



*Review Paper*

## IMPACT OF REARING SEASON, HOST PLANTS AND THEIR INTERACTION ON ECONOMIC TRAITS OF *ANTHERAEA MYLITTA*

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### ABSTRACT

Tropical tasar silkworm, *Antheraea mylitta* (Lepidoptera: Saturniidae) is a polyphagous, silk producing forest insect of commercial importance in India. Forest dependent people rear its larvae on different forestry host plants twice or thrice in a year for meagre household income. Larvae of *A. mylitta* feed on many forest tree species, but always show a great degree of selectivity as a function of its behavioural responses to physical structure and chemical features of the host plants. Cocoon crop of *A. mylitta* is influenced by heterogeneity of tasar food plants and climatic conditions of the habitat. The role of host plants, temperature, humidity, rainfall, photoperiod and other climatic variables on the growth and development of insects have clearly been demonstrated. This article entails an in-depth analysis on the implications of various forestry host plants, ecological factors and nutritional attributes of *A. mylitta*, which may provide selective information to the researchers, people associated with tropical tasar culture of the country and forest managers, who are particularly concerned with improvement of the livelihood function of the forest to its dependents.

**Key words:** Biotic and abiotic factors, food utilization, forest silkworm, growth and development, Indian tasar, silkworm nutrition.