

FOLIAR VENATION STUDIES IN VARIOUS SPECIES OF IPOMEA

Praveen Dhar T.

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Abstract

The minor venation pattern in certain species provides taxonomic and evolutionary clues. Foliar venation patterns act as device for the identification of various species. In the present investigation minor leaf venation pattern of 16 South Indian species of Ipomoea were studied. The study reveals that the Ipomoea species shows simple, linear curved, once, twice and thrice branched minor leaf venation with polygonal leaf areole. Size of the leaf areole is concerned highest length and breadth is reported in *I. coptica*.

Keywords: Ipomoea, foliar venation, areole, polygonal

Introduction

Taxonomic evidence as such can be had, in a general sense from any part or phase of development of the plant. Although much importance is attached to the purely morphological characters in the classification. Much evidence can, however be had from other characters as well, other than the reproductive phase. There are a few characters which were rather neglected. It is particularly noteworthy that certain organ or features of the plants are inherently more conservative than others and therefore it may be argued that there should have more dominant role in the classification and phylogeny. Endomorphic characters such as anatomy have as much of equal importance as exomorphic features. While the epidermal characters are of greater value in identification of some taxa, there can be little doubt that greater attention to characters other than those pertaining to flowers would certainly improve in many cases. Although purely epidermal character used in the identification or classification would entail a few disadvantages, it may be pointed out that wherever other characters could show any differences, the epidermal characters may be of some value in identification and classification. The study of the epidermal features of most of the living angiosperm has received little attention. There are only a few reports of the epidermal studies in the family. That too confined to the development of stomata (Pant and Banerji, 1965; Shah, 1967).

Singh et al., (1978) described leaf architecture in Berberidaceae and discussed bearing of the circumstances of the

family. They concluded that in leaf architecture of *Holboellia* and *Podophyllum* stand apart from other taxa of the family and this support their view of removal to a separate family. Foster, (1959) suggested that open dichotomous venation of the ranalian genus *Kingdonia* may be primitive within angiosperms. The minor venation pattern in certain species of Compositae provides taxonomic and evolutionary clues (Carlquist, 1959). He also described the foliar venation pattern in the Rutaceae and devices a key for the identification of various species on the basis of these characters.

Hickey and Wolfe, (1975) provided the first systematic summary of dicot leaf architectural features and they demonstrated that a number of lower order leaf architectural feature, including leaf organization, configuration of first three vein orders and characteristics of leaf margin are significant systematic indicators within dicotyledons. Levin, (1929) emphasized the taxonomic value of vein let areas. He pointed out that veinlet number is nearly constant for a species and it can be used as a valuable character. Carlquist, (1959) reported that minor venation pattern in certain species of Compositae provides taxonomic and evolutionary clues.

Materials and Methods

Foliar venation studies were carried out in all the species studied. The venation pattern of leaves were traced out, from fresh leaves. The minor venation pattern were observed by clearing the leaves based on the method of Foster, (1959) with modification by Hickey (1973). First the leaf materials were washed thoroughly in tap water, then the veins of the leaves were stained by immersing the base of the petiole in safranin stain for over night. Then washed the leaves in water and boiled them in 50% ethyl alcohol in a water bath. The materials were transferred to 5% so-

dium hydroxide and kept in the oven at 40 to 50°C for 6 to 10 days for clearing. After clearing, the specimens were washed thoroughly in water to remove all the traces of sodium hydroxide. The leaves were examined for their major and minor venations.

The minor venation pattern was studied with the help of microphotographs. The terminology and description of leaf architecture were done based on the leaf architectural studies by Hickey (1973). The data regarding the nature of major venation pattern and the nature of minor venation pattern including the nature of areole and veinlets were recorded.

Results and Discussion

During the present investigation, major and minor leaf venation were analysed. Among the 16 *Ipomoea* species selected for the study, *I. alba*, *I. carnea sub sp. fistulosa*, *I. coptica*, *I. digitata*, *I. obscura*, *I. staphylyna* shows simple curved once and twice branched minor leaf venation. Mean while *I. aquatica*, *I. batatas*, *I. hererifolia*, *I. horsfalliae*, *I. indica*, *I. pes-caprae sub sp. brasiliensis*, *I. purpurea* shows simple linear once, twice thrice branched minor leaf venation pattern. Polygonal shaped areole was recorded in all species. Size of the leaf areole is concerned highest length is reported in *I. coptica* and *I. indica* and *I. horsfalliae*. Breadth of the areole is concerned higher is reported in *I. coptica* and lower in *I. indica* and *I. horsfalliae*.

Banerji and Das, (1972) have shown that minor venation pattern is useful in the distinction of the Indian species of *Acer*. The size of areoles, number of terminations per areole and characteristics of branches provide useful taxonomic characters. Hickey, (1893) published the most comprehensive system of descriptive terminology of leaf form and venation pattern of dicotyledonous leaf. Data obtained from leaf architectural features, particularly venation pattern have been successfully utilized for systematic and evolutionary considerations. Gupta, (1961) could not establish any direct correlation between the size of areole and number of vein endings in the family Euphorbiaceae. They divided the genus *Euphorbia* on the basis of venation pattern and grouped it into various species. According to him veinlets number and veinlet termination number are inversely proportional to the area of lamina and their absolute numbers are constant for a species.

Hall and Melville, (1951) pointed out that the number of veinlets in conjunction with other histological characters could be used as taxonomic criteria. The use of architectural pattern is gaining significance in phylogeny and classification of angiosperm. The leaves of various dicotyledonous taxa of angiosperms possess consistent and recognizable patterns of architectural organizations. In recent years these characters have been successfully used by several workers in the diagnosis of fossil as well as living material (Dilcher, 1974).

Conclusion

The study of the morphological variation of plants and the causes and consequences of this variation provide the bulk of taxonomic evidence. These include information from morphology, external or macro morphological characters and internal or micro-morphological characters such as pollen and epidermal features. Morphometric methods are known to be effective in analyses leading to recognition and discrimination of groups and for evaluation of ontogenetic and phylogenetic changes in plants.

Recommendations

Botanists realized the importance of micromorphological characters inadequate for identifying taxa. Micro-morphological features such as epidermal, anatomical, embryological and palynological character in biosystematics. The importance of leaves as taxonomic entities can be preserved for longer period of time. Pollen grains and seeds are not influenced by environmental conditions and hence it provides dependable systematic evidence. Variation in minor leaf venation acts as a marker of plant systematics and also helpful for cataloguing South Indian species of *Ipomoea*.

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