Contribution to the Algal Flora (Chlorophyceae) of Namchi, Sikkim-Himalayas

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Abstract
The present communication is a part of survey being conducted to study the fresh water algal flora of Namchi, South Sikkim. Thirteen taxa of class Chlorophyceae, which include 8 genera, 10 species and 3 varieties, were identified from 6 samples. *Spirogyra nitida* (Dillw.) Link, *Netrium digitus* (Ehr.) Itzigs. and Roth. and *Scenedesmus bijugatus* (Turp.) Kuetz. were the dominant green algae followed by the remaining other rare species of *Scenedesmus* and *Staurastrum*. All these taxa constitute new records for the study area.

Key words: Chlorophyceae, Fresh water algae, India, Namchi, Sikkim-Himalaya

Introduction
The contribution to the North Indian Chlorophycean flora have been made by Kant and Anand (1978), Habib (1996, 1997), Habib and Chaturvedi (1999), Singh and Gupta (2000), Suseela and Dwivedi (2001), and Misra et al. (2002, 2005). However, the morpho-taxonomic studies of Eastern Himalayan green algal flora have received very little attention (Das 1961; Santra and Adhya 1973, 1976; Alfred 1978).

Algal floral account of Sikkim Himalaya is lacking in the literature. As far as the authors are aware, few reports on fresh water algal flora of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim are available (Prasad and Khanna 1987, Prasad and Misra 1987).

The present report is a part of survey being conducted to explore the fresh water algal flora of Namchi which is situated at an altitude of 300-5,500 m in South Sikkim. It shows varied topography and micro-climatic conditions that provide a congenial environment for rich growth of fresh water algae. During the multidisciplinary expedition of Sikkim Himalayas, the present survey was carried out at Namchi and its surrounding areas of different environments.

Materials and Methods
Fresh water algal samples were collected in the month of April 2001 from several localities in and around Namchi of South Sikkim. These samples were preserved in 4% formaline and deposited at Phycology laboratory of National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow. During microscopic observations, camera lucida diagrams were drawn and identified up to species level following the keys given by Prescott (1951), Tiffany and Britton (1952), Randhawa (1959), Philipose (1967), Prasad and Misra (1992), Kant and Gupta (1998) etc. The result of morpho-taxonomic studies, with description of each taxon, their collection number and locality and date of collection were given.

Systematic Description
1. *Scenedesmus arcuatus* Lemm. (Fig. 6)
Cells 12-13.5 µm long, 6-6.2 µm broad, ovoid or
Map of Sikkim showing study area Namchi
6. *Spirogyra rhizobrachialis* Jao (Fig. 13)
Vegetative cells 120-132.5 µm long, 46.5 µm broad with plane end walls; chloroplast 4, slightly spiraled, deeply toothed on the margins, making 3-6 turns; conjugation scalariform, tubes formed by both gametangia; zygospores 75-80 µm long, 38-40 µm broad, ellipsoid; spore wall irregularly and coarsely reticulate, brown.
Locality: Under a cliff with dripping water at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0187.

2. *Scenedesmus bijugatus* (Turp.) Kuetz. (Fig. 9)
Colonies slightly curved, 2-4 cells arranged in a single linear series; cells 12.5 µm long, 6.8 µm broad, ellipsoid to ovoid with ends broadly rounded.
Locality: A pond near Namchi towards Jorthang.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0185.

3. *Ulothrix zonata* (Web. and Moh.) Kuetz. (Fig. 7)
Vegetative cells 196-197.2 µm long, 48.5 µm broad, cylindrical or slightly swollen; cell wall thick; chloroplast band shaped, covering mid region with several pyrenoids.
Locality: Water springs at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0186.

4. *Cladophora glomerata* (Linn.) Kuetz. (Fig. 8)
Filaments usually with profuse, y-shaped lateral branching; vegetative cells of main axis 175 µm long, 45 µm broad and of branches 180.5 µm long, 35.8 µm broad with thick stratified walls, multinucleate; plant mass light green.
Locality: A pond near Namchi towards Jorthang.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0185.

5. *Spirogyra nitida* (Dillw.) Link (Fig. 5)
Vegetative cells 110-150 µm long, 65 µm broad with plane end walls; chloroplasts 4 with 3-5 turns; conjugation scalariform, tubes formed by both gametangia; zygospores 75 µm long, 45-48 µm broad, cylindric ellipsoid with sharply rounded poles; spore wall smooth, minutely grooved.
Locality: Under a cliff with dripping water at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0187.

7. *Netrium digitus* (Ehr.) Itzigs. and Roth. (Fig. 1)
Cells 196-197.2 µm long, 48.5 µm broad, fusiform without median constriction; cell wall smooth without pores, margin convex, attenuated gradually from the middle to truncate apices; apices 32.8 µm wide; chloroplast with longitudinal ridges with serrated margin.
Locality: Water spring at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0186.
Remark: The specimen observed here was similar to Tiffany and Britton (1952) but wider than the specimen described by Prasad and Misra (1992) from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Cells 41-44.5 µm broad and apices 15-16.5 µm).
9. *Closterium lunula* var. *massartii* (Muell.) Nitzs. (Fig. 4)

Cells 335 µm long, 50 µm broad, about 5-6 times longer than broad, almost straight, outer margin more or less curved, inner margin slightly tumid in the middle, gradually and gently attenuated to slightly truncate apices, apex 15 µm wide; cell wall smooth; chloroplast with 5 ridges and numerous scattered pyrenoids.

Locality: Waterfall at Namchi towards Namthang.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0188.

Remark: The present specimen is much shorter than the Prasad and Misra (1992) specimen described from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (cells 738 µm long, 109 µm broad).

10. *Closterium tumidum* Johns. (Fig. 2)

Cells 84 µm long, 13.5 µm broad, curved, gradually attenuated towards slightly truncate rounded apices, apex 3-4 µm wide; cell wall smooth; chloroplast with 4 ridges and 3-4 pyrenoids arranged in a row.

Locality: A pond near Namchi towards Jorthang.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0185.

11. *Cosmarium lundellii* Delp. var. *ellipticum* West and West (Fig. 11)

Cells 70 µm long, 50-52 µm broad, deeply constricted with linear sinus; semicells subsemicircular to sub-pyramidate with rounded angles; isthmus 8 µm wide; cell wall coarsely punctuate; chloroplast axile with two pyrenoids in each semicell.

Locality: Waterfall at Namchi towards Namthang.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0189.

12. *Cosmarium pseudogranatum* var. *rotundatum* (Krieg.) Messik. (Fig. 12)

Cells 21.2 µm long, 16.5 µm broad; semicells broadly truncate exhibiting rather prominently convex side and truncate-rounded apex; cell wall minutely punctate; isthmus 4 µm wide.
Locality: Natural stream at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0190.

13. *Staurastrum pachyrhynchum* Nordst. (Fig. 10)

Cells 16.8 µm long, 15.2 µm broad, deeply constricted, sinus open and acute angled; semicells sub-elliptic, dorsal marging strongly convex, thickened angles, obtusely rounded and produced with a faint upward tilt; top view triangular showing convex sides; cell wall smooth.
Locality: Natural stream at Namchi.
Collection number: NBRI-ALSN 0190.

Results and Discussion

Namchi district of South Sikkim Himalaya falls under the tropical to subtropical hilly region. Due to low land area water stagnation is a common phenomenon, which supports the luxuriant growth of algae. Out of 13 taxa of class Chlorophyceae, 3 species of *Closterium*, 2 species of *Cosmarium*, *Scenedesmus* and *Spirogyra* (with fertile parts), and 2 species each of *Netrium*, *Ulothrix*, *Cladophora* and *Staurastrum* have been reported in this communication. Mor-pho-taxonomic variation was observed in the Sikkim Himalayan algal flora with that of rest part of Indian algal flora. This variation...
may be due to the high altitude, low temperature and other climatic and ecological conditions of the locality.

Acknowledgements
The authors express a deep gratitude to the Director, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow and the Head of Botany Department, Lucknow University, Lucknow for their constant encouragement and support to carry out this work.

References