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CIARI Scientists Redescribe a Taxonomically Cryptic Freshwater Fish Species from the Andaman Islands

Denis Giles – 08 September 2022



Port Blair, Sept. 7: A team of scientists led by ICAR-Central Inland Agricultural Research Institute (CIARI), Port Blair under the technical guidance of Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI has redescribed a new species *Sicyopterus garra* from the Andaman Islands.

The species was first described in late 1925 by an eminent ichthyologist Dr. Sundar Lal Hora from the type locality Brichgunj. Due to the taxonomically cryptic nature, the species was merged with *Sicyopterus microcephalus*, a species known from South-East Asia. For more than 90 years, the name *Sicyopterus garra* remained invalid and was not used by researchers.

A team of scientists, J. Praveenraj, Dr. R. Kiruba-Sankar, and Dr. K. Saravanan of ICAR-CIARI in collaboration with the French Museum, Paris, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata and Thackeray Wildlife foundation, Mumbai investigated live specimens with DNA studies and confirmed *Sicyopterus garra* from the Andaman to be unique and endemic to these Islands.

This discovery is remarkable, as this is the third endemic freshwater fish species to be described from the Andaman Islands. The study was published in the *Journal of Fish Biology* (Wiley-Blackwell), a reputed journal from The Fisheries Society of the British Isles.