

INSECTA : HYMENOPTERA : CERAPHRONIDAE

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INTRODUCTION

Superfamily Ceraphronoidea is a little known group of very small (body size of 1-2 mm) parasitic hymenoptera, that are commonly found in all major biogeographical realms (Johnson and Musetti, 2004). The superfamily consists of two extant families, Ceraphronidae and Megaspilidae. Most Ceraphronoids are primary endoparasitoids of entomophagous insects with an exceptionally large host range which spans to at least eight insect orders including Hemiptera, Thysanoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Mecoptera, Trichoptera and Neuroptera (Miko *et al.*, 2011). The superfamily is also known to have highly diverse ecological roles from primary to quaternary parasitism (Haviland, 1920).

Earlier, the group was under Proctotrupeoidea, until Masner and Dessart (1967) formally removed them and characterized a separate super family. At present, Ceraphronoidea comprises of two families, Ceraphronidae and Megaspilidae. The available literature indicates that the attempts to assess the diversity of Ceraphronoids in India were much scarce. Some data on Indian Ceraphronoids are available in Mani (1939) and Sharma (1983). Later, Mani and Sharma (1982) made a brief compilation of the available information of Ceraphronoidea in India. Since then, a total of 11 species under 4 genera in 2 families are reported from India (Bijoy and Rajmohana, 2014; Bijoy *et al.*, 2014). *Aphanogmus manilae* (Ashmead) is the only species of the superfamily so far reported from Kerala (Ghosh and Abdurahiman, 1985).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ceraphronid specimens for this study were collected from Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary (MWLS), using sweep nets and yellow pan. They were studied and digital imaging was carried out under high resolution stereozoom microscope-Leica MZ 205A with Leica DFC 500 digital camera. Morphological terminology follows Miko and Deans (2009).