**Statement of research achievements, if any, on which any award has already been received by the applicant. Please also upload brief citation(s) on the research work(s) for which the applicant has already received the award(s) (not to exceed 2000 words)**

I received the Major General Saheb Singh Sokhey Award of the Indian Council of Medical Research in 2001 for my work on “Viral hepatitis among tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands”.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Union Territory of India, are home to six primitive tribes, namely the Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas and Sentinelese (Negrito race), and the Shompens and Nicobarese (Mongoloid race). These tribes account for about 8% of the island’s population and the Nicobarese constitute >95% of the tribal population. As a part of this work, we estimated the burden of hepatitis A, B, C, D and E viruses among four tribes (Great Andamanese, Onges, Nicobarese and Shompens) of these islands and conducted studies to understand the epidemiology of hepatitis B virus infection among the Nicobarese tribe.

The notable findings was high endemicity of hepatitis B virus infection among these tribes. The prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) was 3.7% among the Great Andamanese, 23% among the Nicobarese, 31% among the Onges and 38% among the Shompens. The high HBsAg prevalence among pregnant mothers (20.5%), a linear increase in the age-specific rates of HBV exposure and the presence of HBsAg-positive individuals in every family suggested a combination of perinatal and horizontal transmission among the Nicobarese. These findings were the basis of introduction of hepatitis B vaccination among the universal immunization program for the tribal population of these islands in 2001.

The citation of the work, as published, is given below:

The Major General Saheb Singh Sokhey Award was instituted in 1988 in accordance with the will of Major General Sokhey and is given annually to a young scientist for his/her significant research in communicable diseases. The Award for 2001 is being presented to Dr. M. V. Murhekar, Deputy Director, Regional Medical Research Center, Port Blair for his work on 'Viral hepatitis among tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands'. Dr. Murhekar has been one of the leading members of the team involved in carrying out studies among the tribal population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands especially in the field of viral hepatitis. The results of studies showed hepatitis B as the most significant public health problem of these tribes. He was able to establish the important routes of transmission and risk factors associated with this infection. Considering the significance of the findings and recommendations, Government of India has initiated universal immunization against hepatitis B among the population of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.