
SHORT COMMUNICATION

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ETHOLOGY OF CAVE-CRICKET,
KEMPIOLA SHANKARI SINHA
(ORTHOPTERA : PHALANGOPSIDAE)

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While carrying out the field and laboratory studies of *K. shankari*, observations have been made regarding the functions of the hind legs and the behaviour of these insects.

The long hind legs are used for walking and jumping, and are of great help in escaping from enemies. The insects are usually found on walls and in crevices, with their head hanging downwards. When a bright light is thrown on a group of these insects, they either remain stationary, waving their antennae or scuttle away quickly and never attempt to fly. If, however, they are disturbed by approaching hand of an investigator, they jump away sometimes skipping over a distance of more than a meter. Once the insects escape, it is difficult to approach to them because, unlike *Macropsathus filifer* (Richard, 1954), *K. shankari* does not remain motionless after a few leaps. In proportion to their size, these insects cover long distances and jumping seems to be the means of escape from an enemy. The mouth parts of insects are not used for defence and they very seldom make attempt to bite. Thus unlike Henicidae, the members of which are known to fight in self defence, *K. shankari* relies entirely on its greater manoeuvrability in escaping from its enemies. When held in hand, *K. shankari* kicks and thrusts with its hind legs in an endeavour to free itself. Although it possesses numerous spines, they are too small to inflict a painful scratch.

In the laboratory, *K. shankari* are frequently observed cleaning their legs, body and antennae. The object of the cleaning process is evidently to remove dust particles so as to keep the antennae and the setae on the legs in a state of sensitivity to environmental conditions. Before starting any movement, they bring

their antennae in the desired direction of movement. Congregation is characteristics as reported in *Rhaphidophora picea* by Chopard (1924). They also have the habit of homing i.e. returning back to the starting place after movement.

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