REDISCOVERY OF *OSBECKIA TRUNCATA* D. DON EX WIGHT & ARN. (MELASTOMACEAE) IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Osbeckia truncata D. Don ex Wight & Arn., (Melastomaceae) rediscovered after more than one hundred years from Fashiakhali wildlife sanctuary of Chakaria Upazila of Cox’s Bazar district, Bangladesh.

In December 2010, while working in Fashiakhali Wildlife sanctuary of Chakaria Upazila of Cox’s Bazar district, two woody herbs one growing on the bank of a stream and the other on a hilltop with purple to rose pink flowers were collected using standard herbarium technique (Hyland 1972 and Alexiades 1996). Later, the specimens were critically studied and identified as Osbeckia truncata D. Don ex Wight & Arn. (Fig. 1) (Hooker 1879, Prain 1903 and Ahmed et al. 2009). The species was first reported from Modhopoor (presently spelled as Madhupur), East Bengal (now Bangladesh) by Hooker (1879). Prain (1903) also mentioned its occurrence as East Bengal (without citing any specific locality). As this species was not reported from any part of Bangladesh (Ahmed et al. 2009, Rafiqul et al. 2009, Tutul et al. 2009, 2010, Barbhuiya and Gogoi 2010 and Uddin and Hassan 2004, 2010), it is now reported here as rediscovery in Bangladesh after more than one hundred years. This rediscovery has been confirmed with the consultation of the data base of Salar Khan Herbarium of Dhaka University, Bangladesh National Herbarium, Chittagong University Herbarium, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute Herbarium.

A short description of the species is given below based on the fresh materials and detailed studies in the laboratory.


A branched woody herb, up to 35 cm tall. Stem tetra-angular, covered with hairs. Leaves simple, sessile, *ca* 2 × 1 cm to 6 × 2 cm, opposite, decussate, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, 3-nerved, hairy at both the surfaces. Inflorescence terminal cymes. Calyx tube with stalked stellate white hairs, lobes 4, free, ovate, acute. Petals 4, obcordate, *ca* 2 × 2 cm, purple to rose pink. Stamens 8, isomorphic, anther *ca* 7.15 mm long, tip long acuminate, yellow, filament 5.1 mm long, light violet. Carpel 1, style *ca* 2 cm long, stigma short, greenish, ovary 4-chambered. Fruit a capsule, occasionally 5-celled. Seeds minute, numerous, curved, pitted. Flowering and fruiting times: August to December.

*Specimen examined*: Cox’s Bazar district, Chakaria Upazila, Fashiakhali Wildlife Sanctuary, 21. 11. 2010, Zashim Uddin 42 (Salar Khan Herbarium of Dhaka University).

The genus *Osbeckia* L. consists of *ca* 100 species, distributed in Tropical Africa to Australia (Airy-Shaw 1973). Osbeckia truncata D. Don ex Wight & Arn. is known to occur in India and Nepal (Prain 1903). In Bangladesh, the species was recorded from two spots in Fashiakhali wildlife sanctuary, Chakaria Upazila of Cox’s Bazar district. One spot is on the bank of Lama chara (stream) and another one on the hilltop near Chakaria Sundarban. The occurrence of the species was found to be very low. Further exploration is needed to determine the population status of the species in the wild and in taking conservation measures *in situ*.

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References


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