NOTE ON THE MILLIPEDE, *PHYLLOGONOSTREPTUS NIGROLABIATUS*
NEWPORT A BIODEGRADATOR IN SOUTH ARCOT DISTRICT, TAMILNADU

Information on the faunal diversity of Indian Diplopoda is so far rather inadequate. Data on the role played by them in nature is still more meager. (Kubra Bano and Krishnamoorthy 1979 and Hopkin and Read 1992). Studies carried out by Crawford et al., (1987), Bailey and de Mendonca (1990), Eisenbeis and Wichard (1987) and Hoffman and Payne (1969) in Millipedes revealed that Millipedes consume a variety of food materials. But so far there is no report of their feeding on human faces. During a recent faunistic survey of South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu, apart from collection of different species of millipedes, attempts were made to study their habitats and food preference. The study lead to observations on food preference of common species, found in the district, *Phyllogonostreptus nigrolabiatus* as a biodegradator.

In Tamil Nadu, in every village a particular portion of field, a little far away from the village is set apart for use as open public toilet by the villager. During a survey in 1994, when the villagers were asked where does the millipede occur? Immediately they responded asking back. Are you asking about the big milipede? and then took us to these open fields. Herewere observed the millipede *Phyllogonostreptus nigrolabiatus* in large numbers, feeding on human faces. The villages from where these millipedes were collected is given in Fig. I and II.

Because of this habit, this species of millipede can be called a partial Biodegradator. This process of biodegradation by these millipedes may help to clean the envirnoment and make the soil more fertile. Experimental studies on the propagation of this millipede to other villages, to be used as biodegradator may be undertaken in future. The soil of these fields can be used as natural fertilizer in agriculture.

REFERENCES


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Fig. I

List of collection sites of *Phyllogonostreptus nigrolabiatus* Newport in South Acrot District
Fig. II

Dorsal and Ventral view of Millipede *Phyllogonostreptus nigrolabiatus* Newport