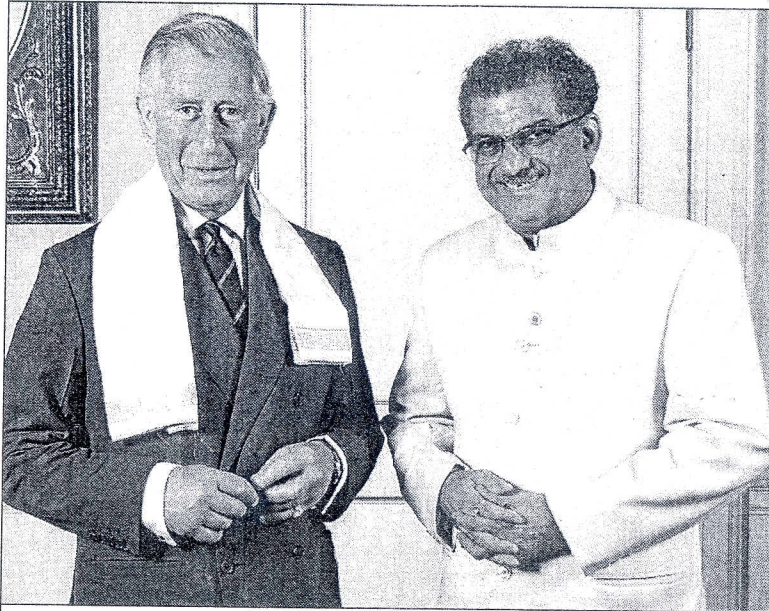


Rural project wins Ashden green award

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GREEN OSCARS FOR ENERGY



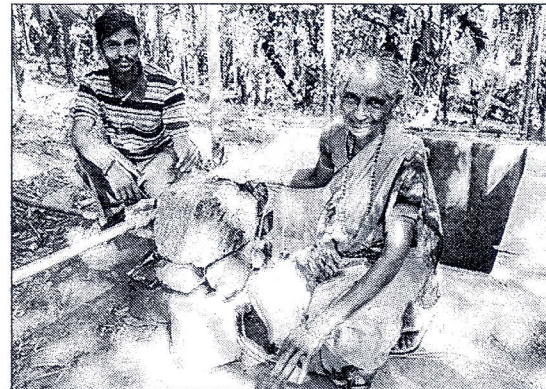
Prize For Promoting Sustainable Energy

Stanley Pinto | TNN

Mangalore: Karnataka-based microfinance provider Shri Kshethra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) has been adjudged as the overall gold award winner by Ashden, which promotes universal access to sustainable energy. The award was given in recognition of SKDRDP's role in demonstrating how microfinance organization can play a key role in meeting energy needs of the poor.

The award, a world's leading green energy prize, was presented to Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari D Veerendra Heggade, promoter of SKDRDP, by Prince Charles in London on Wednesday. Of the five international winners, SKDRDP was the overall gold prize winner.

The Ashden judges said, "SKDRDP is fantastic example of how ethically-managed microfinance



LEADING THE WAY: SKDRDP's ethically-managed microfinance can deliver sustainable energy to the poor

can deliver sustainable energy to the poor. It has demonstrated that providing consumer loans for energy makes social, environmental and economic sense. SKDRDP has huge potential to expand its work even further, and to inspire many others to follow its lead."

The five winners have been awarded a total of £120,000 to help them scale up their work. Apart from SKDRDP, the winners are: IBEKA, a community-owned micro-hydro programme in Indonesia; GIZ/Integration, a micro-hydro programme in remote Afghanistan; iDE/Hydrologic, an energy-saving water filter in Cambodia and Barefoot

Power, an affordable solar power provider that's lighting up lives in East Africa.

Kandeh Yumkella, director general of UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) in his keynote speech at the ceremony urged governments around the world to increase their support for clean energy pioneers: "The Ashden 2012 winners are exposing the myth that poor countries cannot stimulate growth without degrading the environment. They are demonstrating that sustainable energy stimulates green growth and new jobs, lifts people out of poverty, improves health and opens up new educational opportunities."

GLOBAL RECOGNITION: Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari D Veerendra Heggade with Prince Charles after receiving the Ashden Awards in London on Wednesday. Popularly known as Green Oscars, the awards are given for helping poor people invest in renewable energy projects. Microfinance provider Sri Kshethra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project was chosen for the International Award for Financial Innovation and this year's overall Gold Award — P4

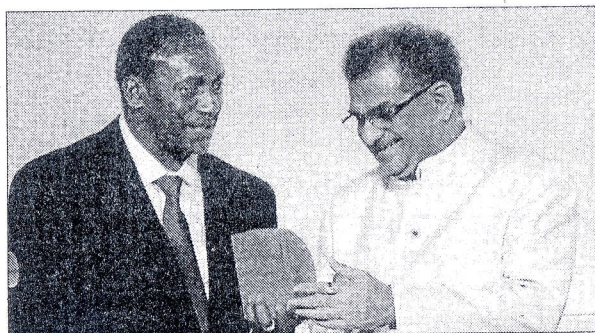
Ashden Gold Award 2012 to SKDRDP

Dharmasthala NGO bags Green Oscar

MANGALORE: The Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) has been conferred the prestigious 2012 Ashden Gold Award, for its contribution to the field of micro-finance and promotion of sustainable energy.

Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Chair of UN Energy, Dr Kandeh Yumkella, presented the international award to the president of SKDRDP, Dr D Veerendra Heggade and SKDRDP Executive Director L H Manjunath, at a ceremony in the presence of the Foundation patron, The Prince of Wales. The ceremony took place at The Royal Geographical Society in London on Wednesday night. The award, popularly known as the Green Oscars for its recognition of renewable projects and projects intended to help the poor, comes with a cash prize of £40,000.

According to a press release, SKDRDP was selected for the



Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari D Veerendra Heggade receives the award from Dr Kandeh Yumkella, Director General of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, in London on Wednesday.

green energy award because of the impressive role it had played in boosting microfinance organisations intended to meet the energy needs of the poor.

“SKDRDP is a fantastic example of how ethically-managed microfinance can deliver sustainable energy to the poor, demonstrating that providing consumer loans for energy makes sound social, environmental and economic sense,” the judges said. In his keynote

address, Dr Yumkella urged governments across the world to extend their support for clean energy pioneers. “The Ashden 2012 winners are exposing the myth that poor countries cannot stimulate growth without degrading the environment. They are demonstrating that sustainable energy stimulates green growth and new jobs, lifts people out of poverty, improves health and opens up new educational opportunities,” he said.

The SKDRDP has been providing loans at affordable interest rates to the poor in order to help them to buy renewable energy systems to improve the quality of life in villages. Since its inception 29 years ago, the organization has provided 20,000 energy loans and promotes development through a network of 169,000 self-help-groups which now includes 1.8 million families, about 20 per cent of rural households in Karnataka. A total of five organisations were honoured with the prize this year - out of 250 applicants from around the world. SKDRDP was only one to win the prestigious Gold award.

U.K. award for State rural development project

Hasan Suroor

LONDON: A Karnataka microfinance organisation, which provides affordable loans to the poor to help them plan their energy needs, has won the prestigious Ashden Gold Award, given annually by Ashden, a British charity, for promoting universal access to sustainable energy.

The Shri Kshethra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) was awarded the £40,000 prize money at a ceremony here on Wednesday.

'Bowled over'

Judges described the SKDRDP as a "fantastic example" of how ethically managed microfinance could deliver sustainable energy to the poor. "We were bowled over by the scale the SKDRDP has achieved so far, along with the responsibility it takes for lending to the poor, nurturing users to take out effective loans. The SKDRDP has huge potential to expand its work even further, and to inspire many others to follow its lead," they said.

L.H. Manjunath, executive director of SKDRDP, said it was important to recognise that the poor needed financial support to acquire sustainable energy assets.

"For too long, microcredit only meant improving livelihoods. This award will redefine the scope of microcredit," he said.

Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Chair of UN-Energy, which campaigns for increasing access to energy for the poor, urged governments around the world to support clean energy pioneers.