

# Notes on *Fimbristylis multinervia* and its exclusion from Flora of India

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## फिम्ब्रीस्टाइलिस मल्टीनर्विया एवं भारतीय वनस्पतिजात से इसके अपवर्जन पर टिप्पणी

वी. पी. प्रसाद

### सारांश

प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र में *फिम्ब्रीस्टाइलिस मल्टीनर्विया* गोविन्द, के वितरण एवं इसके भारतीय वनस्पतिजात से अपवर्जन के तर्कसंगतकरण वर्णन किया गया है। इस जाति के सही अभिनिर्धारण और पहचान हेतु इस शोधपत्र में इसका संक्षिप्त सचित्र वर्णन भी दिया गया है।

### ABSTRACT

Distribution of *Fimbristylis multinervia* Govind, is discussed and its exclusion from Flora of India is justified. For easy identification, the paper also provides a brief description of the plant along with a photoplate.

**Keywords:** Distribution, *Fimbristylis*, India, Myanmar, Taxonomy

### INTRODUCTION

While studying the herbarium specimens of the genus *Fimbristylis* Vahl at CAL, the author came across seven specimens named by C.B. Clarke as *Fimbristylis polyneura*, nov. sp. A search for this name in the published Floras and on online databases was futile, because Clarke never described this plant and published under this name. There is an annotation by Clarke on one of these specimens on the distinguishing characters of the plant, which says “This has among other differences, 9–13 longitudinal nerves covering nearly the whole width of the glume; whereas *F. complanata* Link and all its allied

(or sub-species) *F. asperimma*, *F. filifolia*, *F. thomsonii* have the glume 3–5-nerved near the centre of the back. ....”

It is evident that Prof. E. Govindarajalu, the eminent Indian Cyperologist of yester years noticed the annotation by Clarke and the name proposed by him, because Prof. Govindarajalu utilised all these specimens to describe *Fimbristylis multinervia* Govind. As observed by Clarke the characters are distinct and hence *F. multinervia* is a distinct species. Further, while describing *F. multinervia* Govindarajalu (1972) rightly compared it with *F. thomsonii*, a name mentioned in Clarke’s annotation.

## TAXONOMY

***Fimbristylis multinervia*** Govind. in J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 69:162. 1972; Karthik. & al., Fl. Ind. Enum. Monocot.: 53. 1989.

**Fig. 1**

Perennials with short, woody rhizome. Culms tufted, trigonous, 18–50 cm long. Leaves shorter than culm, obtuse or abruptly acute at apex, scabrid on the margins; ligule a tuft of short hairs; sheaths glabrous. Inflorescence compound to decompound, lax, 4–9 x 4–8



**Fig. 1.** *Fimbristylis multinervia* Govind. A. Holotype; B. Spikelet; C. Glume (side view); D. Stamen; E. Style; F. Achene.

cm, bearing many spikelets. Involucral bracts shorter than inflorescence, scabrid on the margins. Primary rays 4–6, up to 11 cm long; secondary rays 2–4 cm long. Spikelets solitary, ovoid-lanceolate, acute or subacute at apex, 5–7 x 2–2.5 mm, many-flowered; rachilla winged. Glumes spirally arranged, oblong-ovate, obtuse at apex, 3–3.5 x c. 1.5 mm, strongly keeled at back, many-nerved, mucronate, brownish. Stamens 3; filaments elongate up to 3.5 mm; anthers linear, 1.4–1.7 mm long. Style slender, 1.4–2 mm long, pyramidally thickened at base; stigmas 3, slightly shorter than style. Achene trigonous, obovoid, broadly obtuse at apex, c. 1.3 x 0.9 mm, one side often flat and two sides somewhat convex, minutely stipitate, hardly umbonulate, densely tubercled,

*Distribution:* Endemic to Myanmar.

*Specimens examined:* Burma (Myanmar): Karen country Hills, Joukyeghat, Pegu S. Kurz 637 - Holotype (CAL0000001810!) and Isotype (CAL0000001811!); Khoni, Upper Burma J.C. Prazer s.n. - Paratype (CAL0000001796!); Pegu, D. Brandis 1018 - Paratype (CAL0000001797!); Pegu, s. coll., s.n. (CAL0000001798!); Pegu, D. Brandis s.n. (CAL0000001801!); Pegu river, Pegu S. Kurz 628 - Paratype (CAL0000001799!); Joukyeghat, 7 Pagodas, Pegu S. Kurz 636 - Paratype (CAL0000001800!). All the eight specimens mentioned above were collected from Burma (now Myanmar). But, while describing *Fimbristylis multinervia*, Govindrajalu included one specimen from Naga Hills (Dr. D. Prain 226) as a paratype, thereby reporting this species from the political boundary of India. Based on this report it has been included by Karthikeyan & al. (1989) also. However, a study of the specimen revealed that it is nothing but *F. thomsonii* Boeckeler. There is another specimen (N.P. Balakrishnan

42669) from Meghalaya identified as *F. multinervia* by D.M. Verma. This one also was found to be *F. thomsonii*. Further, *F. multinervia* has not been reported from any other Indian state and no specimens were found in any Indian herbaria. Therefore, *Fimbristylis multinervia* Govind. is excluded from the Flora of India.

Rao & Verma (1982) noted that they are unable to distinguish *Fimbristylis multinervia* Govind. from *F. thomsonii* Boeckeler. However, it is noticed that the Burmese specimens are different from *F. thomsonii* and can be maintained under a distinct species. Clarke might have realised it and hence, he affixed the determination slips on the Burmese specimens as *Fimbristylis polyneura*, nov. sp.

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