

**NOMENCLATRURAL NOTES ON *PIPER PSEUDONIGRUM* VELAYD. AND  
AMALRAJ (PIPERACEAE)**

R. KOTTAIMUTHU<sup>1</sup>

*Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru,  
Karnataka, India*

Keywords: *Piper pseudonigrum*; Nomenclatural note.

*Piper* L. is the largest genus in the family Piperaceae with about 2000 species (Quijano-Abril *et al.*, 2006). In India, the genus *Piper* is represented by over 100 species which are mainly confined to the northeast Indian part of Eastern Himalaya and Western Ghats of southern India. Western Ghats along with Sri Lanka is one of the four recognized biodiversity hotspot in India (Chitale *et al.*, 2015), has about 23 species (Nayar *et al.*, 2014). While studying the *Piper* of Western Ghats, Velayudham and Amalraj (1992) described *Piper pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj based on the specimens collected by Amalraj from Silent valley. But, the name *P. pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj is an illegitimate later homonym of *P. pseudonigrum* C. DC (1898). Hence, Kumar and Mathew (2013) proposed a new name *Piper velayudhanii*. Unknowingly, Kumar and Karthikeyan (2014) also proposed a replacement name, '*P. sivarajanii*' for *P. pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj. Hence the later published name is treated here as a superfluous name. Following is a note on the nomenclature on *Piper pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj.

***Piper velayudhanii*** E.S.S. Kumar and S.P. Mathew in J. Sci. Res. 5: 579 (2013).

*Piper pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj in J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 16: 247 (1992), *non* C.DC. (1898). *Piper sivarajanii* Karthik. and V.S. Kumar in Phytotaxa 167: 210 (2014), *nom. superfl.*

*Type*: India: Kerala; Palghat District, Silent Valley, 6 Apr 1988, AV202 (Holotype: MH. *Isotype*: NHCP, *n.v.*).

*Piper rukshagandhum* J. Mathew in Telopea 19: 23 (2016). **syn. nov.**

*Type*: India: Kerala: Kollam District, Kottavasal Valley, 77°08' 11"E, 09°13' 06"N, 700 m, *J. Mathew 2811* (flowering: female), 28 Feb 2011 (*Holotype*: MH, *n.v.*; *Isotype*: CMS, *n.v.*).

*Distribution*: INDIA (Kerala and Tamil Nadu). Endemic.

*Note*: *Piper velayudhanii* closely resembles *P. nigrum* in habit and leaf morphology, but can easily be distinguished by its pedicellate and sparsely distributed male flowers on long, light purple spikes (vs. sessile male flowers, densely distributed on light yellow spikes of *P. nigrum*).

Recently, Mathew *et al.* (2016) described a new species *Piper rukshagandhum* J. Mathew from Achankovil, Kerala. The description and photographs provided by the authors for *P. rukshagandhum* falls within the circumscription of *P. velayudhanii*. In addition, some of the characters used for the delimitation (up to 3 cm long petioles and unequal leaf base) are the diagnostic characters of *P. velayudhanii*. Furthermore the characters *viz.*, bluish red/pink-colored

<sup>1</sup>Present Address: Department of Botany, Saraswathi Narayanan College, Madurai-625 022, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: kottaimuthu@yahoo.co.in

spikes, fruits and internodes, comparatively long petioles (c. 3 cm long) and elongated male inflorescence (c. 15 cm long) used by Mathew *et al.* (2016) for the delimitation of *Piper rukshagandhum* from all other members of section *Muldera* were already recorded in *P. velayudhanii*. Hence, *Piper rukshagandhum* is reduced here as a synonym under *P. velayudhanii*.

### Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Dr. R. Ganesan, ATREE, Bengaluru for facilities and encouragement and to Dr. G.V.S. Murthy, Scientist F, Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Southern Regional Centre (SRC), Coimbatore for granting permission to visit the herbarium and library. Thanks are also due to Dr. V. Sampath Kumar, Central National Herbarium, Howrah, for providing literature.

### References

- Chitale, V.S., Behera, M.D. and Roy, P.S. 2015. Global biodiversity hotspots in India: significant yet under studied. *Curr. Sci.* **108**: 149.
- Kumar, E.S.S. and Matthew, S.P. 2013. *Piper velayudhanii* (Piperaceae), a new name for *P. pseudonigrum* Velay. and Amalraj. *J. Sci. Res.* **5**: 579–580.
- Kumar, V.S. and Karthikeyan, S. 2014. Notes on nomenclature and distribution of some taxa of *Piper* L. (Piperaceae). *Phytotaxa* **167**: 209–211.
- Mathew, J., George, K.V. and Yohanan, R. 2016. *Piper rukshagandhum* (Piperaceae): a new species from southern Western Ghats, India. *Telopea* **19**: 23–29.
- Nayar, T.S., Beegam, R.A. and Sibi, A. 2014. *Flowering Plants of the Western Ghats, India*. Volume 1 Dicots. Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, India
- Quijano-Abril, M. A., Callejas-Posada, R. and Miranda-Esquivel, D.R. 2006. Areas of endemism and distribution patterns for Neotropical *Piper* species (Piperaceae). *Biogeography* **33**: 1266 – 1278.
- Velayudhan, K.C. and Amalraj, V.A. 1992. *Piper pseudonigrum* – a new species from Western Ghats. *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.* **16**: 247–250.

(Manuscript received on 19 August 2016; revised on 6 February 2017)