

25 YEARS OF THE JPC: AN APPRAISAL

V. RAJAGOPAL

Editor, JPC, ISPC

Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod

The Journal of Plantation Crops (JPC) is the official publication of the Indian Society for Plantation Crops (ISPC), the objective of which was to disseminate the knowledge on various aspects in plantation crop sector. The JPC had an humble beginning in 1973 with articles from the Research Institutes like the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Central Coffee Research Institute, UPASI Tea Research Institute and Rubber Research Institute of India. The Editorial Board was constituted with Dr. N.M. Nayar as the first Editor and highly experienced scientists in plantation crops as members nominated from other Institutes, giving representation to the expertise in major disciplines. This excellent tradition continued with successive Editors namely Drs. M. K. Nair; T. Prem Kumar and H. Hameed Khan. The quality of publication with wide coverage of articles and distribution of the JPC in India and abroad bears good testimony to the great efforts and hard work put in by the team for the last 25 years. The Journal is acclaimed to be one of the best in maintaining the time of publication, devoted to wide range of plantation crops in the world. So far 25 volumes with two numbers in each volume were published. This does not include the supplementary issues published as the proceedings of the Plantation Crops Symposia (PLACROSYM). The Silver Jubilee of ISPC was celebrated in August 1997 and it is but appropriate at this juncture to review the coverage of articles in the Journal. This article provides an insight into the number of papers published in each crop and the discipline-wise break up. The contribution of papers from each institute/organization is also highlighted. An

attempt has also been made to project the nature of articles namely review, research and short scientific reports, published in the Journal. Lastly, a comparative study was made on the papers published in the JPC and in the proceedings of PLACROSYMS.

Crop-wise coverage: From the Table 1, it is clear that as many as 579 articles (including the present issue) have been published in the Journal. The papers in coconut topped the list (178), followed by

Table 1. Research papers published in JPC crop-wise

Crop	No. of papers
Palms	
Arecanut	54
Coconut	178
Oilpalm	13
Palmyrah	1
Spices/condiments/aromatic plants	
Cashew	50
Cardamom	32
Cinnamon	4
Clove	7
Ginger	15
Nutmeg	7
Pepper	49
Turmeric	25
Ajawain	2
Chilli	4
Fennel	1
Betelvine	16
Cymbopogon	2
Vanilla	2
Beverages	
Coffee	10
Tea	47
Cocoa	31
Commercial crops	
Rubber	27
Eucalyptus	1
General	1
Total	579

Table 2. Research papers published in JPC discipline-wise

Discipline	No. of papers
Crop Production	
Agronomy	85
Soil Science	41
Microbiology	15
Crop Improvement	
Genetics/Horticulture	91
Botany	6
Crop Protection	
Entomology	97
Pathology 74	
Nematology	7
Basic Sciences	
Plant Physiology & Biochemistry	90
Biotechnology	15
Post Harvest Technology	16
Social Sciences	
Statistics/Economics	40
Transfer of Technology	1
General	1
Total	579

arecanut (54), whereas cashew with 50 and pepper with 49 papers came next in the order. The crops which had 25 and above papers include tea, cardamom, cocoa, rubber and turmeric. With a total of 246 papers the palms group contributed 42.5% of total number of papers, whereas the major spices/condiments like pepper, cardamom and cashew with 131 papers (22.6%) stood second, while the third position went to the group on beverage crops with 92 papers (15.9%). Even the minor spices and the highly commercial plantation crop like rubber were represented well in the Journal. It must be mentioned here that large number of papers in coconut is apparently due to more than one institute working on the crop, unlike a single crop institute like rubber.

Discipline-wise coverage: Among the field of specialization in which the large number of papers appeared in the JPC, Entomology (97) followed by Genetics and Plant Physiology/Biochemistry (91 and 90 respectively) occupied the top position, whereas Agronomy (85) and Pathology (74)

also had good coverage (Table 2). When considered as a group, the Crop Protection had as many as 178 papers (30.7%) and Crop Production 141 papers (24.4%), while the third position had gone to the Basic Sciences with 105 papers. An important group like Crop Improvement had less than 100 papers over a period of 25 years. There was poor representation of papers from Post harvest Technology and Transfer of Technology.

Institute-wise coverage: Among the research Institutes, CPCRI contributed as many as 233 papers (Table 3). This large number was due to the papers in crops like pepper, cardamom, cashewnut and other spices published by CPCRI prior to the delinking of these crops from CPCRI in 1985. Other Institutes like UPASI, RRII and IISR (after it had become a separate centre/Institute) could publish 19, 14 and 13

Table 3. Research papers published in JPC Institution-wise

Institution	No. of papers
CPCRI	233
UPASI	19
RRII	14
TRA	13
ICRI	7
IHR	6
NBRI	7
CCRI	5
KAU	58
UAS	27
TNAU	17
APAU	15
University of Calicut	10
KKV	8
HPKV	6
CSIR Laboratories	14
Other ICAR Institutes	15
Other Universities	24
Other R & D Institutions (GOI)	7
R & D Institutions (Govt. of Kerala)	3
R & D Institutions (Pvt. Sector)/Consultants	10
Contributions from Abroad	56
Total	579

papers, respectively. The contribution of papers (58) by the Kerala Agricultural University was substantial, while UAS and TNAU also had fair representation. Interestingly the JPC could attract papers from other organizations (70) and also from foreign countries (56).

Table 4 depicts the nature of papers that had appeared over a period of 25 years. As many as 44 review articles were brought out during the period. With 350 articles out of 579 published so far, the research papers accounted for 60.4%. The Journal also maintained a fair balance by publishing 185 short scientific reports (32.0%). There were also few 'Book Reviews'. It is evident that each volume, containing two numbers per year, managed to publish an average of 23 papers.

Over view: An analysis of the data provided reveals that the JPC has been able to cater to the needs of the researchers working in a wide range of plantation crops in various disciplines from different Institutes/Universities/Organizations. The research efforts on major crops like coconut, seems to be most satisfactory, while those on some of the crops like minor spices needs to be strengthened. With regard to the group (discipline) wise coverage, the Crop Protection dominated the scene, whereas areas such as Statistics/Economics and Post Harvest Technology lagged much behind. The institutional contribution of papers in the JPC needs improvement especially from ICRI, CCRI, NRCC etc. This would mean that by and large the diseases and pests are investigated extensively and reported in the Journal, while the Post Harvest Technology is yet to receive the priority status in plantation crops. However, the future looks bright for oil palm among the crops and Post Harvest Technology among the disciplines.

A similar analysis was made exclusively for the papers presented in 12 PLACROSYM's (Rajagopal, V. 1997.

Table 4. Nature of articles published in the JPC

Year	Review article	Research article	Short scientific report	Total
1973	-	9	-	9
1974	-	18	6	24
1975	-	20	2	22
1976	-	13	8	21
1977	4	14	8	26
1978	3	13	6	22
1979	2	10	2	14
1980	1	11	3	15
1981	1	15	6	22
1982	2	11	6	19
1983	2	19	5	26
1984	2	18	10	30
1985	2	13	14	29
1986	1	19	6	26
1987	1	13	13	27
1988	2	12	14	27
1989	1	15	10	26
1990	2	12	6	20
1991	12	6	5	23
1992	1	17	11	29
1993	-	10	17	27
1994	1	13	8	22
1995	1	16	4	21
1996	2	15	5	22
1997	2	18	10	30
Total	44	350	185	579

Plantation Crops Symposia: Intellectual Exercise of the ISPC. In: Souvenir, Silver Jubilee of ISPC, (Eds.) V. Rajagopal, Rohini Iyer and K.K.N. Nambiar, Publ. by ISPC, CPCRI Kasaragod, 43-51). A comparison of these two publications indicates that while there are some similarities in the papers published in the PLACROSYM proceedings and those published in the Journal, there are also perceptible differences in some aspects. The large number of papers in coconut, the dominant trend in Crop Protection, the CPCRI leading other institutes are the common features both in PLACROSYM and JPC papers. The papers in coffee were significantly high in PLACROSYM (a total of 115 papers) than in the JPC (only 10 papers in 25 volumes). A similar trend was noticed in tea (PLACROSYM papers 149, JPC papers 47). So also, the papers in Social Sciences appeared more in PLACROSYM

(92) than in the JPC (41). The direct reflection of these is also seen in the contribution by the Institutes. The most glaring example is that of the Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI) which had published only 5 papers in the JPC against 107 papers published in PLACROSYM proceedings. This trend also existed in the Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) with 100 papers in PLACROSYM and only 14 papers in the JPC. From this, it is inferred that the proceedings of the PLACROSYM are preferred by the scientists to the publication in the JPC. Precisely this is the reason for a total of 924 papers published in 12 PLACROSYM between 1978 and 1996 as against only 579 papers published in the JPC between 1973 and 1997. The popularity of PLACROSYM among the scientists in various organizations has been well sustained, a creditable achievement for the ISPC.

In conclusion, the plantation crop sector has a strong vehicle of communication to spread the knowledge on various crops through the Journal or PLACROSYM, both of which are the official channels of scientific pursuit controlled by the ISPC. Having completed 25 years with only half yearly

publications it is high time that the Editorial Board launches a quarterly series per volume from 1998 (Volume 26). With the vast improvements made in the Journal, including the constitution of an International Advisory Committee, it should not be difficult to make innovative changes, keeping in view the international readership, more research reviews/book reviews and enhancing the subscription from the foreign countries. The fact is that the Journal has become more author-friendly through an assurance of reasonably quick publication of quality papers and this should attract more scientists to patronize the Journal. The immediate task of the Editorial Board is to ensure the Journal finding its enlistment in the 'Current Contents', which calls for publication of exceedingly high quality papers, paving the way for citation of the JPC-published papers in other International Journals - a challenging and difficult but not impossible assignment for the Editorial Board.

My sincere thanks are due to Mr. John George, Technical Assistant, T-4 for compiling the data and Mrs. A. Premavally, Senior Stenographer for typesetting the article.