



SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST AND THE ALLIED TRUSTS

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INSTITUTIONS



NGO GRANTS



INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

Lady Tata Memorial Trust

YOUNG RESEARCHER AWARD — 2011

The Lady Tata Memorial Trust instituted an award called the “**Young Researcher Award**” in 2009 to recognise and merit young Indian scientists who have an outstanding track record in the biological sciences. A deep commitment to research innovative solutions to major problems, relating to human diseases and a potential for high quality research are also essential requisites for eligibility.



The recipient of this 5-year award receives a monthly amount of Rs.10,000/- from the Trust, in addition to the regular salary received from the host Institute. In addition, the awardee receives a contingency grant of Rs. 5 lakhs per annum towards meeting the expenses on consumables, minor equipment, international and domestic travel, manpower and other contingent expenditure to be incurred in connection with the implementation of the research project under the Fellowship.

To select this year's (2011) candidate, the Trust invited applications from 120 leading scientific research institutions within the country. It publicised the award announcement in the national media as well as two leading national and international scientific journals. A total of 33 applications were received of which 7 were short-listed.

The Trust's 6-member Interview Panel unanimously proposed the research project of **Dr. Durai Sundar**, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, Department of Biochemical Engineering & Biotechnology entitled “**Towards modifying nature's DNA recognition system for highly specific genome editing**” for the honour of the Young Researcher Award — 2011. Dr. Sundar was selected for the award for pursuing a novel concept which has the potential for treatment of genetic disorders.

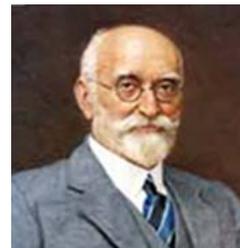
Dr. Sundar, passed his M.Sc. degree in Life Sciences from the Pondicherry University in 1997 and completed his Ph.D. studies in India in 2001. For his post doctoral research, Dr. Sundar moved to the prestigious Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore, Maryland, USA in 2001, where he worked on the binding mechanism of zinc finger proteins to target the DNA sequence.

After returning from the USA in 2005, Dr. Sundar has been working on zinc finger protein - DNA interactions and in developing novel approaches, ranging from protein sequence to structure and function. He is credited for developing a system which is arguably the quickest and most accurate method for evolving novel and highly specific zinc finger proteins to target unique sites in any plant or mammalian genome.

In recognition of his achievements as an independent researcher, he was among the first recipients of the “Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA)” instituted by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Govt. of India in 2006. He is also the recipient of the “Young Scientist Award” of the Indian Science Congress for the year 2006, “Young Scientist Award” of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) in 2008 and the “Outstanding Young Faculty Fellowship” at IIT Delhi in 2008.

The Young Researcher Award will enable Dr. Sundar to focus attention on his mission of constructing highly specific zinc finger proteins which will recognise any desired target sequence within a genome. The proposed research will also lead to the creation of zinc fingers with highly affinity and sequence specificity to unique address in the genome, ensuring high efficacy and safety, for the successful implementation of zinc finger protein-mediated gene targeting for various biological and biomedical applications.

Sir Dorabji Tata



Sir Ratan Tata Trust



Set up in 1919, a year after the untimely demise of Sir Ratan Tata at the age of 47, the Sir Ratan Tata Trust is one of the oldest philanthropic institutions in India.

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