Keshvi Sharma Memorial Award 2026 for Excellence in Fundamental Virology

1. Purpose

The Keshvi Sharma Memorial Award for Excellence in Fundamental Virology is instituted in memory of Late Keshvi Sharma (February 19, 2016 – June 7, 2025), daughter of Dr. Naveen Kumar and Dr. Shalini Sharma. The objective of the award is to promote basic research in virology in India and to recognize scientists who have made outstanding and impactful independent contributions to the field of fundamental virology.

2. Award Components

The award comprises a cash prize of ₹51,000 and a certificate with a citation recognizing the awardee's contribution to Fundamental Virology. Travel assistance of up to ₹15,000 and one-day accommodation expenses of up to ₹6,000 will be provided for travel to ICMR-NIV, Pune, to present the work and receive the award. No other allowances or reimbursements will be admissible.

3. Eligibility

The applicant must be an Indian citizen and below 50 years of age as of December 31, 2026. They must be currently employed in a government or private organization, or in industry within India, and should have a sustained track record of independent research contributions to fundamental virology. All research work submitted for consideration must have been conducted entirely in India. The applicant must be the lead author on all submitted publications. Research stemming from Ph.D. or postdoctoral work, fellowships, or tenures undertaken abroad will not be considered. There must be no record of scientific misconduct or publication retractions associated with the applicant. The award will be conferred solely on the basis of scientific merit and original contributions to the field of fundamental virology.

Candidates may apply directly without the need for formal approval or prior permission from their organization.

4. Scope of Eligible Research

The award recognizes exceptional independent research contributions in fundamental virology. Eligible research areas include, but are not limited to: virus structure and replication, pathogenesis and virus–host interactions, epigenetic regulation of viral replication, novel insights into virus transmission, development of innovative model systems, mechanistic insights on novel antiviral drugs, viral immune evasion, and viral immunopathology. Publications related to epidemiology, virus detection, serosurveillance, or the development of conventional diagnostics or vaccines will generally not be eligible for scoring under the 'Publications' category (Annexure). However, technologies arising from such work will be considered under the 'Technology Development' category **(Annexure).**

The research must contribute new knowledge to the field of virology. Applicants are required to demonstrate scientific excellence through publications in reputable journals such as *Journal of Virology*, *Virology*, *Journal of General Virology*, or other leading virology journals.

5. Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated by a three-member Award Screening Committee. This committee is comprising one scientist from Basic functional group of ICMR-NIV, Pune; a member of the executive committee of NIV research foundation; and one faculty member from IISER, IISc, IIT, or another research institute with a distinguished record in fundamental virology.

Selection is based on the quality and quantity of publications produced throughout the applicant's career as an independent researcher, as demonstrated by original research projects, the novelty of the work, and the overall scientific merit and impact of their contributions to the field of fundamental virology **(Annexure).**

One selected candidate will be invited to present their contributions for talk at ICMR-NIV Pune**.**

Annexure: Selection criteria	
Parameter	**Maximum marks**
(A) List of best 30 publications (5 marks will be awarded for each research paper with an impact factor (IF) greater than 10; 2.0 marks for IF greater than 4.0; and 0.5 mark for IF greater than 2. Only publications where the applicant is the first or corresponding author will be considered. Impact Factor will be determined based on the latest JCR (2026) report.	**60**
(B) Sustained quality contribution to the Fundamental Virology (Ongoing and consistent research contributions to fundamental virology over multiple years, rather than a single breakthrough. 0.5 mark will be awarded for each quality fundamental contribution each year. Publication list provided under para (A) will be used to evaluate the marks.	**10**
(C) Technology development (5 marks for each technology patented and commercialized as lead inventor and 2.5 marks as co-inventor. Please provide proof of patent, commercialization and licensing.	**20**
(D) Research Leadership and Independence (Demonstrated ability to lead extramural independent research projects). One mark will be awarded for each virology-related extramural research project led as PI and 0.5 mark as Co-PI. Please provide documentary evidence of serving as PI or Co-PI in independent extramural research projects.	**5**
(E) Citations of the publications (1 mark for over 100 citation of a single research paper)	**5**
Total	**100**

6. How to apply

Interested candidates are invited to submit a duly signed application in the prescribed format (attached), along with the necessary supporting documents/proofs, compiled as a single PDF file, to the following **email address**: *ksmaward@gmail.com*. The **deadline** for receipt of applications is **October 31, 2026.**

The selected candidate will be notified via email on or before November 15, 2026. The awardee will be invited to present their work and receive the award at ICMR-NIV, Pune in December 2026.

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Application proforma

1. Name in Full : ...../.....
   Surname Forename(s)

2. Designation and
   Name of the Institution……

3. a. Date of Birth…… b. Gender : Male / Female

5. Address
   (a) Official ……

   ……...

   (b) Residential ……

   ……...

   (c) Email ……

   (d) Mobile No./Contact No……..

6. (a) Subject …….....

   (b) Specialization……...

   (c) Area of Research…….

7. Educational Qualifications (Chronological order):

Degree	Year	University	Subjects

8. Employment record (Chronological order):

Designation	Institution	Duration

9. List of best 30 relevant research publications as lead author (first or corresponding). Please mention Author, Title, Journal, Year, Volume, page etc. along with latest impact factor for each paper. Only original research articles published in peer-reviewed journals will be considered. Review articles, Letter to editor, Perspectives, Opinion papers, meta-analysis, conference papers, reports, book chapters, and other non-research outputs will not be considered. Also, only the work carried out primarily in India will be considered *(Maximum marks 60).*

10. Which specific year(s) had at least one publication, demonstrating a sustained quality contribution to Fundamental Virology? *(Maximum marks: 10).*

11. List of developed technologies: Only technologies that have been both patented and commercialized will be considered. Proof of commercialization and licensing must be provided. Technologies without evidence of patent, commercialization and licensing will not be considered *(Maximum marks 20).*

11. Leadership and independence in virology research, as evidenced by the successful acquisition and leadership of externally funded research projects (please list projects with funding agency, year and duration of the project, status (PI/Co-PI) and cost involved). Please provide documentary evidence of serving as PI or Co-PI in independent research projects *(Maximum marks 05).*

12. Number of research publications with citations > 100 *(Maximum marks 05).*

13. A concise summary (maximum 500 words) outlining the applicant's most significant scientific achievements, with a particular focus on impactful contributions to the field of fundamental virology.

14. Statement of contributions in fundamental virology in 50 words to be printed on the award certificate

15. I declare that all the information provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name and signature of the candidate