Pseudotrachypus ancistrodes, a new combination for Meteoriopsis ancistrodes (Meteoriaceae)

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to define the current status of Meteoriopsis ancistrodes, which has been identified as a new addition to the South Indian bryoflora. The taxon has been variously treated by different workers from time to time, resulting in its initial placement under Pseudobarbella ancistrodes. Subsequently, in a taxonomic revision of the Meteoriaceae, Pseudobarbella was transferred to and synonymized under Pseudotrachypus. Thus in the present contribution Meteoriopsis ancistrodes is proposed as belonging in Pseudotrachypus, with the new combination P. ancistrodes. Diagnostic characters along with illustrations of the species and distinction from closely related Indian taxa, with which it may be confused, are discussed.

Key words: Bryoflora, Pseudotrachypus ancistrodes, South India, synonym

INTRODUCTION

Meteoriopsis M.Fleischer ex Brotherus (1906: 825) was circumscribed by Brotherus and included five species: M. ancistrodes (Renauld & Cardot) Brotherus (1906: 825), M. divergens (Mitten) Brotherus (1906: 826), M. reclinata (Müller Hal.) M.Fleischer ex Brotherus (1906: 826), M. sinensis (Müller Hal.) Brotherus (1906: 826) and M. squarrosa (Hooker) M.Fleischer ex Brotherus (1906: 826), the latter being the type species. Meanwhile M. squarrosa was reported from South India (Sedgwick 1910: 941, Dixon 1914: 64, Dabhade 1998: 103). A detailed study on the taxonomy of Indian mosses by Chopra (1975: 351) reported four species of Meteoriopsis, of which M. ancistrodes was previously reported from Garhwal (western Himalaya). Later on two other species; i.e., M. squarrosa and M. reclinata, were reported from South India (Srinivasan 1974: 28, Nair et al. 2005: 157). Gangulee (1974–78: 1352) reported four species of the genus from different parts of India. According to the checklist of Indian Mosses (Lal 2005: 88) Meteoriopsis has five species in the country, of which M. squarrosa, and M. formosana are distributed in western Himalaya, eastern Himalaya and Nepal; M. squarrosa is also reported from South India. Meteoriopsis reclinata shows its distribution in western Himalaya, eastern Himalaya, South India, central India and Nepal, whereas M. ancistrodes is restricted to western Himalaya and M. divergens to eastern Himalaya.

During the revisionary study made by Noguchi (1976: 338) for Asiatic species of Meteorieaeae, Meteoriopsis ancistrodes was treated at the varietal rank as M. reclinata var. ancistrodes (Renauld & Cardot) Noguchi (1976: 338), whereas Manuel (1977: 587) and Norris & Koponen (1985: 44) excluded M. ancistrodes from Meteoriopsis, placing it in Pseudobarbella, due to pluripapillose laminal cells, spreading leaves with a long piliferous, flexuose leaf acumen. Manuel (1977: 587) made the new combination Pseudobarbella ancistrodes (Renauld & Cardot) Manuel (1977: 596), with P. assimilis (Cardot) Noguchi (1947: 81) as the type species of the genus. Gangulee (1974–78: 1340) reported three species of