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A NEW RECORD OF SPIDERS AS PREDATORS OF SORGHUM SPIDERMITE *OLIGONYCHUS INDICUS* (HIRST) (ACARI: TETRANYCHIDAE)

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THE mite *Oligonychus indicus* (Hirst) is one of the important spider mite pests of sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) and many insect natural enemies have been recorded on it although spiders are rarely viewed as natural enemies of this important pest¹. However, such observations on other phytophagous mites are available like spiders feeding on *Panonychus ulmi* Koch on apple² the species of spiders belonging to Microphantidae feeding on *O. punicae* (Hirst) on avocado³ and spiders *Philodromus* sp. and *Theridion murarium* (Emerton) on spider mites of peaches⁴.

During our investigation (1982–85) at the Main Research Station, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, on the population dynamics of *O. indicus* in relation to its natural enemies and weather parameters apart from insects, five species of spiders were observed in the clasping leaf sheaths of mite susceptible sorghum variety TAM-2566. They were found to move out of their hiding during cooler hours and feed on all the stages of mite. In the laboratory when each species of the spider was confined to cages containing sorghum leaf infested with mites, they were found to feed readily on all stages of the mite. The spiders were identified as *Uloborus* sp. (Uloboridae), *Argyrodes* sp. (Theridiidae), *Theridula* sp. (Theridiidae), *Theridion* sp. and *Cheiracanthium* sp. (Chebionidae) which forms a new record.

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