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उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग
शास्त्री भवन
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
SHASTRI BHAVAN
NEW DELHI-110 115

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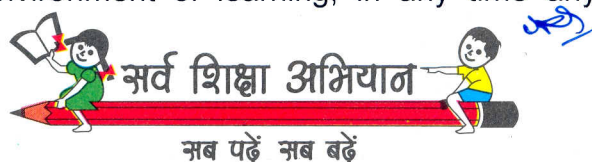
23rd November, 2011

Dear Sir / Madam,

You are aware that the Ministry of HRD, under a Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme, namely, National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) plans to leverage the potential of ICT to provide high quality, personalized and interactive knowledge modules over the internet/intranet for all the learners in Higher Education Institutions in an any time any where mode. As part of this initiative, a low cost computing cum access device called 'Aakash' was developed. You must be aware that our Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development launched 'AAKASH' the world's Lowest Cost Computing-cum-Access Device on October 5, 2011 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

2. Using Aakash, students can access the educational e-content that is getting created in a massive program under NME-ICT for UG and PG courses in Humanities, Commerce, Science, Social Science and Engineering etc. E-content that is ready is uploaded on our Sakshat portal (<http://www.sakshat.ac.in>) and the content would continue to increase and shall be made available to every Indian learner. The NME-ICT is further committed to provide broadband connectivity to all higher educational institutions in the country. Nearly 419 universities have as on date been provided 1Gbps connectivity on optical fibre and are getting migrated to the National Knowledge Network. It is quite likely that your university / institution would already have received this connectivity. Installation of a Local Area Network (LAN) within the Universities / institutions connected under NME-ICT is already underway. I would like to bring to your notice that 75% of the cost of providing this connectivity for a 10 year period has been provided by the Govt. of India under NME-ICT. Similarly, 75% of the cost of establishing a LAN at each University is being met by the Govt. of India under NME-ICT. Apart from this, Departments of the University and Colleges shall be provided Local Area Network connectivity. I am sure your University / Institution / College shall derive full benefit of NME-ICT to enhance access, equity and quality in our education system.

3. To enable our students and teachers to access the e-content, computers or laptops or tablet PCs would be needed. Very few universities or institutions can boast of a ratio of 1:1 between the number of students and number of access devices like PCs / laptops / tablet devices. We also have a yawning digital divide between the haves and the have-nots and most student homes do not have broadband connectivity. Therefore, in order to create an environment of learning, in any time anywhere mode, highly



inexpensive tablet device called 'Aakash' has been developed under NME-ICT. The field trials of these devices are ongoing and perhaps your institution is already participating in these trials. Based on the feedback that we receive, improved versions of 'Aakash' tablet with higher capabilities and specifications at the same or lower cost would keep getting developed and produced on a mass scale to meet the gigantic requirements of our student population. Current specifications and more information as well as answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) are available on the Sakshat portal (www.sakshat.ac.in).

4. Under the NME-ICT during the 11th Plan period, funding of Rs. 700 crores is available for providing 50% subsidy to every University / Institution / College for procurement of computing devices. The vision is that the effective use of technology in imparting education should enable each student of an institution in India to enhance his/her capability. The present delivered cost of 'Aakash' is Rs. 2276 per device. Institutions of higher education can procure 'Aakash' by contributing 50% of this cost as the balance 50% would be borne by the Govt. of India under NME-ICT. Thus, to a University, College or Institution the 'Aakash' tablet would be available at around Rs. 1138 per device. This would enable them even to issue 'Aakash' tablets to their students on a pattern similar to the book bank scheme. Naturally, the demand is expected to be very high and we would like to get a clear picture of the total requirement


5. It is with the purpose of planning and fine-tuning the policies that we need to know the requirements of these devices in your university/ institute/ college in the current financial year. It would also help the procuring organization to prioritize the delivery schedules and indentify the suppliers. We now seek your support and would like you to send us a note giving your inputs on the following:

1. Your total requirement of the 'Aakash' tablets for your institution
2. Your thoughts on how the devices should be distributed across the country
3. Your thoughts on how to best handle the issue of subsidy
4. How you plan to handle the distribution within your institution

6. I shall be grateful if you could kindly respond at the earliest.

With regards,

Yours Sincerely


(N.K. Sinha) 23 11 11

Vice Chancellors of all the Universities in the country