

*Short Communication*

**STATUS OF *PSYCHOTRIA SEKCHARANA* RAMAM & RAJAN (RUBIACEAE)**

**C. Murugan**

*Botanical Survey of India, Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre, Port Blair 744 102, South Andaman*  
*Corresponding Author Email: sivanthimurugan@rediffmail.com*

**ABSTRACT**

*Psychotria sekharana* Ramam. & Rajan is combined with *P. flavida* Talbot and its systemic position is discussed.

**Key words:** *Rubiaceae, Psychotria, Systematic*

**INTRODUCTION**

Ramamoorthy and Rajan (1983) described a species *Psychotria sekharana* (Rubiaceae) from the Western Ghats in Trichur District, Kerala. According to them, the species is allied to *Psychotria nudiflora* Wight & Arn. but differs in leaves lanceolate – oblanceolate, acute at apex; inflorescence – dichotomously corymbose; peduncles – short; bracteoles – minute, deciduous; corolla tube 4-5 times longer than the calyx, a ring of hairs at the mouth inside; corolla 5-lobed, lobes thickened at tips; stamens 5, arising near the mouth of corolla.

While studying the wild genetic resources of *Coffea* L. and allied genera, the author found that the identity of *Psychotria sekharana* Ramam. & Rajan is doubtful. It may be mentioned as *P. flavida* Talbot, which is endemic to South India (Karnataka, Kerala & Tamil Nadu). According

to Gamble (1921) and Deb & Gangopadhyay (1989), the branches of inflorescence is opposite, which is the prominent feature for the following Indian *Psychotria* spp. viz. *P. adenophylla* Wall., *P. elongata* (Wight) Hook.f., *P. flavida* Talbot, *P. fosbergii* Sohmer, *P. johnstonii* Hook.f., *P. nilgiriensis* Deb & Gang., *P. pendula* Hook.f., *P. platyneura* Kurz, *P. subintegra* (Wight & Arn.) Hook.f. and *P. tylophora* Kurz. On the critical evaluation of isotypes viz. *P. sekharana* and its related collections at the Madras Herbarium(MH), the branches of inflorescence are revealing as opposite. *Psychotria nudiflora* is having whorled branches of inflorescence. Meanwhile, Deb and Gangopadhyay (1989) merged the same with *P. nudiflora* Wight & Arn. var. *nudiflora*. In conclusion, *Psychotria sekharana* needs to be combined with *P. flavida* Talbot as given below. The comparative characters of *P. flavida* Talbot, *P. nudiflora* Wight & Arn. & *P. sekharana* Ramam. & Rajan is also given in Table -1 for the easy identity.

**Table. 1: Comparison of *Psychotria flavida*, *P. nudiflora* & *P. sekharana***

Descriptions	<i>P. flavida</i>	<i>P. nudiflora</i>	<i>P. sekahrana</i>
<b>Habit</b>	Shrub, up to 1m high	Shrub, 2-4 m high	Shrub, 1m high
<b>Branchlets</b>	Glabrous	Glabrous	Glabrous
<b>Leaves</b>	Elliptic-oblong, 8 - 25 x 4 - 9 cm, cuneate at base, acuminate, 10 -14 pairs	Obovate-oblanceolate, 6 - 18 x 1.5 - 6cm, attenuate at base, acute-acuminate at apex, 12 - 16 pairs	Lanceolate to oblanceolate, 6 - 15 x 3 - 5 cm, tapering at base, acute at apex, 2 - 10 pairs
<b>Inflorescence</b>	Corymbs with branches opposite	Panicles with branches 3-5 whorled	Corymbs with branches opposite

<b>Peduncles</b>	1-2 cm long	1.5-5 cm long	1-3 cm long
<b>Flowers</b>	Sessile, subsessile, heterostylous	Sessile to sub-sessile, heterostylous	Sessile, sub-sessile, heterostylous
<b>Calyx</b>	Cupular, truncate, glabrous	Cupular, glabrous or puberulous	Campanulate, truncate, glabrous
<b>Corolla</b>	Tube 2-3 mm long; lobes 5, rarely 6	2-2.5 mm long; lobes 4 or 5	2-3 mm long; lobes 5
<b>Stamens</b>	5, rarely 6	4 or 5	5
<b>Ovary</b>	ca 0.5 mm long, papillose	ca 0.5 mm long, glabrous	ca 0.5 mm long, glabrous
<b>Style</b>	1-2.5 mm long	1.5-2 mm or 3-3.5 mm long	2-3 mm long
<b>Fruits</b>	Globose or ellipsoid, 5-6 x 4-5 mm	Ovoid, 8-10 x 6-8 mm	Globose, 6-7 x 5-6 mm
<b>Pyrenes</b>	Smooth at dorsal, flat at ventral	Smooth at dorsal, flat at ventral	Smooth at dorsal, flat at ventral

## TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

*Psychotria flavida* (Talbot, Trees & Shrubs Bombay, 1894).

*P. sekharana* (Ramam. & Rajan, 1983).

*P. nudiflora* Wight & Arn. var. *nudiflora*; *sensu* (Deb and Gangopadhyay, 1989).

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