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Two new species of an Indian endemic genus *Krishnacapritermes* Chhotani (Isoptera: Termitidae) from the Kerala part of the Western Ghats, India

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ABSTRACT

Krishnacapritermes Chhotani (Isoptera: Termitidae) is one of the endemic termite genera from the Western Ghats of India. Under the genus, only two species *Krishnacapritermes maitii* Chhotani and *Krishnacapritermes thakuri* Chhotani were known earlier. The present study describes two new species, *Krishnacapritermes dineshan* Amina and Rajmohana **sp. nov**. and *Krishnacapritermes manikandan* Amina and Rajmohana **sp. nov**. from the higher elevation hill ranges of Western Ghats part of Kerala. DNA barcodes based on cytochrome oxidase I genes were generated for *K. thakuri* and *K. dineshan* from multiple locations and tested for phylogenetic relationships. The paper provides a dichotomous key for the four species of *Krishnacapritermes* and a species distribution map, along with data on the extension of distribution range for *K. maitii* and *K. thakuri*. Comments on intracolonial variability of the hyaline lateral points or processes of the labrum in soldier caste are included. *Pericapritermes travancorensis* Mathew and Ipe **syn. nov**. is treated as a junior synonym of *K. thakuri*.

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Introduction

Termites are one of the most ecologically and economically important insect group (Wood and Sands 1978; Krishna et al. 2013). Small- to medium-sized, and ranging from 3 to 20 mm in body length, they are much familiar to common man due to their abundance, social organisation, caste system and division of labour, super architectural ability, a cryptic mode of life, depends on symbiotic microbiota and above all, their pest status (Krishna et al. 2013).

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