**Helicoverpa armigera** (Hubner): A new pest of *tossa* jute, *Corchorus olitorius* L

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Jute is considered as the golden fibre of India. West Bengal is the leading state in terms of area and production of raw jute at the national level which contributes to 77% of the Indian jute (Sinha et al., 2004). The crop is grown in summer and several pests attack the crop. Among the pests, jute semilooper (*Anomis abulifera* Guenee), Bihar hairy caterpillar (*Spilosoma oblique* Walker), indigo caterpillar (*Spodoptera exigua* Hubner), stem girdler (*Nupserha bicolor* Dutt), stem weevil (*Apion corchori* Marshall), grey weevil (*Myllocerus discolor* Bohemos), yellow mite (*Polyphagotarsonemus latus* Banks) and red mite (*Oligonychus coffeae* Nietner) are considered major pests causing economic damage to the crop every year (Das and Singh 1977). The avoidable losses in fibre yield due to multiple infestations by pests were 31–34% in West Bengal (Rahman and Khan, 2006). The most prominent lepidopteran pests infesting jute are Bihar hairy caterpillar and semilooper. Earlier *H. armigera* was not reported on jute. During survey of insect pests infesting jute in *kharif* 2012, *H. armigera* was recorded to damage *tossa* jute *C. olitorius* from Padugachia village, 24 Parganas (N) district of West Bengal. The pest was found to be defoliating, feeding and cutting the terminal succulent portion of stem of about 65-70 days old (cv. JRO-204). This resulted in drooping and drying of stem that eventually reduced the quality and subsequently yield. Approximately, 2 ha of jute crop in Padugachia village and Basirhat (fig 1) were damaged.

*Helicoverpa armigera* is the most devastating, widespread polyphagous pest species worldwide (Chaturvedi, 2007). It feeds on 182 plant species in Indian subcontinent of which 56 are heavily damaged (Pawer et al., 1986). Tossa jute has become a new host for this polyphagous pest.

**References:**

![Plant damaged by Helicoverpa armigera at Bashirhat](image)

**Fig. 1.** Plant damaged by *Helicoverpa armigera* at Bashirhat