

**NEW RECORD OF THE SPIDER *ARACHNURA ANGURA* FROM
MAHARASHTRA WITH ADDITIONAL MORPHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION
(ARANEAE: ARANEIDAE)**

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INTRODUCTION

Araneidae includes 29 genera and 154 species from the Indian sub-continent (Sebastian *et al.*, 2009) The genus *Arachnura* Vinson, 1863 is represented by two species only; *A. angura* Tikader, 1970 from Gazing, Sikkim (Lat 27°20' N & Lon 88°40') and *A. melanura* (Simon, 1867).

During recent surveys in some parts of Satara (Maharashtra) at Lat 17°42' N & Lon 74°02' E; a mature female of *Arachnura angura* was sighted, collected and preserved in 70% ethanol. The specimen is deposited in the National Zoological Collections vide Ar/424 at Zoological Survey of India, Pune. Observations were done using the dissecting microscope; the genitalia was dissected and kept in clove oil for 24hrs. The genitalia was observed and drawn. The specimen was identified referring to the morphological descriptions and illustrations given by Tikader 1970.

Arachnura angura Tikader

1970 : *Arachnura angura* Tikader, *Rec. Zool. Surv. India*, 63 (1-4): 30

1982 : *Arachnura angura* Tikader, *Fauna Of India* 2 (1):210

Material examined: 2 from India, Maharashtra, Satara, Kurneshwar Garden found in the web constructed on aerial roots of Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis*) Coll.- Shripad Manthen, Sidharth Kulkarni on 28 Sept. 2011.

Closer examinations revealed some morphological variations and additions as follows:

Carapace : 4.20 mm long and 2.6 mm;

Abdomen : 5.90 mm long and 3 mm wide.

Cephalothorax : The mid-longitudinal brown patch extends till the anterior medians which differs from *A. angura*. Brown patch present along the lateral margins of the carapace and no distinct markings elsewhere as given in *angura* [Fig 1]. Carapace widest at just anterior to fovea. Anterior medians black ; rest nocturnal. Sternum yellowish, sparsely clothed with spines on anterior region with pea-shaped brown patch at the posterior end [Fig 2]. Leg formula: 4213. Femur of leg I stoutest with spines along the inner margin. Meta-tarsus and tarsus of leg I, II, III covered with strong pubescence. Metatarsus and tarsus of leg III black. During observations the right leg III appeared to be folded from the dorsal side. When upturned, it was found entangled in its own silk; and on removing the silk cover; an ant (Formicidae) was discovered, which probably detects act of food-storage.

Abdomen : Lateral view of abdomen as in [Fig. 3]. Genitalia as given in [Fig 4]

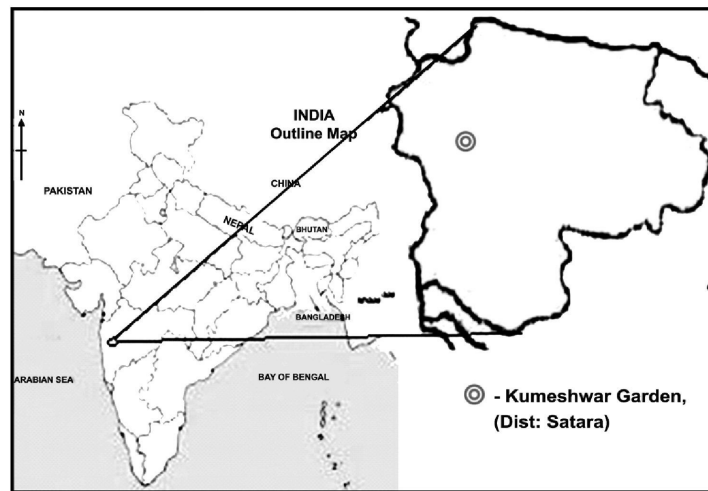
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the present report, three points are intended to put on record:

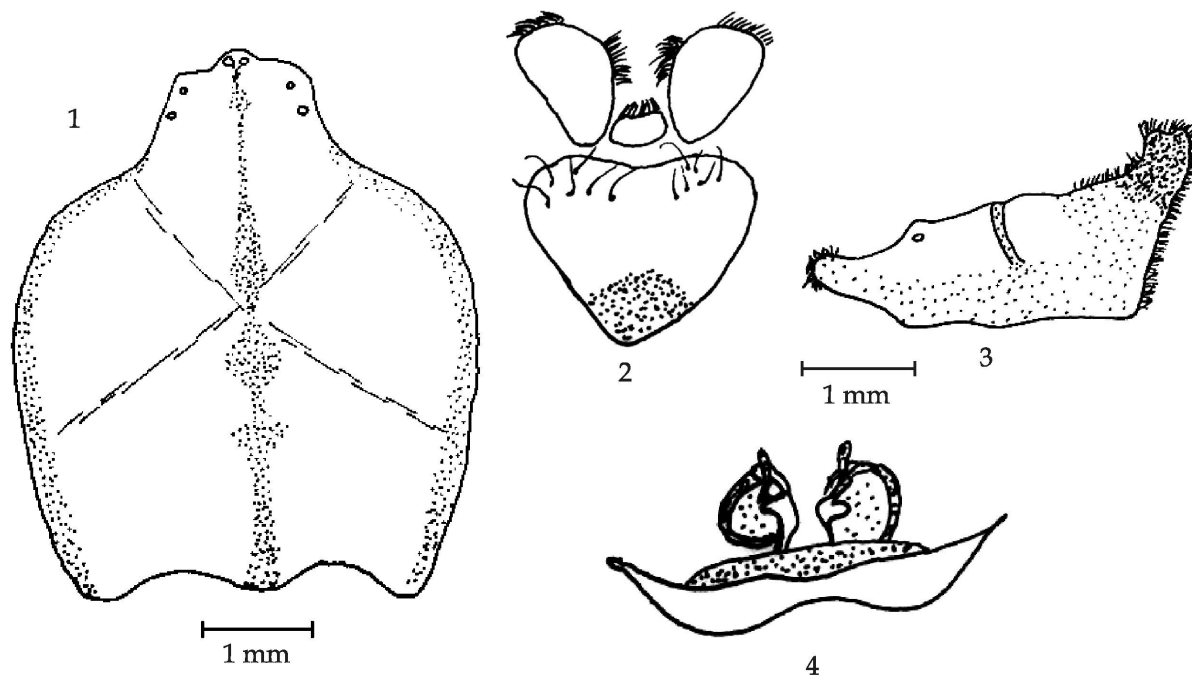
1. Extension of distribution of *A. angura* further westwards (2303 kms)
2. Close variant of species form of species attributed to change in climatic, microhabitat conditions and food composition; and
3. This is the first record of this genus and species from Maharashtra state.

Similar spider of the genus *Arachnura* has been sighted in Amravati (Maharashtra, India) in 2007

but has been proposed to as new genera and family *Gajbesa*, Gajbesidae respectively.



Map of India showing the study area



Figs. 1-4 : *Arachnura angura* Tikader; 1. Cephalothorax (dorsal); 2. Sternum and labium; 3. Abdomen lateral view; 4. Internal genitalia.

website of Spiders of Central India (Wankhede G.N.) which has not yet received an official status as a new family and genus, and till date the valid classification of the spider is genus *Arachnura* belonging to family Araneidae.

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