

Report on the XXXIV Annual Conference of Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy (IAAT) and International Seminar on “Botanical Symphony - Perspectives and Current Challenges in Angiosperm Systematics [BSPCCAS 2024]”

The XXXIV Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy (IAAT) and the International Seminar on “Botanical Symphony - Perspectives and Current Challenges in Angiosperm Systematics [BSPCCAS 2024]” was organized by the Department of Life Science and Bioinformatics, Assam University, Silchar from 23rd to 25th November, 2024.

The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Prof. Rajive Mohan Pant, Vice Chancellor, Assam University. Dr. M. Sanjappa, former Director, Botanical Survey of India, was the Chief Guest. The event featured several notable dignitaries, including Prof. A.K. Pandey (Pro-Chancellor, Mansarovar Global University, Bhopal), Prof. Manabendra Dutta Choudhury (Vice Chancellor, Rabindranath Tagore University, Hojai), Dr. Usha Yadav (President, IAAT), Sr. Prof. Santhosh Nampy (Secretary, IAAT), Dr. S.S. Dash (Scientist-F, Botanical Survey of India), Prof. Supriyo Chakraborty

(Dean (i/c), School of Life Sciences, Assam University), Prof. Anirudha Giri (Head and Chairperson, Department of Life Science and Bioinformatics, Assam University) and Dr. Debjyoti Bhattacharyya (Organizing Secretary of the Conference). The program began with the National Song, followed by ceremonial activities, including lighting of the lamp and planting a *Ficus benjamina* sapling.

Prof. Anirudha Giri welcomed the delegates and the participants, and Dr. Debjyoti Bhattacharyya, briefed about the conference. Dr. Usha Yadav highlighted the importance of taxonomy in biological science, while Prof. Santhosh Nampy explained the objectives and functioning of the Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy. Prof. S.R. Yadav (crossed 70 this year) and Dr. Debabrata Maity (Organizing Secretary, 33rd Annual Conference of IAAT) were honored. The book of abstracts was released by the dignitaries. Dr. M. Sanjappa commended Assam University for hosting the Conference in Northeast India and stressed the need for training taxonomists to protect species. The conference was officially declared open by Prof. Rajive Mohan Pant.

The first technical session featured a keynote lecture by Dr. Sanjappa, focusing on the importance of morpho-taxonomy in biodiversity and sustainable use. Prof. A.P. Das delivered ‘Prof. Y.D. Tiagi Medal Award Lecture’, while Prof. Santhosh Nampy delivered ‘Prof. V.V. Sivarajan Gold Medal Award Lecture’. Prof. S.R. Yadav delivered ‘Prof. Kameswara Rao Endowment Lecture’.





The conference included oral and poster presentations in six major themes: Floristics, Plant Diversity and Conservation; Nomenclature, Revision and Monograph; Biosystematics, Applied Taxonomy and Phylogeny; Ethnobotany, Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) and Bioprospectation; Medicinal Plants and Drug Discovery, and Digitization and Database. Every technical session began with one or two invited lectures, followed by oral presentations by the participants. Over 300 delegates participated, with around 140 research papers presented. International experts, such as Prof. Deepthi Yakandawala (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka), Dr. Kanchi N. Gandhi (Harvard University Herbaria, Cambridge, USA), and Prof. Petr Smýkal (Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic), contributed to the discussions.

During the event, a panel discussion on the status of taxonomy in India was held, followed by valedictory session, which included the distribution of awards to the following outstanding presenters. The Executive Committee (EC) of IAAT met on 23.11.2024, and the General Body (GB) met on 24.11.2024. The conference also witnessed a vibrant cultural program performed by the students.

Ten awards, namely K.S. Manilal Award, Rolla S. Rao Award, T.R. Sahu Award, Fr. Antony Mukkath-K.S. Manilal Award, Prof. M. Sabu Award, S.R. Yadav Award, S.M. Almeida & M.R. Almeida Award, A.K. Pandey Award, Santhosh Nampy Award, and A.K. Pradeep Award are given at the annual conference for the best paper/ poster by the IAAT. Following is the list of awards and awardees of this year's conference:



1. **K.S. Manilal Award for best paper in Floristics (New Species/New Reports):** V. Drisya (University of Calicut)
2. **R.S. Rao Award for best paper in Biodiversity Conservation:** Harishma K.H. (University of Calicut)
3. **T.R.Sahu Award for best paper in Medicinal Plant Systematics:** Aswathi Ganga (University of Calicut)
4. **S.R. Yadav Award for best poster presentation:** Meera Rami (The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda)
5. **Fr. Antony Mukkath–K.S. Manilal Award for best paper in Modern Techniques in Plant Taxonomy:** Oshin Sharma (Savitribai Phule Pune University)
6. **Prof. M. Sabu Award for best paper in Angiosperm Taxonomy (for Teachers and Scientists):** Shinoj K. (Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur)
7. **S.M. Almeida & M.R. Almeida Award for Plant Nomenclature:** Abhishek T. Bhat (CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow)
8. **Prof. A.K. Pandey Award for Revisionary Studies:** Anna Ancy Antony A. (St. Albert's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam)

9. Prof. Santhosh Nampy IAAT Young Scientist Award: Jagdish Vishnu Dalavi (Botanical Survey of India, Western Regional Centre, Pune)

10. Dr. A.K. Pradeep Young Researcher Award: Ashutosh Sharma (The University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences & Technology, Bengaluru)

In addition to these, Arup Kumar Halder, Sibashish Kityania, Sudipa Das, and others received awards in the general oral presentations category. For the general poster presentations, awards went to Barnali Das, Priyakshi Nath, and others. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Shubhadeep Roychoudhury.

The conference was funded by Assam University, Botanical Survey of India, Rabindranath Tagore University, Anusandhan National Research Foundation, Department of Biotechnology, Indian National Science Academy, and sponsored by Rosekandy Tea Estate, Silchar. The success of the event was widely acknowledged by participants and organizers alike.

Dr. Debjyoti Bhattacharyya

Organizing Secretary

34th Annual Conference of IAAT &
International Seminar BSPCCAS-2024
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