



**Professor Abdul Ghafoor
(1938-2020)**

Professor Abdul Ghafoor was born on 1st January 1938 in a small village named Kamali (Indian Punjab). He migrated to Pakistan in 1947 with his maternal grandfather after crossing river of blood. All his family members including his mother, paternal grand parents and siblings were martyred. He was sent by his mother to his maternal grandfather before this mishap. Fortunately his father was already in Pakistan as he was working and posted in Karachi. Prof. Ghafoor completed his early education including Matriculation from Army Public School, Karachi and Intermediate (F.Sc.) from D. J. College and finally obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees (Botany) from University of Karachi (1962).

Prof. Ghafoor started his career from Government College Sukkur as Lecturer, rose to the level of Assistant Professor, Vice Principal after serving in various government colleges, Karachi. He also served Libyan universities at Tripoli and Benghazi from 1976 – 1982. After coming back from Libya he joined University of Karachi as Senior Taxonomist. In 1994, he joined Natural Resources and Environment Research Institute, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and remained there till 2002.

During his entire career he remained associated with Flora of Pakistan Project. He was a prolific writer, excellent researcher and a taxonomist of high calibre. He was so much dedicated and committed to his work, while serving in college service he used to visit University of Karachi almost every day and worked till late evening for Flora of Pakistan. He was one of the most active participants of Flora of Pakistan group. He published his first account of Family Elatinaceae (1972). Since then he never saw back and contributed to the account of 20 plant families (including the important tribe Anthemideae, tribe Cichoreae (in parts) Cardueae (in part) and Astereae, Heliantheae and some small tribes of giant family Asteraceae). He remained associated with Flora of Pakistan till the end of project (2020). Prof. Ghafoor, perhaps the only taxonomist of Pakistan who contributed to the Floras of 6 different countries of 3 different continents. He contributed to the Flora of Libya (account of 15 families), Flora Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (5 accounts), Flora of Arabian Peninsula and Socotra (1 account), Flora of Iraq (Anthemis-Asteraceae) and Flora of Australia (12 genera of various tribes of Asteraceae). Besides this he has published large number of papers on the various aspects including ethnobotany, taxonomy, biodiversity. He seems to be the pioneer of Systematic Ethnobotanical studies in Pakistan and published with Goodman (co-author) on "Ethnobotany of Baluchistan, Pakistan with particular reference to medicinal plants" (Fieldiana Botany new series 31: 1-84, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago).

He described a new genus *Artimisiella* (Asteraceae), number of new species along with several new infraspecific taxa and also proposed many new combinations. Quite a few species are also named after him such as *Abutilon ghafoorianum* S. Abedin.

Prof. Ghafoor was a thorough gentleman, with pleasing habits and a cooperative nature. He was also instrumental and mentor to young people and always ready to guide them to deal with taxonomic problems. He was also a prolific plant collector, collected all over Pakistan, Libya and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His main collection is a part of Karachi University Herbarium (KUH) but duplicates are distributed to important herbaria of the world including New York and Kew.

Prof. Ghafoor passed away after a brief illness on March 28, 2020 in Sydney, Australia after attending the International Symposium held in Karachi for the completion of Flora of Pakistan. He is survived by four daughters, three sons and vast number of students, colleagues and friends.

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