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## **IFS Scientist wins prestigious award**

Research Fellow at the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS) in Kandy, Dr. Meththika Vithanage, has been selected as the outstanding young scientist to receive the 2009 American Geophysical Union Natural Hazards Focus Group Award for Graduate Research. The award has been given for her original theoretical research and field work on the interactions of the 2004 December tsunami floodwaters with the fresh groundwater aquifers in the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The award will be presented at a reception of the Natural Hazards Focus Group at the 2009 American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting in San Francisco, California, USA, on December 15.

An alumni of the Devi Balika Vidyalaya in Colombo, Dr. Vithanage completed her Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources at the Sabaragamuwa University in 2002. Following the completion of a Master's degree in Environmental Sciences at the Peradeniya University she was selected for a Doctoral Scholarship by the Copenhagen University, Denmark and the **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** in Sri Lanka to conduct field work and computer modelling of the complex, unprecedented contamination of freshwater wells and the groundwater aquifers of the coast belt of Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami.