



# Free Software in Public Institutions ~ **Another Kerala Model**

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# Kerala



# Kerala



Population	32 Million
Population Density	819 / km <sup>2</sup>
Language	Malayalam
Sex Ratio	1058*

\* No of women per 1000 men

# The Kerala Model!!



	Literacy (%)		
	M	F	Total
<b>Kerala</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>95</b>
India	76	54	65
China	96	88	92
USA	99	99	99

# The Kerala Model!!



	Average Life Expectancy	HDI
<b>Kerala</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0.64</b>
India	64	0.51
China	73	0.66
USA	80	0.90

# Social Movements of Kerala



- ~ Public School System
- ~ Libraries
- ~ Girl's Education
- ~ Education for Backward Sections
- ~ People Science Movement


**Public Institutions and Public Action**



# Free Software Movement in Kerala

# ICT in Public sphere



- Source of foreign exchange (Late 80's)
  - Vendor driven e-Governance (Mid 90's)
  - ICT4D (2000's)
  - Free Software (1996)
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# Free Software in public institutions

- Two initiatives
- Technology substitution
  - Local body computerization - 1999
- Community mobilization
  - IT in education program - 2002

# IT@school



- ~ Initial government stance to promote MS windows
- ~ FS movement worked with teachers

Played a vital role in bringing various issues before the society. We brought the issue of Software Freedom to their agenda.

MICROSOFT was the opportunity provider.

# IT@School

- IT and IT enabled education to all High Schools students of Kerala
- Fully based on Free Software


## Project at a glance

- > 2600 schools
- 1,500,000 children
- > 50,000 teachers
- Moving towards 100% broadband connectivity
- Moving to IT Enabled Education




# Public Sector & Software



- Largely vendor-driven
    - Control with bureaucracy
    - Political leadership and legislature largely ignorant (Yet supportive, across political spectrum)
    - Technology as political tool
  - Demand for free software from grassroots
    - Kerala State Electricity Board
    - Kerala State Water Authority
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# Kerala State Electricity Board



- Microsoft Bundling strategy
    - Microsoft – PwC nexus
  - Worker protest & Migration to free software
  - 2007 - Govt policy on Free software
  - New tender and withdrawal of Infosys
  - Manipulation by Bureaucracy
  - Wipro writing letter to Chief Minister
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- Kerala strategy
  - Public Awareness → Public Action → Public Policy → Change
  - Mass base and sustainability
  - Informed public as watchdog
- Will it always work ?
- Bottom Up or Top Down
- Different states different strategies

# Forging ahead

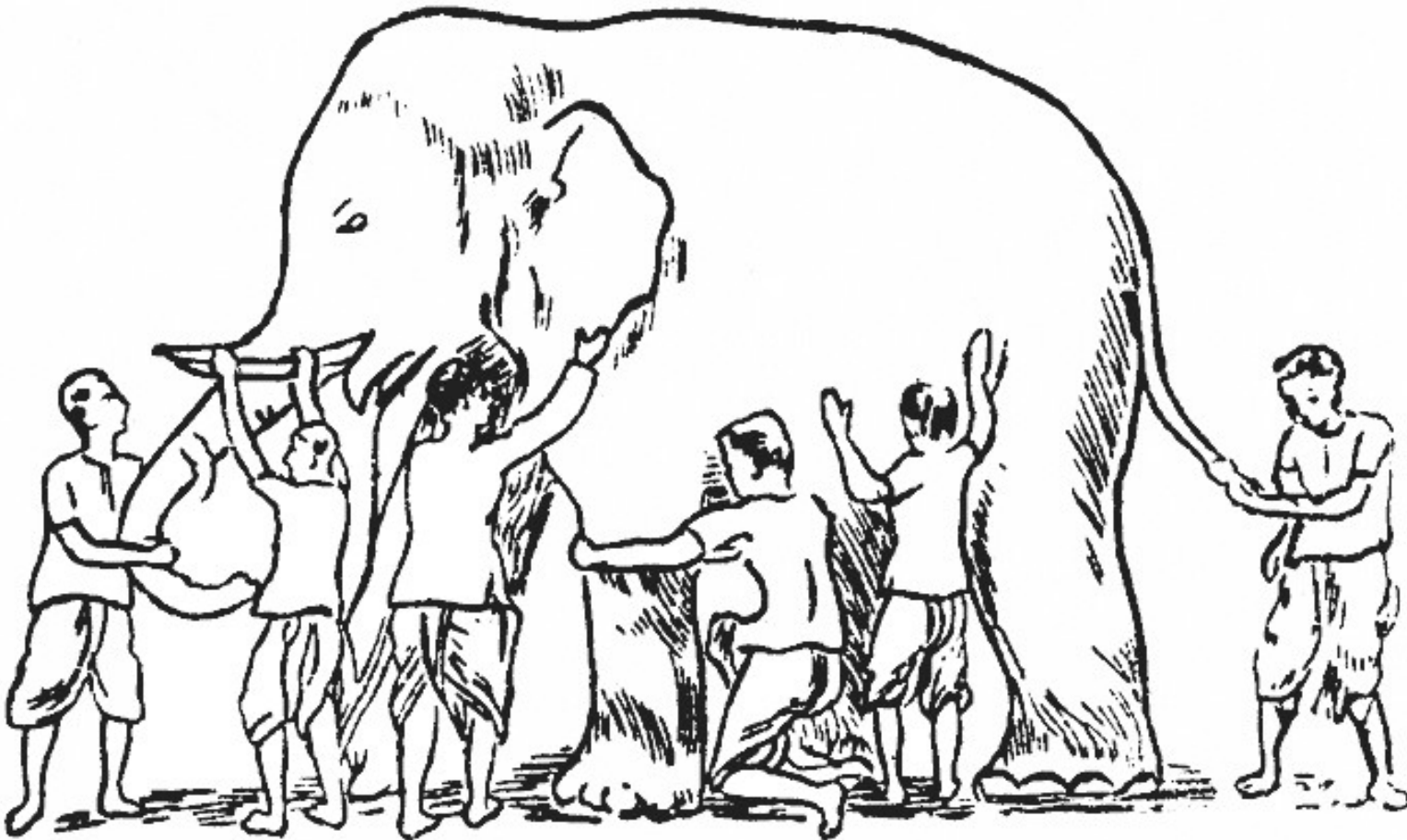


- National level policies on technology selection and open standards
- Anti competitive practices in technology choice and procurement
- Gaps in procurement policies
- Public sector collaboration
- Improving awareness among legislators



Thank You

# What does free software mean to you?



# Tale of Two Cities



## Bangalore

- Silicon Valley of India
- Exports 33% of India's software
- India's Free Software development centre
- Largest Linux Users Group

# - ICT centre for Differently Abled

- Resource centre for Visually Challenged & Autistic children
  - Based on Free Software
  - Around 1000 people trained

