

Myrmica longisculpta, a new species from Himalaya
(Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Myrmicinae)

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Abstract. *Myrmica longisculpta* sp. nov. is described from south-western slopes of Himalaya in the Jammu and Kashmir region of India. It is most similar to species of the *Myrmica rugosa* Mayr, 1865 species group but based just on workers, this species cannot be placed with certainty to any species group in the scheme provided by RADCHENKO & ELMES (2010).

Key words. Hymenoptera, Formicidae, Myrmicinae, *Myrmica*, taxonomy, new species, Himalaya, India.

Introduction

The ant genus *Myrmica* Latreille, 1804 in the Old World, is represented by 144 valid species (RADCHENKO & ELMES 2010; BHARTI & SHARMA 2011a,b) which are well distributed in the Palaearctic zone and South-east Asian tropical and subtropical regions. The *Myrmica* fauna of the central Asian mountains which comprise Hindu Kush, Karakorum, south-western slope of Himalaya (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan), contains 35 species representing 7 species groups; 33 species (94.29 %) are endemic to this region. Although the species groups in *Myrmica* as proposed by RADCHENKO & ELMES (2001, 2010) are based on arbitrary morphological divisions, most appear to be monophyletic and seem to have some phylogenetic value as verified by molecular studies (JANSEN et al. 2009, 2010).

Myrmica longisculpta sp. nov. has a combination of morphological features by which it can be discriminated from all other species in the Himalaya and elsewhere. The species from this region are interesting because many have morphological features that are considered to be plesiomorphic (RADCHENKO & ELMES 2010). However, unfortunately the diversity of species from Indian Himalaya is very poorly represented in this census. There are reasons galore for this under-representation of species diversity, one of the most significant being the lack of material from this region.