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In Memoriam: Dr. Palpu Pushpangadan (1944–2025)

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On December 19, 2025, Dr. Palpu Pushpangadan, a renowned ethnobotanist, forward-thinking scientific leader, and esteemed member of the PhytoTalks Advisory Board, passed away. With great sadness and reverence for a life dedicated to science, society, and the preservation of traditional knowledge, the Editorial Board documents his passing. For his groundbreaking work in ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, medicinal and aromatic plants, and biodiversity conservation, Dr. Pushpangadan received recognition on a global scale. He was instrumental in establishing a connection between indigenous knowledge systems and contemporary science, which strengthened the ethical application, scientific validation, and preservation of traditional medical practices¹.

Dr. Pushpangadan held a number of important leadership roles throughout his illustrious career, including Director of the Tropical Botanic Garden & Research Institute (TBGRI), Kerala, and subsequently Director of the CSIR–National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow. These institutions saw significant developments in interdisciplinary research, national capacity building, and international cooperation under his direction. In addition, he held the positions of Director of RGCB in Thiruvananthapuram, Director of CIMAP in Lucknow, and Director General of the Amity Institute for Herbal & Biotech Products Development.

The creation of the Jeevani herbal remedy, which is derived from *Trichopus zeylanicus*, and the internationally recognized benefit-sharing model, which guaranteed indigenous communities proper recognition and rewards, are two of his most enduring legacies². Many people consider this work to be a turning point in the governance of biodiversity and ethical bioprospecting. Numerous national and international awards, such as the Padma Shri (2010), UN-Equator Initiative Prize, UNEP Borlaug Award, and John W. Harshberger Medal, were given to Dr. Pushpangadan. In addition to serving as President of national and international ethnopharmacological societies, he was a Fellow of several esteemed academies. His lifetime of exceptional scientific productivity was reflected in his more than 500 research publications, more than 20 books, and more than 200 patents.

Dr. Pushpangadan provided invaluable advice, intellectual support, and encouragement as a member of PhytoTalks' advisory board, especially in the early years of the publication. His involvement significantly enhanced the journal's academic culture and dedication to moral, superior research.

The Editorial Board sends its deepest sympathies to his loved ones, coworkers, students, and admirers worldwide. Future generations of scientists and decision-makers committed to using science to advance society will be motivated by Dr. Palpu Pushpangadan's legacy.

Biographical Snapshot

Dr. Palpu Pushpangadan

(23 January 1944 – 19 December 2025)

Fields: Ethnobotany, Ethnopharmacology, Medicinal & Aromatic Plants

Former Director: TBGRI, Kerala; CSIR–NBRI, Lucknow

Honours: Padma Shri; UN-Equator Initiative Prize; UNEP Borlaug Award

Publications: 500+ papers; 20+ books

Patents: 200+

Association: Advisory Board Member, PhytoTalks

References

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2. Indo-Asian News Service (IANS). *Jeevani pioneer who ensured tribal share in science, Dr P Palpu Pushpangadan, passes away.* Published December 19, 2025. Accessed December 20, 2025. <https://ianslive.in/jeevani-pioneer-who-ensured-tribal-share-in-science-dr-p-pushpangadan-passes-away--20251219144633>