

Book Review: Biodiversity of Spiders (Tamil edition: *Silanthikalin Uyirvirimum*) - K. Muthuchelian and R. Karthikeyani

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Reviewed by B.A. Daniel

This book on biodiversity of spiders written in vernacular language is first of its kind in Tamil. This comprehensive book dealing with diversity of spiders of the state, Tamil Nadu includes 43 units mainly dealing with the history of spider research in India, spider morphology, size, colour, types of spider webs, life cycle, life span, food habits, spider microhabitats, adaptations, predators, parental care, communication, tips for field research, research methodology, spider families, and complete account of spiders found in Tamil Nadu with 64 colour photos of spiders found in Tamil Nadu. The authors have listed 112 spiders families which are globally known of which 60 families are reported from India. Detailed account of 30 spider families found in Tamil Nadu has been given. Interestingly all these families have vernacular names which shows some typical character of the spider. For example Burrowing spiders in Tamil are called as '*Nilangudayum silanthikal*'. Similarly Wandering spiders belonging to Ctenidae are called as '*Naadodic silanthikal*' which explains the behaviour of the animal.

Importantly the authors have highlighted the need for the conservation of the spiders and some immediate activities that require to conserve these species. Some very interesting and useful spider information given are the proverbs related to spiders, folklore and Greek stories on spiders. The other main additions to this book is an account of spiders in six Tamil *Sangam* literature such as *ahanaanooru*, *periya puraanam* etc., which will create some interest among Tamil readers to learn more about spiders of the state. An index to the book would have benefited a lot for the readers which is lacking. The book is written in simple language with colour plates. Though spiders are considered as a least and tiny creature, this book reveals how these species play a major role in ecosystem functioning. On the whole the book is a successful venture useful to introduce the basics of spider conservation requirements for beginners and also a very useful book for the field researchers and as a reference book.



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