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भारत सरकार

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

BY AIRMAIL

संचार और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स निकेतन

ELECTRONICS NIKETAN

6, सी.जी.ओ. कॉम्प्लेक्स / 6, C.G.O. COMPLEX

नई दिल्ली / New Delhi-110003

दिनांक / Dated August 31, 2005

Dear Dr. Davis,

L2/05-246

This refers to the encoding of the Malayalam Chillu characters in the Malayalam code block of the Unicode standards.

2. It has come to the notice of this office that the approval given for the inclusion of six Malayalam Chillu characters in the Unicode during the May 2005 meeting of the Unicode Consortium was rescinded during the August meeting. We understand that the reason for rescinding was some document sent by Rachana Akshara Vedi.
3. The decision to accept encoding of the Chillus was made after long discussions among the Unicode experts, Malayalam experts and Malayalam IT experts. We express our deep concern on the matter of withdrawal of the approval given for Chillu encoding.
4. The Chillus are very frequently used in Malayalam text. Chillus are considered as pure forms of their base consonants, but are different from <consonant + Chandrakkala> combinations. When Chillus are used in word final position, they have different meaning from the <consonant + Chandrakkala> combination. The present method of representation of Chillus with ZWJ (Zero Width Joiner) has the disadvantage of introducing a control character in the text which is ignored by search engines.
5. We also noticed that UTC took the decision without taking concerned (voting) member in confidence. We would appreciate to forward such representations for our consideration before putting it to agenda.
6. We would like to mention that UTC members were very well convinced about the encoding of Chillus since the proposal was well discussed among the experts in the country and supported by documentary evidences.
7. Language is the state subject. Malayalam is a modern language and the language standards are set by the Government of Kerala. We fully endorse the views of the Kerala IT Mission on this issue. We would request that UTC should consider the views of the government organizations, whose decisions are based on extensive research and studies made by various linguistic and technical experts.

o/c

8. In view of the above we request you to please reconsider the decision about the Malayalam Chillus.

Your kind co-operation is solicited.

With our best wishes with a new resolve to reach the unreached and race together,

Yours faithfully,


(Om Vikas)

o/e
Issued
SB
2/9/2005

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KSITM/D/333/05
23rd August 2005

Dear Mark Davis,

Sub: Malayalam Language –Inclusion of Chillu characters

We have come to know that the acceptance of the proposal for providing separate code points for six Malayalam Chillu characters in the Unicode during the May 2005 meeting of the Unicode Consortium was rescinded during the August 2005 meeting. We understand that the reason for this decision of the Consortium was some documents received from Rachana Akshara Vedi.

We know that the above proposal was accepted after a long public discussion in the Unicode mailing list, and the UTC was finally convinced of the need to encode the Chillus. A number of people from different parts of the world have put in their time and energy to sort out this issue, when it was open to discussion. Some members of the above Rachana Akshara Vedi group were also present with counter arguments, but they were not able to convince the authorities at that time. We understand that the Unicode Consortium is providing enough time for people to respond on issues by way of mailing list discussions and facilities for feedback on public review issues. It is irresponsible on the part of any individual/organisation not to make use of these facilities appropriately.

Government of Kerala has taken an official stand regarding inclusion of Chillaksharams in Unicode . This is based on extensive research and studies made by various linguistic and technical experts in Malayalam language. Hence, we request that UTC may consider the official statement of Government of Kerala which has been constantly informed through Ministry of IT, Government of India. It is unfortunate that the Consortium have rescinded an approval based on such a document when there was enough time for any body to defend their arguments.

The Kerala State IT Mission, who (on behalf of Govt. of Kerala) have taken initiatives for the standardisation of Malayalam Character encoding, based on which the proposal for encoding Chillus were prepared, hereby express our concern on this action of the Unicode Consortium and request them to encode the Chillu characters in the next version of the Unicode.

Director
Kerala State IT Mission