

Indian academic gets honorary doctorate at The Hague

Last week, in an elegant ceremony at The Hague (Netherlands), the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Europe's leading development studies institute, conferred an honorary doctorate on Bina Agarwal, Professor of Economics at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University.

The occasion began with an academic procession from the ISS to the Ridderzaal, the 13th century Knight's Hall where the Dutch Parliament opens every year. Here the ceremony was inaugurated by the Mayor of The Hague and the ISS Rector and attended by 500 persons, including academics, ambassadors, policymakers and members of European universities and research institutes.

In her acceptance address Prof. Agarwal spoke on "Rethinking collectivities", focusing on the importance of production collectivities of the poor, especially women, for their empowerment, and on the need for strategic and vertical alliances among diverse collectivities, and for a new moral order. A workshop in honour of her work was also held the next day.



Bina Agarwal receives honorary doctorate

Others who have received an ISS honorary doctorate, and whose pictures grace the ISS Board room where Bina Agarwal's will also be placed, include Edward Said and Nobel laureates Jan Tinbergen and Amartya Sen.

An economist with a keen interest in interdisciplinary and intercountry explorations, Bina Agarwal's publications include eight books and numerous professional papers on a range of subjects: land, livelihoods and property rights; environment and development; the political economy of gender; poverty and inequality; law; and agriculture and technological change.

Her book: *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia* was awarded the A.K. Coomaraswamy Book Prize 1996; the Edgar Graham Book Prize 1996; and the K. H. Batheja Award 1995-96. She was the first Asian to win the first two awards.

Much of her research focuses on the lives of the most disadvantaged. Her writings, especially on women's land rights, have been used extensively in framing policy by governments, NGOs and international agencies. Recently she catalyzed a successful campaign for gender equality in Hindu inheritance law in India. She has been consultant to the Indian Planning Commission and has participated in the formulation of several of India's Five Year Plans.