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ICFOSS to promote GNU/Khata for public use

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ICFOSS, in its effort to make available Open Source applications for mass use, will be adopting and promoting GNU/Khata, a FOSS-based Financial Accounting software. GNU/Khata is being developed by a team of developers based in IIT-Bombay, Mumbai, and is being supported under the National Mission for Education through Information Communication Technology (NMEICT) project.

Besides supporting the final stages of development of GNU Khata, ICFOSS will also be helping in suggesting new features, evaluating & testing the application, translating it into Malayalam and other Indian languages, providing promotion & capacity building, and exploring alternative deployment modes like the Cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model.

GNU Khata is full-featured, multi-user, web-based financial accounting application, built on robust open source platforms and freely downloadable by any interested user. It is released under the GNU GPL licence, and is capable of customization by any firm or individual user, as its source code is available for download under the terms of the General Public License.

Mr. Krishnakant Mane of IIT Bombay, the Project Manager of the GNU Khata team, was in ICFOSS at a consultation with experts to chart out strategic plans for the software. Mr. Mane, a well-known Free Software activist, is one of the few visually impaired programmers in the country.

"GNU Khata has been designed by a group that includes software developers, chartered accountants and users, and is a complete solution to the financial accounting requirements of most Indian firms. We are now in the process of adding more features such as inventory and language localization. When this is done, Khata will emerge as the application of choice for Financial Accounting for any firm in the country", said Mr. Mane.

Satish Babu, Director, ICFOSS said, "As a part of our objectives, ICFOSS intends to provide Free/Open Source Software for all popular applications. Financial Accounting is a near-universal requirement for all kinds of enterprises, from SMEs to NGOs and even Self-Help Groups. Therefore, a powerful, zero-cost, freely customizable application such GNU Khata leverages the power of FOSS for the benefit of society at large. When coupled with 'edge-of-the-network' devices such as Akash tablet PCs, even small Self-Help Groups & microenterprises at the grassroots will be able to tap into the power of Cloud-based GNU Khata deployment".

"For ICFOSS, this application forms an important component of its strategy for ICT-enabling Kerala's enterprises, especially SMEs. We will also be providing training to users, especially accountants in rural and urban areas, so that they can use Khata for their clients", he continued.

Mr. R. Ravikumar, Chartered Accountant, who participated in the consultation, said "We need multiple alternatives for financial accounting software, so that ordinary users have choices. An Open Source financial accounting software, besides being zero cost, provides better options for customization, and therefore may be even more useful than conventional software".

Mr. Amarnath Raja, Global Chair, IEEE Humanitarian Activities Committee, and the architect of the computerized financial accounting software for KCMMF, said "Ensuring that GNU Khata is easy to install and use will result in ICT-enabling the fundamental and vital function of financial accounting, and thereby take enterprises in Kerala to the next level of ICT-enablement".