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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### PANICUM LAXUM (POACEAE): A NEW RECORD FOR PENINSULAR INDIA.

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#### Abstract

*Panicum laxum*, a species hitherto unknown to peninsular India, has been described here from the riparian zone of Kannur district of Kerala state, India. Detailed illustrations, Photographs, Phenology and Distribution etc. are given.

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#### Introduction:-

The genus *Panicum* L. of Poaceae has a worldwide distribution from tropics to temperate zones of varying microclimatic conditions. The Plant List, Version 1.1(2013) records c. 4007 names of the taxa of which 6 are accepted names of the species. The genus is represented by c. 300 species all over the world (Mabberley, 2008) and in India; it is represented by c.55 species (Yadav, 2010).

#### Materials and methods:-

During an exploration tour along the riparian flora of Kuppam river of Kannur district of Kerala State of India, the authors collected specimens of *Panicum* from Thadikkadavu location, which on critical examination was found to be different from the hitherto species described from this location. Subsequent perusal through the literature confirmed that the specimen was *Panicum laxum* (The lax panic grass) which was earlier reported by Moonmee Devi & Debjyoti Bhattacharyya (2013) from Barak valley of Assam state as an addition to flora of India. As this species has not been mentioned from Peninsular India, it is recorded as an addition to the region and a brief description and detailed illustrations of the species is provided.

#### Description

*Panicum laxum* L., Sw., Prodr. 23. 1788; Judz., Fl. Guianas, ser. A, Phanerogams 8: 397, t. 71, f. a-c. 1990; Zuloaga *et al.*, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 79: 799. 1992; Duist., Gard. Bull. Singapore 56: 37. 2004. *Steinchisma laxa* (Sw.) Zuloaga, Amer. J. Bot. 90: 817. 2003; B.K. Simon, Austrobaileya 6: 561. 2003. *Cliffordiochloa parvispiculata* B.K. Simon, Austrobaileya 3: 676, t. 3, 4A. 1992. *Panicum laxum* Moonmee Devi & Debjyoti Bhattacharyya, Rheedia 23(2): 128-131. 2013.

Plants are annual or perennial, 20-60 cm long, often caespitose, lower nodes with roots, simple or branched, rhizomes and cataphylls lacking. Nodes 4-6, glabrous; internodes 1.5-6 cm long, glabrous. Leaf sheath loose, striate, glabrous, margin ciliated. Membranous, fimbriated ligule. Leaf blade linear or lanceolate, 3-14 x 0.2-0.5 cm, truncate at the base and apex acute and both surfaces glabrous. Membranous bract on the first node of the panicle

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inflorescence. Inflorescence axis scabrid, spikelets of secondary racemose branches which are compressed to primary branches or occasionally lax. Spikelets paired, more or less elliptic, 1.3-1.6 x 0.5-0.6 mm, greenish with prominently purplish tinge, apex blunt. Glumes 2, lower one broadly ovate, 0.5-0.7 mm long, acute, 3-nerved, middle nerve scabrous towards apex, membranous; Upper glume narrowly ovate, c. 1 mm long, 5-nerved, middle nerve scabrous towards apex, membranous; Lower floret usually sterile. Lower lemma narrowly elliptic, 1-1.2 mm long, minutely scabrous on abaxial surface at apex, 3-nerved, membranous. Lower palea hyaline, narrowly elliptic, 0.9-1.1 mm long, 2-keeled, keels scabrous, membranous; Upper floret bisexual. Upper lemma ovate-oblong, c. 1 mm long, glabrous, smooth and shiny. Upper palea with same texture as upper lemma, ovate-oblong, c. 1 mm long, 2-keeled, scabrous on abaxial surface at apex. Lodicules 2, c. 0.2 mm long, fleshy, hyaline, truncate at apex, glabrous. Stamens 2; anther c. 0.5 mm long; filament glabrous. Ovary ovate, c. 0.23 mm long, glabrous; styles 2, glabrous; stigma 2, pink coloured, plumose. Caryopsis elliptic to oval, c. 0.7 mm long, yellowish and glabrous.

### Phenology

Flowering & Fruiting occurs during June – February.

### Habitat

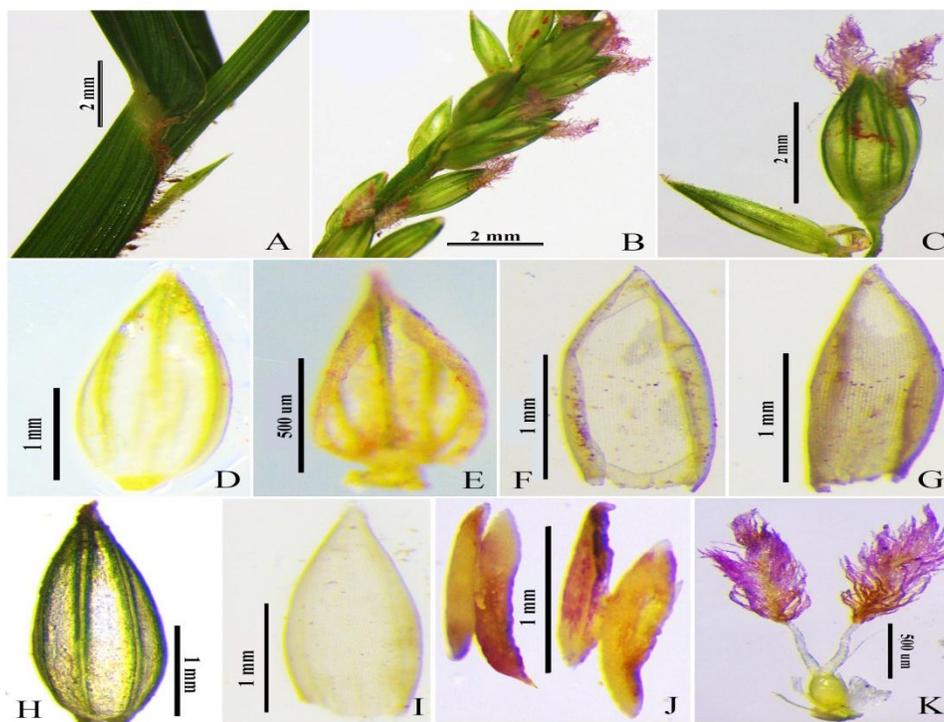
The species was found growing near the margins of rivers along with riparian and associated vegetations. The region is highly fragile as various anthropogenic activities and flood cause serious disturbances.

### Distribution

Argentina, Paraguay, West Indies, West Africa, Mexico, Australia, Malasia, Borneo, Singapore, India (Assam, Tripura, Kannur (Present report) district of Kerala).

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*Panicum laxum* Sw. A. Ligule, B. Part of inflorescence, C. Spikelet, D. Upper glume, E. Lower glume, F. Upper lemma, G. Lower lemma, H. Upper palea, I. Lower palea, J. Stamens, K. Pistil

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