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International Association for Plant Taxonomy  
Research Grant

February 29th, 2020

Dear Award Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I provide my strongest support for Ms. Resmi S.'s application for the IAPT Research Grant Award. Resmi is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Calicut, India. She is working on the systematics of the genus *Sonerila* (Melastomataceae) in India. I am very interested in Melastomataceae and this is a group I have been working on since I was in graduate school. I have known Resmi for about two years. I have been following her progress and discussed her research goals and methodological approaches on a regular basis. She is a very bright, passionate student dedicated to her work with exceptional diligence.

Overall, paleotropical Melastomataceae are understudied compared to the Neotropical groups, and fundamental taxonomic studies are still lacking. *Sonerila* is one of the largest herbaceous groups in the Old World melastomes; it is incredibly diverse, widespread from India to Papua New Guinea and, not surprisingly, taxonomically difficult and poorly understood. A formal treatment is only available for the species in Sri Lanka, therefore, Resmi's work is critical to our understanding of its systematics, evolution, and biogeography.

The Indian sonerilas were studied by Dr. Roger Lundin until his premature death, several years ago. It is refreshing to know that a young Indian student is now picking up from where he left, and I have no doubt that Resmi will generate outstanding work, both morphological and molecular, on this complex taxon. I am familiar with her research and I wholeheartedly endorse her application for the IAPT research grant. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to receive additional information.

Sincerely,

Nico Cellinese  
Associate Curator, Herbarium & Informatics  
Joint Associate Professor, Department of Biology