NOTES ON NATURAL HISTORY

An Observation on Parenthood of Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*)

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Coordination: 17°19'35.03"N and 78°24'33.98"E

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Introduction:

Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) is Least Concern species commonly resident in Indian subcontinent. In the present report, some key activities were recorded by using D 90 SLR camera (400 mm lens). The communication posture measurements followed Kumar (2010). Different characteristics and elements of various displays and behaviour were analyzed using photographs. For the measurement of elevation of the crest, a horizontal line was taken over the proximal end of upper mandible and centre of the eye. One vertical line passing through the centre of the eye and the apex of the crest was laid on a horizontal line. The angle was taken according to crest up position and crest down position (0 to 5° Lowest and up to 105° highest).

Red-vented Bulbul active nest site was spotted on 13th May 2013 in an old building of our University campus. On 22nd May 2013, a chick was fallen down from the nest, rescued and placed in the same nest. A total of 43 scan observations were noted during the 09:00 hr to 18:00 hr. Among the recorded activities, parents feeding to chick was high 27.9% followed by calling 16.3%, moving and perching 14.0%, flying and guarding 9.3%, begging 4.7% and preening and resting 2.3% (Table-1). The bird activities such as crest position and angle Down crest position (n=9), Middle crest position (n=17) and Up crest position (n=7). The chick was rescued at 09:54 hr and placed back in the nest at 09:59 hr. The parent birds visited the nest at 10:17 hr and flew away with the chick to new location, since many species of birds did not accept to stay in their nest due to predation (Kumar, 2010). In this present observation, a predator bird Spotted Owlet *Anthe brama* nest was noticed about 15 m distance from our targeted Red-vented Bulbul nest. During this situation they alerted the chick by giving continuous calls as these birds can scan 275°-300° in the normal position (Kumar 2010; Martin 2007). Begging behaviour was observed in the chick after the arrival of parents at the new location on the ground. The chick flapped the wings, stretched their neck

and begged for the food. The nestling opened their beaks when the parent bird visiting the location with food material. Sometimes, in absence of parents (between two feeding visits), they produced begging calls and other display behaviours which was seen only two times (4.7%) at 12:21 hr and 12:23 hr.

Table-1: Activity levels of the crest and circumstances in which *Pycnonotus cafer* performed

Crest position (CP)	CP angle	Bird activity	Scan/Ob-servation*.	Proportion
Down crest position (n=9)	0° to 30°	Begging	2	4.7 %
		Calling	7	16.3 %
		Flying	4	9.3 %
Middle crest position (n=17)	31° to 60°	Feeding	12	27.9 %
		Guarding	4	9.3 %
		Preening	1	2.3 %
		Moving	6	14.0 %
Up crest position (n=6)	61° to 105°	Perching	6	14.0 %
		Resting	1	2.3 %
		Total	43	100 %

(n=number of observations; *-total number)

Food & feeding:

Feeding behaviour was observed for highest 27.9% (n=12) duration at 11:15 hr with earth worm, 11:42 hr, 12:06 hr, 13:00 hr, 13:10 hr, 13:12 hr with neem fruit, 15:18 hr, 16:18 hr, 16:23 hr and 16:27 hr with insect larva. In our observations mostly it fed on Neem fruits (*Azadirachta indica*) followed by insect larva's.

Guarding behaviour: Total 9.3% (n=4) was observed occasionally by parents to chick at 12:42 hr, 13:25, 16:28 and 16:30 hr. Red-vented bulbuls make cup type nest with small twigs in bushes, sometimes inside houses (Fig.-1). In the present observation, the nest was fallen down and totally disturbed, the parent bird shifted the chick into a concrete hole during 16:28 hr for guarding the chick (Fig.-

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Figure-1: Measurements of angle elevation in relation to different crest levels in which *Pycnonotus cafer* parent and chick performed various activities (a) chick in the ground, (b-e) feeding, guarding and perching display and (f) begging display. A=Down-crest position; B = Middle-crest position; C=Up-crest position; D=Angle

2). This kind of behaviour was observed for the first time in Red-vented bulbul.

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References:

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Figure-2: *Pycnonotus cafer* in the nest site

Figure-3: *Pycnonotus cafer* Chick

Figure-4: parent *Pycnonotus cafer* feeding insect larva to chick