

endemism is local speciation; under the alternative explanation, that these populations originated in adjoining regions and spread to the Himalaya, where they evolved into new species, we might expect to encounter the parent species throughout the adjoining regions and the Himalaya, which is not the case up to now. On the contrary allied ant species reported from high-altitude regions show pronounced differences among them – other interpretation of character displacement, as noted by Brown & Wilson (1956) – is possible through sympatric speciation.

4. Finally it's interesting to wonder why some ant genera, like *Pheidole*, *Camponotus*, *Polyrhachis* etc., are more diverse/hyperdiverse. What factors have driven speciation rates to be faster in these as compared to others (or else made extinction rates slower)? Which mode of speciation accounts for this radiation? Can allopatry drive speciation at such a high rate (keeping in mind the number of new genera and species reported in ants in recent years)?

Is this hyperdiversity general or patchy? Within the Himalayas, the genus *Myrmica* has the highest number of species (above 1000 m asl), more than *Pheidole* or any other genus, and the highest number of endemic species. Results in the coming years may reveal similar patterns in *Leptothorax* and *Lasius*. Probably species diversity leads to more diversity and endemism too in a region like the Himalaya; this does not seem conceivable under the banner of the allopatric mode. As put forth by Wilson (2003), “strong variation in species richness among genera, families and still higher taxa is a universal but still poorly understood biological phenomenon.”

These are a few aspects which need some serious thinking on the part of evolutionary biologists/myrmecologists. I don't doubt the importance of the allopatric mode of speciation, but what has happened over the years is that when somebody has come up with evidence for sympatric or some other mode, it has been seen as a threat to the allopatric model and refuted immediately, seemingly with a closed mind.

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