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Indian wins first Borlaug field research award

New Delhi, Aug 28, 2012, (IANS)

Aditi Mukherji, a young Indian social scientist, has become the first recipient of the Norman Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application given by the World Food Prize Foundation.

Mukherji, a researcher at the [International Water Management Institute](#) in New Delhi, was chosen for her work on groundwater resources in agriculture, leading to policy changes benefiting farmers in West Bengal.

"I'm delighted to win this award," Mukherji told IANS after the Monday night announcement. "This is in recognition of my years of field research in West Bengal where I went against the dominant discourse and said intensive use of groundwater through checks and balances can unleash a second Green Revolution in the state. These suggestions found resonance among policy makers and they took right decisions," she said.

"Checks and balances like proper pricing of electricity for pumping groundwater are already in place. Other eastern states like Bihar and Assam can emulate Bengal and this region can become the new granary of India." A statement by the US-based World Food Prize said Mukherjee, after surveying more than 4,000 groundwater users, discovered that smallholder farmers in water-abundant eastern India were being prevented by policy restrictions from gaining access to the water resources for irrigation. She worked with farmers and villagers to ensure their collective voice was heard by policymakers.

Endowed by the Rockefeller Foundation, the \$10,000 annual award recognises researchers under 40 who emulate the innovation and dedication of agronomist and Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, said the statement.

Mukherji will be given the award Oct 17 during the World Food Prize international symposium in Iowa.

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