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A new species of *Parapanteles* Ashmead (Hymenoptera: Braconidae) from India reared from *Abisara echeria* Stoll (Lepidoptera: Riodinidae) with key to the Indian *Parapanteles* species

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Abstract

A new species of gregarious endoparasitoid, *Parapanteles echeriae* Gupta, Pereira & Churi, **sp. nov.**, bred from *Abisara echeria* Stoll (Lepidoptera: Riodinidae) on host plant *Embelia* sp. (Myrsinaceae), is described and illustrated from Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. *Abisara echeria*, commonly known as plum judy, is a small striking butterfly prevalent in Asia. This is the first ever record of a parasitic wasp associated with *Abisara*. *Parapanteles echeriae* is distinguished from *P. sireeshaae* Ahmad & Akhtar in having propodeum with areola 1.2× as long as wide; anterior diagonal carina meeting anterior margin of propodeum in one half; veins r and 2RS of fore wing merging in a smooth curve; yellow coloured legs and tegulae brownish black. A key to the Indian species of *Parapanteles* is also provided.

Key words: *Parapanteles*, new species, *Abisara echeria*, host-parasitoid interaction, India

Introduction

Parapanteles consists of twenty one species worldwide (Yu, *et al.*, 2012), including two species from the Oriental region. Two species, *P. sireeshaae* Ahmad & Akhtar (2010), a larval parasitoid of *Hyposidra successaria* (Lepidoptera: Geometridae) associated with host plant *Tinospora cordifolia* (Ranunculales: Menispermaceae), and *P. shivranginii* Sathe & Ingawale (1989) in association with host plant *Amaranthus spinosus* L., are reported from the Indian region. So far the genus is reported from only two states of India: Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Here, a new species of *Parapanteles* attacking larvae of *Abisara echeria* Stoll (Lepidoptera: Riodinidae) from Maharashtra, India is described. An illustrated key to the Indian species of Genus *Parapanteles* is also provided.

The present study also adds a new host family Riodinidae to the existing world fauna of known hosts for *Parapanteles* as listed by Valerio *et al.* (2009).

Material and methods

The specimens examined were reared and collected from Maharashtra, India. Caterpillars were reared in caged containers on the natural host plant. All new type material and specimens are deposited in NBAIL. The holotype and paratypes of *Parapanteles sireeshaae* Ahmad & Akhtar (NPC) were examined, but those of *P. shivranginii* are lost and were not able to be examined.

Morphological terminology used in the species description of *Parapanteles* is that followed by Valerio *et al.* (2009) and wing venation followed Sharkey & Wharton (1997). The taxonomic literature consulted includes Akhtar *et al.* (2010), Valerio *et al.* (2009), Yu *et al.*, (2005), Whitfield (1997), Austin & Dangerfield (1992), Sathe *et al.* (1989), and Nixon (1965).