

Free Software Foundation of India

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2nd September 2009

To
Shri Sanjay Kumar,
Secretary, School Education, Government of Maharashtra
Mumbai

Sub – Representation regarding MOU with Microsoft Corporation

Dear Shri Sanjay Kumar,

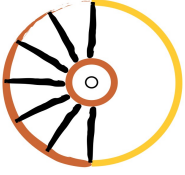
We the undersigned have already communicated to you our concern regarding the MOU which the State has signed with Microsoft, to provide school teachers with IT education, about which we learnt from the news papers.

There are two core concerns we have regarding such an arrangement:

1. The State must continue to be responsible for and regulate all training for teachers, through its own institutions, and private parties, although they provide specialized inputs at the States request from time to time, cannot take over such functions.
2. The State cannot allow products of only one private company to be utilized, and must instead actively engage with and promote FOSS which is based on principles which are consonant with our democratic polity.

We are of the view that the State of Maharashtra already possesses large infrastructure through which IT training can be provided—in the form of the IASEs, DIETs, BRCs and CRCs. There are also funds available for the development of IT labs and to provide IT education to teachers. Through its initiatives such as MSCIT, the State also has developed on a large scale, human resources who can be called in to provide training in the education departments own training centers. This will lead to the development of independent resources within the educational department which will serve long term interests of the State.

The State also has world class institutions such as HBCSE, IIT-B, SNTD (Education Technology) and CDAC who are both willing and fully capable of designing good quality training, and of developing educational products in FOSS, which can freely be provided to teachers, and they in turn in their schools. These institutions can also evolve training in FOSS to Master Resource Persons at the District and Block levels.



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The Kerala Model of providing IT education to teachers and schools is worthy of being understood and adapted to the Maharashtra environment. The Secretary Education, Kerala has communicated to us his open invitation to a team from Maharashtra to study their system. There is no need for Maharashtra resort to private agencies with private interests, in order to achieve the goal of IT education for all teachers.

In the light of this we request:

1. That we be provided with a copy of the MOU which the state has signed with Microsoft.
2. That you nominate a team of 3 to 5 persons from the Education department (academic and administrative) who can visit Kerala and first hand understand that model, which can then be reported back to you for consideration as way forward.
3. That you allow us to work with a team nominated by you to evolve an implementable model that will utilise the States own resources to achieve IT education goals.

Yours truly,

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