

PELATANTHERIA INSECTIFERA (RCHB. F.) RIDL. (ORCHIDACEAE): A NEW ANGIOSPERMIC RECORD FOR DARJEELING DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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Abstract

Present paper deals with the *Pelatantheria insectifera* (Rchb. f.) Ridl. (Orchidaceae), collected from Sevoke of Siliguri sub-division, Gorubathan forest of Kalimpong sub-division of Darjeeling district and is reported as new angiospermic record for the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India. An updated nomenclature, important synonyms, illustrated description, photograph, habitat, flowering and fruiting, altitudinal range, specimen examined, present status and geographical distribution has also been given.

Introduction

WHILE WORKING on Orchid flora of Darjeeling Himalayas, the authors came across interesting specimens of epiphytic orchid species on the fallen tree trunk of *Shorea robusta* Gaertn. f., and was collected from Sevoke of Siliguri sub-division of district Darjeeling. The species was collected in vegetative condition and was grown in small Orchid house of Dr. R.B. Bhujel, Hill Top, Kalimpong where it flowered during August - October, 2010. After critical examination and comparison with other authenticated specimens and literature, an unknown species of epiphytic orchid that was identified as *Pelatantheria insectifera* (Rchb. f.) Ridl. (Orchidaceae). A perusal of earlier literature related to the Orchid flora of Darjeeling (Bose and Bhattacharjee, 1999; Bruhl, 1926; Hara, 1966, 1971; Hooker, 1888-1890; King and Pantling, 1898; Ohashi, 1975; Pearce and Cribb, 2002; Pradhan, 1979; Pradhan and Pradhan, 1997) revealed that the occurrence of this species has not been reported earlier from Darjeeling district and hence the present collection is its first record of occurrence as *Pelatantheria insectifera* (Rchb. f.) Ridl. for Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India. The newly identified specimens were processed and mounted on standard herbarium sheets following Jain and Rao (1977) and have been deposited in the Herbarium of Department of Botany, St. Joseph's College, North Point, Darjeeling and Herbarium of Taxonomy and Ethnobiology Research Laboratory, Cluny Women's College, Kalimpong for future reference. A detailed taxonomic account of the species (Fig. 1a,b) along with habitat, altitudinal range, current status, local distribution within Darjeeling and

geographical distribution is provided in this communication to authenticate the new record and facilitate its easy identification

Species Description

Pelatantheria insectifera (Rchb. f.) Ridl.

Plant epiphyte, *Stem* 20-50 cm erect, scandent, long, flexuous. *Leaves* several, 2.5-4.4 x 1.5-2 cm; *Inflorescence* 10-12 mm long, raceme, sub-sessile, 2-5 flowered, curved and appearing from odd places on the stem, usually 3-5 flowered; *Floral bracts* minute, deciduous. *Flowers* 1.3-1.5 cm across, attractive well spread out, greenish yellow striped red; *Sepals* subequal, 5-8 x 4-5 mm, oblong-ovate, obtuse or subacute. *Petals* shorter, 5-6 x 3 mm, narrower, oblong; sepals and petals greenish-yellow striped with red; *Lip* 1-1.2 cm long, prominent, fleshy, 3-lobed, *lateral lobes* short, rounded, incurved; *midlobe* large, fleshy, obtriangular-ovate with attenuated fleshy apex, bright rose or purplish, the dorsal surface puckered; *Spur* rather short, infundibuliform; callus at base of lip fleshy, villose, that at base of column within it, large, 2-fid; semi-septate by a plate descending from the base of the *midlobe*. *Column* stout, with 2 slender, erect, pointed horns; *Pollinia* 2, large unequal, attached by a very short and broad stipe on a transverse gland.

Flowering and Fruiting

August - December

Specimen Examined

Sevoke of Siliguri Sub-Division of District Darjeeling,



Fig. 1. a-b. *Pelatantheria insectifera* (Rchb. f.) Ridl.: a, Plant in bloom; b, Flower (close up).

260 m alt., dt. 05.10.2010, Rajendra *et al.* 1484. Local distribution within Darjeeling in Gorubathan forest of Kalimpong Sub-Division (altitudinal range: 260-900m).

Ecological Status

Endangered in natural habitat.

Geographical distribution

India (North Eastern States like Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura); Nepal, Myanmar.

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