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DIVERSITY OF SCORPIONS (ARACHNIDA : SCORPIONES) IN TELANGANA STATE, INDIA

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ABSTRACT : Information on scorpion diversity of Telangana State is meager and an attempt was made to compile an updated checklist of these poorly studied groups of arthropods based on published literature and field studies between 2014 and 2021. A total of 13 species of scorpions belonging to nine genera and three families are known to be present in Telangana State, India. Recent taxonomic changes with respect to the giant forest scorpions have been included in the present checklist.

Key words : Checklist, Buthidae, Hormuridae, Scorpionidae.

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INTRODUCTION

Scorpions are arthropods belonging to the phylum Arthropoda, Class Arachnida, and Order Scorpiones. Scorpiones are a reasonably diversified order, with 2677 species recognised worldwide (Rein, 2022), 134 of which are found in India. Buthidae C.L. Koch, 1837 is the largest scorpion family, with 95 genera (one of which is extinct and not mentioned here) and 1297 species (Rein, 2022). Except for Antarctica and New Zealand, this family is distributed all across the planet, in tropical, subtropical, and partly temperate environments.

The scorpion diversity of Telangana State is poorly documented. Telangana is situated on the Deccan plateau, in the western section of the Eastern Ghats. It has a wide range of agroclimatic and biogeographic characteristics, ranging from flat land to rocky terrain and hills. It is situated in the semi-arid zone and experiences a hot and dry environment. The summer season begins in March and ends in May, with typical high temperatures nearing 42 degrees Celsius. The monsoon season begins in June and lasts through September, with an average rainfall of 755 mm (29.7 inches). It includes a diverse range of forest types and encompasses a total area of 26,969.48 square kilometers, with 12 protected areas.

The scorpion diversity of Telangana (formerly a part of Andhra Pradesh) has been poorly documented. Earliest records on scorpions of the region include that of Pocock (1900), who reported *Buthus tamulus* Fabricus, 1798 [presently known as *Hottentotta tamulus* (Fabricius, 1798)], *Lychas scaber* Pocock, 1893 and *Palamnaeus fulvipes madraspatensis* Pocock, 1900 [presently known as *Heterometrus madraspatensis* (Pocock, 1900)]. In 1939, Rahimullah presented a preliminary note on a collection of scorpions from Hyderabad (Deccan) together with some remarks on their venom in the journal of Osmania University which has not been referred by us as the copy of this journal is missing.

Tikadar and Bastawade (1983) made the most significant contribution to the taxonomy of India's scorpion fauna, including several new species. Kovaøík (1997, 2003, 2004) also made a substantial contribution to the taxonomy of Indian scorpions by conducting revisionary research on several taxa including *Lychas*, *Isometrus* and *Heterometrus* and providing information on materials held in various museums. These works are of particular significance for Telangana. Kovaøík (2003) described an endemic species *Isometrus khammamensis* [presently known as *Reddyanus khammamensis* (Kovaøík, 2003)] from Khammam. Rao *et al* (2005) gave a detailed account of the scorpions of the Nallamalai Region, which included 7 species and natural history observations for some of them. Javed *et al* (2010a) added *Liocheles nigripes* to the checklist of scorpions of Andhra Pradesh

Mahabubnagar district; Chintapally and Nalgonda, Nalgonda district; Shadnagar, Rangareddy district; Aswaraopet, Badhrachalam, Chintoor and Mandalapalli, Bhadradri Kothagudem district; Vikarabad, Vikarabad district; Yeddumailaram, Sangareddy district; Pochamrallu, Medak district and Nizamabad, Nizamabad district (Ramakrishna and Srinivasulu, 2021).

Genus *Deccanometrus* Prendini and Loria, 2020

13. *Deccanometrus xanthopus* (Pocock, 1897)

Distribution in Telangana: Regonda, Warangal district.

Remarks: *Heterometrus telanganaensis* Javed, Mirza, Tampal and Lourenco, 2010 is synonymized with this species (Prendini and Loria, 2020).

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this article.

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