Chandrasekharania: A new genus of Poaceae from Kerala, India

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Abstract. A new genus, Chandrasekharania and a new species Chandrasekharania keralensis under it are being described from Cannanore District, Kerala.

Keywords. Chandrasekharania keralensis, Poaceae; new genus; new species.

1. Introduction

Intensive explorations are being conducted in various parts of Kerala to clearly understand the flora of this botanically rich area. During these tours a number of very interesting plants were collected. One of these belonging to the family Poaceae, on critical study with reference to available literature (see Bor 1960; Ved Prakash et al 1978) and the specimens available in the Herbarium of Southern Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore (MH) and the Central National Herbarium, Calcutta (CAL), turned out to be quite distinct. So a specimen along with a detailed description and analytical sketches was sent to Dr Thomas A Cope, Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for expert opinion. He confirmed that our collection belongs to a new genus. This along with its type species is described here.

2. Latin description

Species typica sequens:

**Chandrasekharania keralensis** V J Nair, V S Ramachandran et P V Sreekumar *sp. nov.*

Gramen annuum usque 40 cm altum. Culmi graciles, striati leaves et glabri. Nodis inferioribus radicantes. Folia 2-4.5 cm longa, 5-8 mm lata, marginibus et paginis ambabus pilis densis vel sparsis, basi tuberculatis. Vaginae striatae, glabrae, internodiis breviores. Inflorescentia contracta, ovooidea vel oblonga, spiciformis, racemiflora, 1.5-2.5 cm longa, 1-1.5 cm lata. Spiculae 5-6 mm longae. Pedicelli 0.5-1.5 mm longi. Glumae infernae 7-nervatae, nervi duo alternati et mediani prominentes, nervi cateri inconspicui, ovatae, 3.5-4 mm longae, aristatae, arista ca. 3 mm longa, costa et arista scabridus, margines ciliati, dimidia supera paginae dorsi dense tecta pilis, basibus tubercularibus. Glumae superae 5.5-6 mm longae, ovato-lanceolatae acuminatae, 7-nervatae, margines ciliati nervi scaberuli, arista scabrida, ca. 3 mm longa. Lemnata elliptico-lanceolata, 4-5 mm longa, apicibus breviter emarginatis, arista ad sinus, coriacea, glabra praeter scaberula costas, arista scabrida, 1.5-2 mm longa. Paleae ca. 4 mm longae, subtiles hyalinae, binervatae, dorsi dimidiis infernis pilis longiore, cariniiis ciliatis, apicibus bilobatis, lobi acuti. Gynoecium ca. 2 mm longum. Ovarium 0.5-5 mm longum, oblongum. Antherae ca. 1.25 mm longae. Fila ca. 0.25 mm longa. Lodicae cuneatae, apicibus emarginatis. Grana ellipsoidae, ca. 1 mm longa, fusca et extremis distaliis maculae ateris.

Holotypus: Kerala, Cannanore District, Kannoth, ± 175 m, 18-2-1978, V S Ramachandran 54064 (CAL). Isotypi in K et MH.

3. Description

**Chandrasekharania** V J Nair, V S Ramachandran et P V Sreekumar *gen. nov.*


Type species follows:

**Chandrasekharania keralensis** V J Nair, V S Ramachandran et P V Sreekumar *sp. nov.*

Annual grass up to 40 cm tall. Culms rooting at the lower nodes, slender, striate, smooth, glabrous. Leaves 2-4.5 cm long, 5-8 mm broad, both surfaces and margins with dense or sparse tubercle based hairs. Sheaths shorter than the
Chandrasekharania, new genus of Poaceae


Internodes, striate, glabrous. Inflorescence a contracted ovoid or oblong spikate raceme, 1.5-2.5 cm long, 1-1.5 cm broad. Spikelets 5-6 mm long. Pedicels 0.5-1.5 mm long, scabrid. Lower glume 3.5-4 mm long, ovate, awned, awn ca. 3 mm long, densely hairy on the upper half of the dorsal surface with tubercle based hairs, the median and the alternating two nerves prominent, the midrib and the awn scabrid, margins ciliolate. Upper glume 5.5-6 mm long, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, the tip with an awn ca. 3 mm long, scaberulous on the nerves, scabrid on the arista, margins ciliolate. Lemma elliptic-lanceolate, 4-5 mm long, shortly notched at apex with an awn in the sinus, coriaceous, glabrous except for the scaberulous midrib, awn scabrid, 1.5-2 mm long. Palea ca. 4 mm
long, delicate, hyaline, long-ciliate on the lower half of the outer surface, keels ciliate, apex bilobed, lobes acute. Gynoecium ca. 2 mm in length; ovary ca. 0.5 mm long, oblong. Anthers ca. 1.25 mm long, filaments ca. 0.25 mm long. Lodicules cuneate and shallowly notched at apex. Grains ellipsoid, ca. 1 mm long, brown coloured with a black spot at the distal end.

Holotype: Kerala, Cannanore District, Kannoth, ± 175 m, 18–2–1978, V S Ramachandran 54064 (CAL). Isotypes in K and MH.

4. Affinities

Affinities of this new genus are not very clear. According to Dr T A Cope, Kew Herbarium, anatomical studies are required to clearly understand its affinities (personal communication).

5. Etymology

The genus is named after Dr N Chandrasekharan Nair, the first author’s teacher and present Joint Director, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Indian botany. The specific epithet is after ‘Kerala’ the state from where the plant has been collected.

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References