It highlights about the need for a multidisciplinary response that combines legal reform and social change in order to curb witch-hunting as a form of gendered violence successfully.

Keywords: *Witch-hunting, Assam, gender-based violence, human rights, Assam Witch- Hunting Act 2015.*

Publications:

1. **Ahmed, R., & Sapna, S. (2023).** A psychological analysis of the structural, socio-cultural, and legal aspects of women's rights, their societal development & superstition-gender-based violence and their eradication alarming practice. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, 6(8s), 140–155.
2. **Ahmed, R., & Sapna, S. (2025).** Midwifery, witchcraft, and forensic blindness: A gendered bioanalytical inquiry into historical practices. *Journal of Applied Bioanalysis*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.53555/jab.v11i4.368>