

Larval Host Plants of the Butterflies under Papilionidae Family of the Western Ghats, India

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Abstract: *Butterflies are flying jewels of nature. They are very diverse and has a great role the ecosystem maintenance. Butterflies are widely used as model insects in various studies related to evolution, ethology, insect - plant interactions and distribution (Settele & Kühn, 2009; Rayalu et al., 2013). Butterflies are among the most studied group of insects in relation to the selection of larval food plants and egg laying patterns and behavior. In relation to the larval food plant selection, considerable amount of database is available on the butterflies and their behavior. These studies have been carried out in almost all geographic regions of the world. (Wilkund, 1984; Kelly & Debinski, 1998; Settele et al., 2009; Curtis et al., 2015; Nitin et al., 2018; Robinson et al., 2001; Rayalu et al., 2013, Hill et al., 2018).*

Butterflies are one of the most interesting and fascinating insect groups. Butterflies widely appreciated for their aesthetic value are important as ecological indicators [1]. One fifth of the world's total butterflies are available in India. The butterflies are selective in their choice of flowers and plants they visit. Butterflies and their caterpillars are dependent on specific host plants for foliage, nectar and pollen as their food. Selection of food plants for the immature stages by the adult females is a well-known fact in butterflies and other group of insects. Thus, butterfly diversity indirectly reflects overall plant diversity, especially that of herbs and shrubs, in the given area.

Keywords: Ecosystem, Model insects, Larval Food Plant, Egg laying.

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