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**A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ON THE DIVERSITY  
OF GENUS *FICUS* L. (MORACEAE) IN KERALA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Members of the genus *Ficus*, commonly called figs are one among the most abundant as well as diverse genus of angiosperm plants with respect to the life forms and habitat. The current estimate accounts for the presence of about 750 species in the world. The revisionary study on the genus in India was initiated in 2008 by Botanical survey of India and 115 species has been so far reported within the political boundary of India. The plants are grouped into 6 subgenera and 12 sections. Majority of the species belongs to the sub genus *Urostigma*. Among them, only 10 species are reported as endemic. North eastern parts of India are considered as the hot spot of figs with a total diversity of 43 species. The genus remains problematic with respect to its taxonomic complexity and identification difficulties. Other than the regional works, no detailed work were done in the genus within the state so far. The current study provides a preliminary assessment on the diversity of figs in Kerala. The assessment reveals the identity of 33 species within the Kerala state. Plants belonging to 5 sub genera are only reported from Kerala. Members belonging to the subgenus *Ficus* is not reported from Kerala. Out of the 10 endemic species in India, 5 species are endemic to Western Ghats one each being in the endangered and Near Threatened category. Four among the species are exotic. In Kerala subgenus *Urostigma* is dominant with a total of 19 species, in which 11 and 8 species in the subsection *Conosycea* and *Urostigma* respectively almost similar to the Indian distribution.