Thus the plants contribute greatly to rural health care. Manandhar (1989) has recorded piscicidal properties in *Persicaria chinensis*, *P. microcephala*, *P. posumbu* and *P. punicata*.

The ethnobotanical uses of Family Polygonaceae call for scientific evaluation of folk claims and intensive field work among unexplored ethnic groups, areas and plant diversity of the country.

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46. A NEW NAME FOR *DIOSCOREA GLABRA* VAR. *HASTIFOLIA* PRAIN ET BURKILL FROM THE ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

(*With one text-figure*)

Dioscorea serpenticola A. Hoque & P.K. Mukherjee nom. et stat nov. is an endemic species to the Andaman Islands. It was first collected by C.G. Rogers in 1904 from Rutland, South Andaman. Later, J.L. Ellis collected it from Saddle Peak, North Andaman in 1987. D. Prain and I.H. Burkill named it *Dioscorea glabra* var. *hastifolia* Prain et Burkill in 1914, based on the collections of C.G. Rogers.

Dioscorea serpenticola A. Hoque & P.K. Mukherjee nom. et stat. nov. (Fig. 1).

Type: South Andaman, Rutland, 19.v.1904, C.G. Rogers 278 (Holotype, CAL).

Syn.: *D. glabra* var. *hastifolia* Prain et Burkill, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng. ns. 10: 37, 1914; Knuth in Engl. Pflanzenr.87 (IV-43): 277, 1924., (non *D. hastifolia* Ness, Lehm., Pl. Preiss. 2: 33, 1848).

D. elegans Ridl., *D. oryzetorum* Prain et Burkill et *D. glabra* Roxb. similis caule dextrorsum volubile, Lamina coriacea, spico masculo 2 cm longo, alabastro masculo globoso, diplotegio latiore quam longo, seminis ala cingenti, sed differt a *D. elegans* Ridl. et *D. oryzetorum* Prain et Burkill venatione campylodromo, nervibus 7, lamina hastata, et differt a *D. glabra* Roxb. foliis alternis, lamina petiolis perlongiora, diplotegiis parvioribus, spico masculo axillari.

Tuber 1.5-3 cm, hard, globose, woody knot at base of stem, bearing tuft of horizontal long roots, superficially buried. Bulbils not known. Stem right twining, terete, glabrous, unarmed, slender, faintly ridged. Leaves simple, alternate, petiole 1-2 cm long, shorter than lamina (lamina:petiole = 5:1)

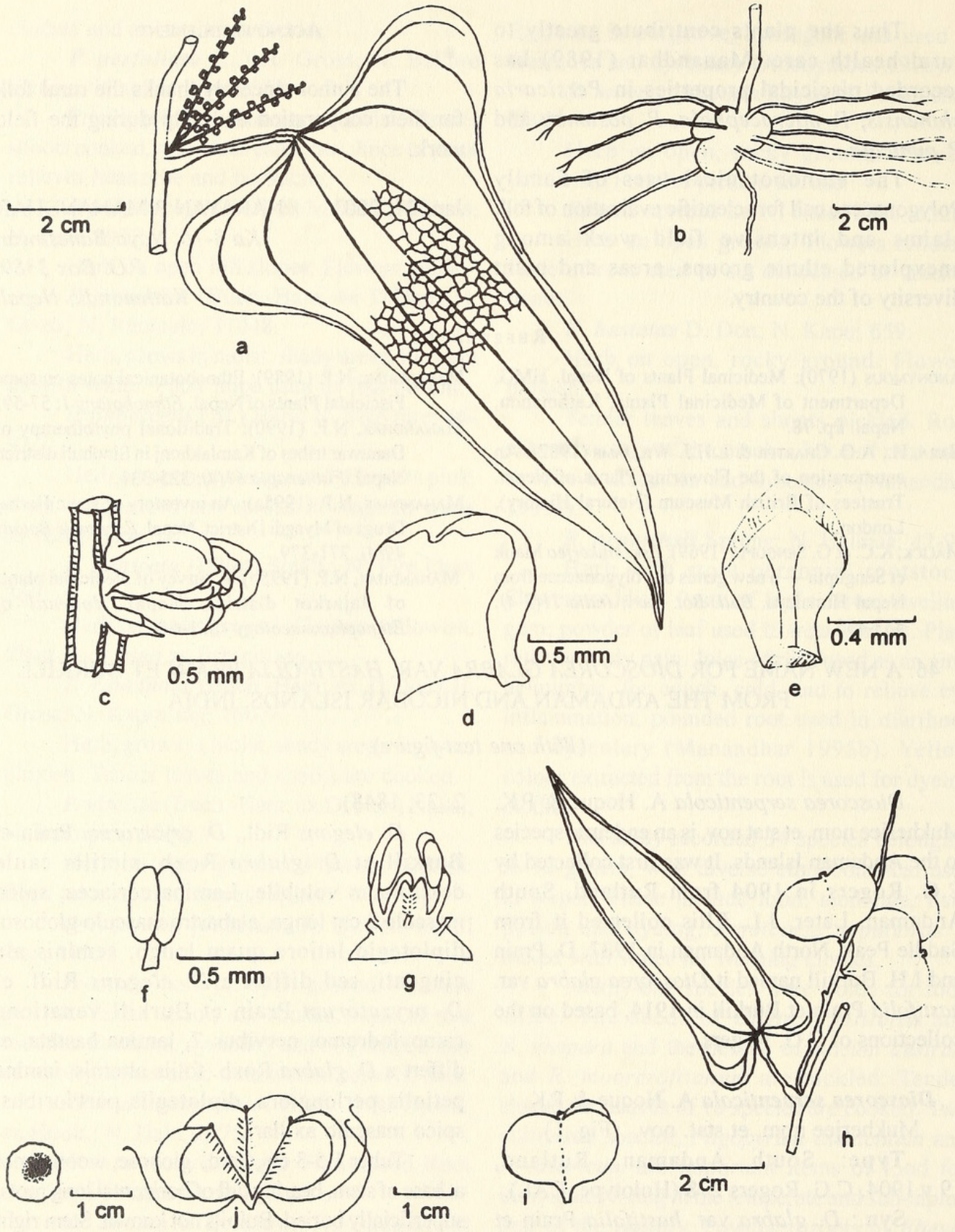

Fig. 1: *Dioscorea serpenticola* A. Hoque & P.K. Mukherjee, a. Habit, b. Underground woody knot, c. Part of male inflorescence, d. Outer perianth, e. Inner perianth, f. Single stamen, g. Position of stamens with pistillode, h. Twig with fruits, i. Single diplotegia, j. Dehiscence of diplotegia, k. Single seed. (a-g: Ellis, J.L. 12719; h-k: Rogers, C.G. 278)

with apical and basal pulvini; lamina 6-10.8 x 3-6 cm, hastate, apex acuminate, base broad or shallow cordate, texture coriaceous, venation palmate, convergent, reticulate (campylodromous), 5-7 nerved, midrib and the first pair of secondary veins reach up to acumen, tertiary veins irregularly branched, forming a network, nerves faintly prominent on abaxial surface, glabrous on both surfaces.

Male inflorescence axillary, somewhat stout, simple spike, arising in fascicles directly from leaf axils, sometimes singly on short flowering branch, 5-7 cm long. Rachis slightly drooping, terete, winged or ridged, glabrous, straight, 0.7-2.8 cm long, bearing 14-20 solitary alternate flowers at 0.5-1 mm intervals.

Male flowers globose or elongate-globose, sessile, with broad base, 1-1.2 x 1 mm, larger than bract, thalamus slightly convex. Bract 1, 0.7-1 x 0.7 mm, anterior, sessile, concave, ovate, apex acuminate-cuspidate, base broad thin, mem-branous. Bracteole 1, 0.5 x 0.5 mm, sessile, lateral; ovate, flat, apex acute, base constricted. Perianths 6, in two whorls (3 + 3), glabrous, polyphyllous, somewhat open; outer 3 obovate, concave, apex acute or obtuse, base broad, margin wavy, 1.1 x 0.85 mm; inner 3 spathulate, hooded, 0.8 x 0.75 mm. Stamens 6, in two whorls in alternate series, all fertile, 0.5 mm long, filament 0.2 mm long, stout, anthers 0.3 mm long, introrse, connective narrow; outer 3 alternate to inner perianth, inner 3 alternate to pistillode ridges inside and opposite to inner perianth outside. Pistillode triridged, apex emarginate-cleft, 0.2 mm long, situated at the centre of torus.

Female inflorescence axillary, simple spike, erect, rachis angular, ridged, stout, 5-7 cm long, bearing 7-16 solitary alternate flowers at 0.3-0.6 cm intervals.

Infructescence erect or semi erect, rachis stout, fruits overlapping, 3-9 fruits on a rachis. Diplotegia not recurved, stipitate (stipe 0.5-0.6 mm), triwinged capsule, with marcescent perianth cup at apex and marcescent bract and bracteole at base, capsule almost rounded (1.5-1.8 x 1.9-2 cm), apex emarginate, base truncate, margins curved. Dehiscence loculicidally septifragal with separation of 3 ribs. Seeds 1 cm diameter, rounded with wing all round, dark maroon.

Distribution: Andaman and Nicobar Islands: South Andaman, Rutland; North Andaman, Saddle Peak.

Fl.: September to October.

Fr.: October to January.

Specimens examined: INDIA - South Andaman, Rutland, 19.v.1904, C.G. Rogers 278 (CAL, type); North Andaman, Saddle Peak, 500 m, 16.x.1987, J.L. Ellis 12719 (PBL).

Dioscorea serpenticola is readily separated from related species by alternate leaves, lamina hastate, much longer than petiole, base truncate, venation campylodromous, 7- nerved; male spikes directly on stem axil; diplotegia small, broader than long, dehiscence by rib separation. We feel that the morphological differences cited above are adequate to recognise this as a distinct species.

The specific epithet *hastifolia* is preoccupied by the existence of *D. hastifolia* Nees, Lehm. Pl. Preiss. 2: 33, 1848. So the name *Dioscorea hastifolia* cannot be applied, being a later homonym, which is illegitimate (Art. 53 of ICBN, Tokyo, 1994). So the above new binomen is proposed.

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