

Folklore, Ethnobotany and the Construction of the Ethnic Self: Reading Arupa Patangia Kalita's *The Cursed Fields of Golden Rice*

Dharmendra Baruah^{*}

Abstract: Ethnobotany emerges as central to literature dealing with Bodo life as well as to the narrative construction the Bodo ethnic self. This paper seeks to examine instances of ethnobotanical expressions in *The Cursed Fields of Golden Rice*, a short story written by Arupa Patangia Kalita and translated from Assamese into English by Ranjita Biswas. It aims to explore how in the given story intergenerationally inherited ethnobotanical lore does not remain a mere backdrop to the main plot, but is transformed into a key site of regaining and recovering a much needed sense of identity. While doing so, the paper also examines how the story succeeds in celebrating relatively underexplored dimensions of resource management practices of the Bodos.

Keywords: Ethnobotany, identity, loss, dislocation, symbol, resource

^{*} The author is Assistant Professor, Department of English, Tezpur College.