

Abutilon theophrasti Medik. (Malvaceae): New distributional plant records to Chandrapur District, MS, India

Shende Mukund B and Deshmukh Umakant B

Higher Learning And Research Centre and P.G. Department of Botany, Janata Mahavidyalaya, Chandrapur. 442401 MS, India

Email: deshmukhumakant979@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

During floristic survey an interesting plant of family Malvaceae was collected from Sonegaon village of Chimur Tahsil, Chandrapur District of Maharashtra state. After critical observation it was identified as *Abutilon theophrasti* Medik. It is reported as a new distributional plant record for Chandrapur district. A brief description with photograph, notes on occurrence and distribution of this taxon are provided for easy identification.

Keywords: Malvaceae, *Abutilon theophrasti* Medik. new, record, Chandrapur District

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Abutilon* Mill. is represented by an approximately 200 recognized species distributed in tropical and subtropical countries (Sivarajan and Pradeep, 1996). This genus having characters like tri to multi seeded mericarp, lack of an epicalyx and dorsal wings in mericarps and presence of an endoglossum differs it from other closely related genera of Malvaceae (Esteves and Krapovickas, 2002). *Abutilon theophrasti* Medik. (Malvaceae) originally described from India in 1787. It is commonly called as Velvet Leaf, Button Weed, Butter Print, Indian Mallow, *Abutilon* Hemp and Chinese Jute (Il' in 1949 and Riedl, 1976). According to Vavilov (1951) and Li (1970) China is stated to be the origin of *A. theophrasti*.

Roxburgh (1832) described *A. theophrasti* as *Sida abutilon*, as 'a native of various parts of India, though not common'. He reported velvet seed was received from Peking (*sic*) and cultivated in the (then) Bengal province as a substitute for hemp and flax. According to Voigt (1944) *A. theophrasti* was grown in former East India Company's Botanical Garden, Calcutta, and in the Serampore Botanical Garden in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Hooker (1875) reported 12 species of *Abutilon* from India and *A. theophrasti* named as *A. avicennae*, *A. theophrasti* as one of the seven

Indian *Abutilon* species of economic importance and it is believed it to be native to northwest India, Sind (now in Pakistan) and Kashmir, with its distribution extending to North Asia, South Europe, and North America (Watt,1889).

Total 18 species of *Abutilon* has been reported from India (Kumar, 2001 and Singh *et al.* 2002). Total 11 species of it has been reported from Maharashtra (Almeida, 1996) and only 2 species reported from Chandrapur District. (Malhotra and Moorthy, 1992). An occurrence of *Abutilon theophrasti* Medik. (Malvaceae) from Sonegaon village of Chimur Tahsil, Chandrapur district shows new distributional records to flora of Chandrapur district of Vidharbha Region. (Maharashtra State)

Taxonomic Treatment:

Abutilon theophrasti Medik. Malv. 28. 1787; Borss. in Blumea, 14: 166. 1966; Paul in Sharma et al. Fl. India 3: 274. 1993; Almeida, Fl. Mah. 1: 103. 1996.



Fig. 1: Habit of *Abutilon theophrasti* Medik in Agriculture field.

Description: A herbaceous annual, covered with fine tomentum intermingled with a few villi. Leaves 7-10 cm long, orbicular-chordate, acuminate, denticate, villose on both surfaces, hispid along the nerves. Petiole 7-8cm, hispid. Stipule large, oblique, broadly ovate-lanceolate. Inflorescence a terminal leafless panicle. Pedicel short, solitary, axillary, jointed below the middle. Calyx hispid, deeply 5-parted nearly to the base; segment ovate-lanceolate. Petals 5, yellow, hardly exceeding the sepals, staminal tube very short. Ripe fruits cylindrical, truncate, umbilicate, longer than the persistent calyx. Carpel's 15-20, oblong, truncate, hispidulous or pubescent, dehiscing along the dorsal suture, each 3-seeded, with 2- long horizontally spreading ciliolate awns. Seeds covered with tufts of stellate hairs. (Fig.1)

Habitat: Weed in Agriculture Field.

Flowers and Fruiting- February – April.

Distribution In Maharashtra- Nasik, Nandur-Madhmeshwar, Sonegaon Village of Chimur Tahsil, Chandrapur District (Now it is collected by Umakant Deshmukh on dated 27 Feb. 2018, from Sonegaon village, GPS location N20°47.5' E79°41.1'-of Chimur Tahsil (Chandrapur District). Herbarium specimen deposited at P.G.Department of Botany Janata Mahavidyalay, Chandrapur (Voucher No.215).

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