

## AEGINETIA INDICA L. - A NEW RECORD TO THE FLORA OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Varun Sharma\* and Sanjay Kr. Uniyal\*\*

**Abstract:** The present communication reports *Aeginetia indica* L. (Orobanchaceae) as a new generic record to the flora of Himachal Pradesh. The plant was found growing in Malan locality of District Kangra on the roots of *Dendrocalamus strictus*.

### INTRODUCTION

During botanical explorations in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh in the month of August, 2008, the authors came across an interesting plant, which on critical examination and screening of literature was identified as *Aeginetia indica* L. Perusal of relevant literature (Nair, 1977, Chowdhery and Wadhwa 1984, Collett, 1984, Polunin and Stainton, 1984, Murti and Uniyal, 1985, Uniyal and Murti 1985, Uniyal, 1986, Singh and Nath, 1987, Aswal and Mehrotra, 1994, Dhaliwal and Sharma, 1999, Singh and Rawat, 2000, Kumar and Sharma, 2004, Singh and Sharma, 2006 and Lal and Rawat, 2008) revealed that the genus *Aeginetia* has not been recorded from Himachal Pradesh and hence is a new generic record to the Flora of Himachal Pradesh.

The genus *Aeginetia* L., named after Paul Aeginette a celebrated Physician (Hajra and Balodi, 1995) belongs to the Broomrape Family Orobanchaceae. These plants are known as Broomrape as they were thought to grow as tubers (rapum) from brooms (Common name of *Cystis*) (Nickrent and Musselman, 2004). In this paper a brief description of *Aeginetia indica* L., its diagrammatic representation and photographs are provided for easy identification.

### DESCRIPTION

*Aeginetia indica* L., Sp. Pl. 632. 1753; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 4: 320. 1884; Babu, Herb. Fl. D. Dun 365. 1977; Naithani, Fl. Chamoli 2: 476. 1985.

A small, leafless, glabrous root parasite with subterranean stem, emerging with suckers. Scape solitary to several, 15-41 cm high with few scales near the base. Flowers large, pink-purple, solitary. Calyx spathaceous, split in front nearly to the base, upto 5 cm long, acute. Corolla 2.5-3.5 cm long; tube broad, incurved; limb ca 2.5 cm in diameter, 5-lobed; lobes obscurely 2-lipped, fimbriate on margin. Stamens 4, included; anthers 2-celled, 1-fertile, anthers of lower stamens with a thick, gibbous, obtuse spur behind. Ovary 1-celled, several ovuled; placentation parietal; style slender; stigma large, peltate. Fruit capsule, ovoid-globose, sub-2-valved, 1.5-2.5 cm long, enclosed in calyx. Seeds yellowish-white, pitted, minute; testa hyaline black.

### Ecological Note

*Aeginetia indica* is a holoparasitic plant that is generally found in moist and shady places. It occurs as a root parasite mainly on monocotyledonous plants, though it has been reported on few dicotyledonous plants also (Tashima *et al.*, 1974). Venkataramani (1961) reported this plant growing on the roots of *Bambusa arundinacea*. We found this plant growing in association with *Dendrocalamus strictus*. Though not to a great extent, *Aeginetia indica* can damage cereal crops and has affected sugarcane in Philippines (Nickrent and Musselman, 2004).

*Specimen examined:* Himachal Pradesh, Dist. Kangra, Malan, 950 m, 12575 (PLP).

*Fl. & Fr.:* August - October.

\* C.S.K. Himachal Pradesh, Agricultural University, Palampur - 176062 (Himachal Pradesh).

\*\*Biodiversity Division, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR), Palampur - 176 061 (Himachal Pradesh).

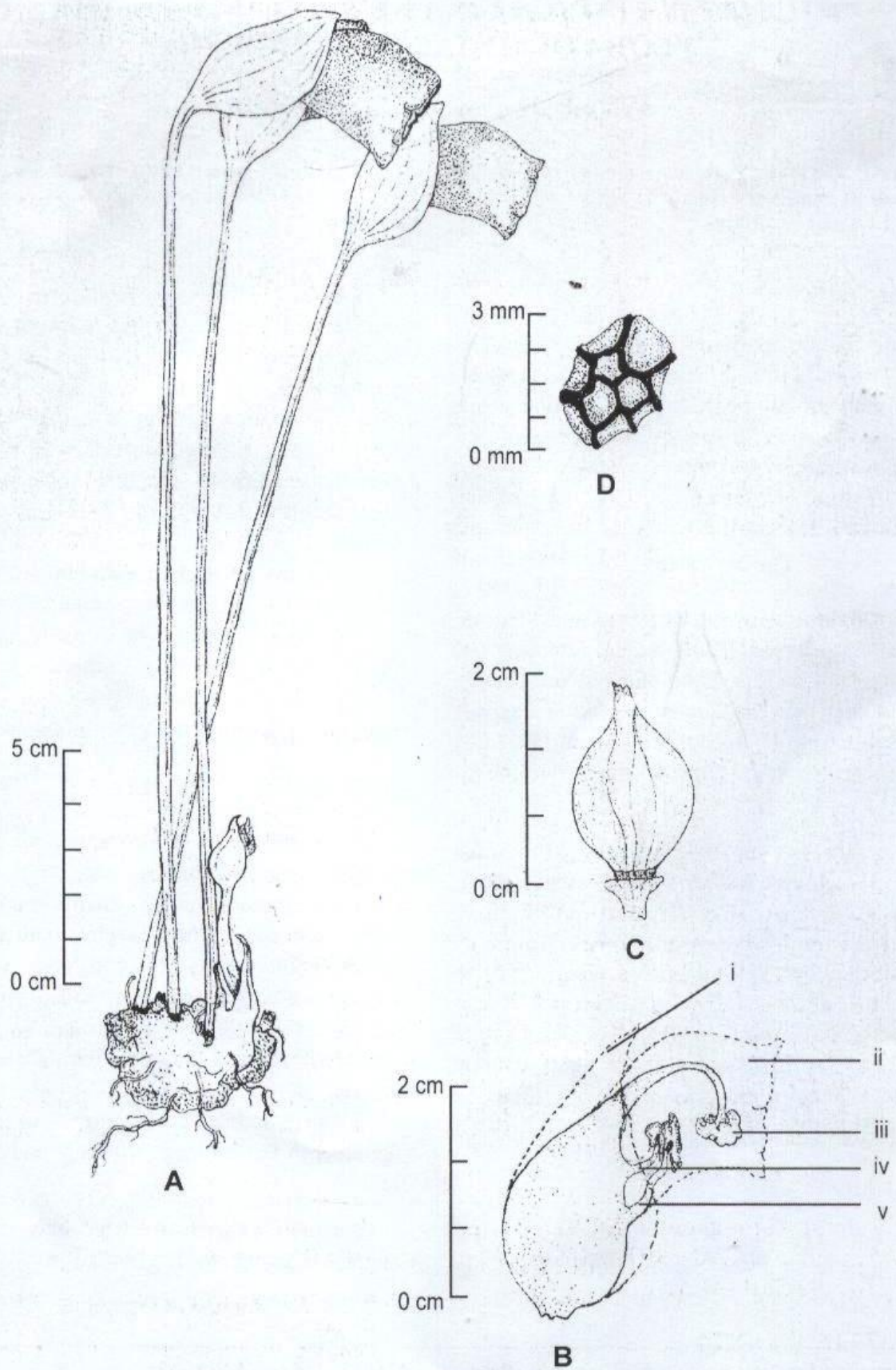


Fig. 1: *Aeginetia indica* L. A. Habit; B. Floral view, i. Calyx; ii. Corolla; iii. Gynoeceium; iv. Upper stamens; v. Lower stamens; C. Capsule; D. Seed.



Fig. 2a: Habit



Fig. 2c: Flowering Buds



Fig. 2b: Inflorescence

**Distribution:** Throughout INDIA, NEPAL, MYANMAR, CHINA, JAPAN, SRI LANKA, INDO CHINA, PHILIPPINES, MALAYA.

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