

Jitendra Nath Pande—The Doyen of Pulmonary Medicine (1941–2020)

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Dr. Jitendra Nath Pande, a renowned pulmonologist was Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. At the time of his untimely demise, he was working as Senior Consultant (Medicine) at Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, New Delhi.

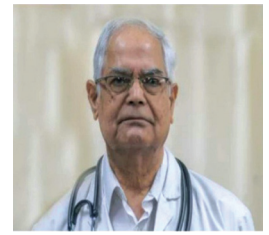
Born in the family of scholars in Shikohabad of Uttar Pradesh on June 14, 1941, Dr. Pande was selected in AIIMS, New Delhi, in its third medical graduation (MBBS) batch. He completed his medical graduation in December 1962, with distinction and highest marks in several subjects. He passed MD (general medicine) in 1966 with a special interest in chest and respiratory diseases.

Dr. Pande joined as faculty in the Department of Medicine in his alma mater and in due course of time, rose to the post of Professor and subsequently became Head of the Department and superannuated from the same position in 2003.

After his retirement from AIIMS, New Delhi, Dr. Pande joined the Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research and worked there as a senior consultant in the Department of Respiratory Medicine.

Dr. Pande was actively involved in research in the field of respiratory physiology and chest diseases. He was a revered teacher of medicine among his undergraduate and postgraduate students. He published more than 170 papers in national and international journals of repute. Most publications were original research and got highlighted with worldwide citations in journals and standard textbooks of respiratory medicine. He contributed in investigation of cardiorespiratory adaptation at high altitude, pathophysiology of chronic obstructive lung disease, pathophysiological changes in anemia, and other hypoxic states.

Dr. Pande was actively involved in the establishment of existing Cardiorespiratory Laboratories and designing and establishing the first Intensive Care Units (ICUs) in Northern India at AIIMS, New Delhi. He served as the Editor of *Indian Journal of Chest Diseases and Allied Sciences* since the 1990s,



Dr. Jitendra Nath Pande

and *Annals of National Academy of Medical Sciences (India)* (ANAMS) during 1996 to 2006. He received several awards and accolades, some are Glaxo Oration of NAMS (1994–95), Dr. K. L. Wig Oration of NAMS (1999–2000), Ranbaxy Science Award (2000); and Om Prakash Bhasin Award of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR; 2010). He was Emeritus Professor and Convener of NAMS Chapter of State of Delhi and NCR, and he had delivered extension lectures at several medical institutions in the country.

His colleagues and students remember him as an encyclopedia of medicine, pioneer of critical care in northern India, and a dedicated teacher and doctor who always put patient care over and above any clinical work. Some of the fond remembrances are quoted below by those associated with him which bespeak the greatness of a medical teacher in him:

“As a professor, he used to reach the wards for the morning round at 7:30 a.m. to check on all the admitted patients even before his students,” remembers Dr. Anoop Misra, his student, and now chairman of Fortis C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases, and Endocrinology. “There were times when he would look at a patient and give diagnosis in minutes.” Dr. Mishra further dwelled on his qualities as a physician par excellence. Even after becoming a doctor in his own right, when Dr. Mishra remained unsure of the diagnosis and had any trouble regarding the treatment to be followed for the concerned patient, he always consulted Dr. Pande who will come out with the correct solution within an eye-blinking time.

Dr. Ashok Kumar, who studied under Dr. Pande as an MBBS and postgraduate student, currently Director of Rheumatology at Fortis Hospital at Vasant Kunj, New Delhi expressed, “it is a great loss to the entire medical fraternity. He helped set-up one of the first ICUs in the country. Many of the current leading intensive care experts have been trained under him. Sometimes, when we asked him a question, he

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would reply with the exact page number and table we should refer to.”

Dr. G.C. Khilnani, former Head of the Department of Pulmonary Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi, said “he was born to a family of teachers, he was my mentor and one of the greatest teachers I know. At that time, many chose to go abroad and practice medicine but he remained at AIIMS right from his graduation to superannuation.”

“Knowledge and humility can coexist and Dr. Pande was an epitome of that. He was an excellent human being, and it is a great loss to the medical fraternity. AIIMS family will miss him the most because he joined AIIMS as an MBBS student and retired as the Head of the Department of Medicine,” said Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi. He further elaborated that “I have closely worked with him and knew him since my childhood as he was the student of my father.”

Mr. Abhishek Bhartia, Director, Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science & Research, New Delhi, remembered Dr. Pande as “a legendary physician who had taught many practicing doctors at AIIMS, New Delhi, and continued to mentor physicians

even after joining this hospital. What has been remarkable was that the most difficult cases would come to him.”

Some important assignments fulfilled most diligently by Dr. Pande were physician and personal medical doctor to the then Presidents of India, Dr. R. Venkataraman and Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. Time to time, Dr. Pande was also involved in the medical treatment of many famous personalities from public life like Prime Minister of India, former Power Minister Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, and the Bollywood actor Raj Kapoor. Various assignments held by Dr. Pande were Director of Clinical Epidemiology Unit; Chief of SRB Center of Clinical Pharmacology; Department of Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi. Dr. Pande was appointed as an expert member at ICMR Review Committee on 1985 Bhopal Gas Disaster.

The Supreme Court referred to Dr. Pande’s team’s study on “outdoor air pollution and emergency room visits at a hospital in Delhi” in its 1997 to 1998 judgment, banning diesel buses in the capital.

Dr Pande will be fondly remembered by everyone with whom he has remained associated in life.