

New distribution of the myrmicine arboreal ant, *Paratopula intermedia* Sheela and Narendran (Formicidae, Myrmicinae) from south India

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ABSTRACT: The myrmicine ant, *Paratopula intermedia* Sheela and Narendran, 1998, which was reported so far only from the type locality (Kerala), was found to be present in two other Indian states as well, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. © 2025 Association for Advancement of Entomology

KEY WORDS: Occurrence, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka

The arboreal ant, *Paratopula* is a small genus with about 12 species across the world (www.antweb, accessed on 25. 06. 24). Luo and Guénard (2016) updated the identification key for twelve known species of the genus *Paratopula* at global level. The genus is known to be distributed in the Indomalayan region (Luo and Guénard, 2016).

Sheela and Narendran described *P. intermedia* from Muthanga, Kerala in the year 1998 and is known so far only from the type locality, Muthanga, Kerala. Muthanga is apart of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary situated at a range of elevation of 650 to 110m from sea level. The temperature in the Sanctuary ranges from 13 to 32°C. This place gets annual rainfall of 3000 to 4000 mm and humidity in above 75 per cent even during summer and up to 95 per cent during monsoon. The ecological niche of this particular ecosystem is well suited for this species. A recent study of the ant fauna of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, revealed the presence of this species in Karnataka. The Indian Institute of Science campus in Bengaluru,

Karnataka which is about 900m above sea level and experiences a moderate climate with annual temperature ranging 15 - 26°C and average rainfall 787mm. The humidity on an average is 65.2 per cent and it ranges 45 in March to 79 per cent in August. Another survey at Madurai Kamaraj University also showed the presence of this myrmicine ant in Tamil Nadu. This university is located in Madurai (Tamil Nadu) at an elevation of approximate 176m above sea level. The average annual temperature is 28.2°C, with an annual average rainfall of 849mm and average humidity 69.7 per cent.

Thus this myrmicine ant species *P. intermedia* is able to exist in a wide range of ecological conditions, with varied elevation, temperature, rainfall and humidity. Though *P. ceylonica* is reported from Karnataka (Bharti *et al.*, 2016), *P. intermedia* is not reported to be present in either Karnataka or Tamil Nadu.

Paratopula intermedia Sheela and Narendran, 1998

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Fig. 1 *Paratopula intermedia* worker – profile

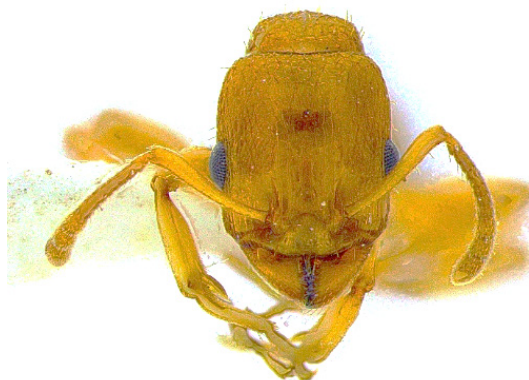


Fig. 2 *P. intermedia* worker, head, frontal view

Diagnostic features: Total length 6.8mm; head length 1.48mm; head width 1.2mm; cephalic index 81; scape length 1.02mm; scape index 85; eye diameter 0.80mm; pronotal width 0.86mm; and alitrunk length 2.1mm. Antennae 12 segmented with three segmented club. Whole body bright brownish yellow with scattered yellow hairs. Metanotum with a pair of long spines. Pronotum broader than long. Post petiole longer than broad (As given in Sheela & Narendran, 1998).

Materials examined: 1 Female, INDIA, Tamil Nadu, 20.iii.2007, Coll. Thresiamma Varghese and Ponnanna. 1 Female, INDIA, Karnataka, Indian Institute of Science Campus, 10.v.2004, Coll. Thresiamma Varghese.

Distribution: This species was known only from its type locality in Kerala. New distribution records are Karnataka (Indian Institute of Science Campus, Benagluru) and Tamil Nadu (Madurai Kamaraj University campus).

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