FROM TROPICAL TO TEMPERATE: FIRST DISTRIBUTION RECORD OF *AMARANTHUS DEFLEXUS* L. (AMARANTHACEAE) AS AN ALIEN SPECIES TO KASHMIR HIMALAYA

Gousia Nabi[a, *], Aijaz A. Wani[a], Adil Gani[b], Wasim Javid[a], Akhtar H. Malik[c], Anzar A. Khuroo[c]

[a]Cytogenetics and Plant Molecular Biology Research Laboratory, Department of Botany, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir – 190 006, India
[b]Department of Food science and Technology, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir – 190 006, India
[c]Centre for Biodiversity and Taxonomy, Department of Botany, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir – 190 006, India
*e-mail: gousiyanabi123@gmail.com

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Climate change and land use transformation are triggering the shift in species ranges, causing tropicalization of temperate floras and consequently impacting the endemic biodiversity of temperate zones. Therefore, early documentation of such floristic changes is essential for implementing effective management strategies to mitigate the loss of endemic biodiversity. Here we report *Amaranthus deflexus* L. of tropical origin for the first time from the temperate Kashmir Himalaya, India. Based on the sparse plant populations and recent reports, *A. deflexus* is categorized as a casual alien species for the study region. The taxonomic identification of species was confirmed on the basis of diagnostic floral characters. This study provides a comprehensive micro- and macromorphological description, photographic illustrations, and a comparison of diagnostic characters of *A. deflexus* with closely related species *A. viridis* L. and a distribution map to support the scientific validity of the plant record in this Himalayan region.

Keywords: alien species, climate change, range shift, Himalaya, biodiversity, diagnostic characters
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