

Running title: Parsi contribution to Indian agriculture

**Short communication [Asian-Agri-History Vol. 19, No. 3, 2015].**

**Additional Note on the Parsi Contribution to Indian Agriculture and Agri-research**

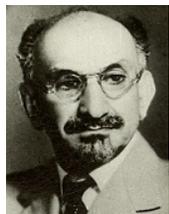
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Further to my review on “The Parsi contribution to Indian agriculture and agri-research” (Asian Agri-History 19(2):131–150), I would like to add another eminent Parsi researcher, Professor Jahangir F Dastur, which I should have included earlier and for which I am making amends by this brief write-up.

**Professor Jahangir Fardunji Dastur: Botanist and pathologist**



**Prof. JF Dastur**

**(1886–1971)**

Prof. Dastur was born on 10 September 1886 at Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India and graduated from Bombay University in 1909 specializing in mycology (the study of fungi) and plant pathology (plant diseases). In the following year he entered British government service as the first assistant to the Imperial Mycologist, Sir Edwin John Butler, at Agriculture Research Institute at Pusa (Bihar). He received worldwide recognition in 1913 on his monumental work on a new species of the fungus *Phytophthora* which was causing a lot of damage to young castor plants in India. The fungus was subsequently named after him as *Phytophthora parasitica* Dastur. In recognition of his work as a plant pathologist he was promoted to the Imperial Agricultural Services in 1919, which was a rare distinction for an Indian in those days. Since 1923 till his retirement in 1941, Prof. Dastur did credible work as a Mycologist to Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) and did valuable work on cotton wilt, foot rot of banana, breaking of cotton, *Nematospora* on cotton, black thread of *Hevea* (rubber), pink disease of citrus, etc. After his retirement, Prof. Dastur came to Imperial Agricultural Research Institute, now Indian Agricultural Research Institute,

New Delhi to take over as Head of the Division of Mycology & Plant Pathology for two years. In 1947, Prof. Dastur was elected as the first President of the Indian Phytopathological Society. Just before he died in 1971, Prof. Dastur was privileged to receive the Indian Phytopathological Society's Silver Jubilee Scroll of Honor. In 2008, the Indian Pathological Society also instituted the biannual Prof. Dastur Memorial Lecture Award given to an Indian researcher in plant pathology. Prof. Dastur also authored two pocket books published by D.B. Taraporewala & Sons, Bombay, titled "Useful Plants of India and Pakistan" and "Medicinal Plants of India and Pakistan". He also produced "Everybody's Guide to Ayurvedic Medicine". The books have a lot of information on the properties of plants of the two countries, especially their use in indigenous knowledge medicine and are part of the collection in my personal library. Prof. Dastur died on 11 May 1971 at the age of 85.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author thanks Prof. RS Mehrotra, Kurukshetra, India for communicating some achievements of Prof. JF Dastur.

### **Boxes**

- 1. He received worldwide recognition in 1913 on his monumental work on a new species of the fungus Phytophthora which was causing a lot of damage to young castor plants in India.*
- 2. Since 1923 till his retirement in 1941, Prof. Dastur did credible work as a Mycologist to Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) and did valuable work on cotton wilt, foot rot of banana, breaking of cotton, Nematospora on cotton, black thread of Hevea (rubber), pink disease of citrus, etc.*
- 3. In 1947, Prof. Dastur was elected as the first President of the Indian Phytopathological Society.*