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# Success Story

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**The Helping hand of DLSA Darrang to a “Witch Hunting” victim**

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For ASLSA Annual Report

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## The Helping hand of DLSA Darrang to a “Witch Hunting” victim

Men circled the poor woman; her fists were wrapped around thick iron pipes and wooden sticks. The woman was huddled on the ground in the remote village of Darrang district and whimpered as the crowd gathered. One young child had died in the village; resulting which the woman was being called *Dayini*, the Assamese word for WITCH. She was accused of feasting on the young Child’s soul.

The incident of attacking the woman, in Darrang district of Assam happened in the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, which is one of the thousands of witch hunting cases that take place in India every year. More than 2,500 Indians have been chased, tortured and killed in such hunts.

In this incident the victimized woman is Phulmoni Nayak. She is 45 years old and belongs to a tea tribe community. She is illiterate, very poor and her small hut is in the middle of the Konwarpara village. On that horrifying day, a group of 30 to 40 people forcefully entered her small hut, tied her with a rope and cut her hair before beating her with plastic pipes and sticks. She was alone during the incident as both of her sons stay away from her after their marriage. A small unhealthy child who was suffering from illness for a few years had died recently and because of this, the villagers’ superstitions made them believe that Phulmoni Nayak was behind this act and soon they treated her as a witch, which was based on superstitions and completely a irrational and ridiculous decision of the villagers.



The victimised woman with  
sallow eyes and face ,after 4days  
of the incident

The District Legal Services Authority of Darrang tried to track the incident, when this dangerous incident came to light from the local Newspapers only. The incident was specially taken care by Shri Mukul

Chetia, Secretary, DLSA Darrang. The Secretary immediately informed the case to Shri. Anjal kumar Dutta, Project Coordinator, Assam State Legal Services Authority, who was also in charge of Darrang district besides 9 other districts of the state. As per suggestion of Secretary DLSA, Darrang, Mr. Anjal Dutta accompanied with Ms. Deepsikha Sarma, Project Assistant, ASLSA, immediately rushed to the incident spot and started investigating this sensible matter with extra care. Both of them carefully interacted with



ASLSA staff doing the investigation of the  
incident and trying to convince the ill  
affetcts of such incidents

the villagers and the family members of the victimized woman about the incident and tried to make them aware of the ill effect of this kind of superstitious belief. During the investigation it came to light that on that day, the Police reached the spot on time and rescued the poor woman from the hands of the wild mob. The younger son of the woman informed the police about the situation. The police locked the hut of the poor woman as the wild mob vandalized the land papers, other properties and utensils inside the hut.

Soon after taking details of this terrifying incident, DLSA, Darrang has acted promptly and immediately tried to find the every possible way to help and support the poor woman victim.

Under the guidance of Secretary, DLSA Darrang, the team of ASLSA visited the shelter home situated at Dhula, where the victim was kept. They noted down the statement of the victim and initiated the process of giving her a fair compensation under Assam Victim Compensation Act 2012. She was called upon and also carried to the DLSA Darrang office and the formal procedures have already been initiated to help the victimized woman coming from

marginal community.



Awareness meeting on Witch Hunting by DLSA Darrang

in that village was also done by DLSA Darrang with the help of police. Soon DLSA Darrang is going to start a series of awareness camps on Witch Hunting menace in various surrounding areas, so that this kind of incident will never be repeated again. The victim Ms. Pholmoni Nayak expressed that the support by DLSA Darrang towards her in this crucial and miserable situation will help her to regain the confidence in the society.



This prompt act of DLSA Darrang assured her with some confidence to overcome the pathetic condition which she was facing every day. Ms. Phulmoni Nayak acknowledged that the compensation initiated by DLSA Darrang will help her for doing treatment of her injuries.

Meanwhile, without any further delay, DLSA Darrang had conducted an awareness meeting in that village with the help of local administration. Counseling of villagers was done in that meeting and the re-establishment of the victimised woman