



*Dear Members of the UK Kannada Diaspora,*

This is a joint statement from KBUK and KUK, two leading, registered Kannada organisations in the UK, in response to developments happening in the UK Kannada community.

## Brief introduction of these two organisations

### Kannada Balaga UK (KBUK)

Kannada Balaga UK (KBUK) is the oldest Kannada organisation in United Kingdom. It began with humble roots after a handful of families decided to form a Kannada organisation in 1982. The purpose of the organisation is to get Kannadigas under one roof, to promote the rich culture and heritage of Karnataka and to expose their children to Kannada language, culture, and tradition. The term “Balaga” denotes a family - an extended family encompassing all Kannadigas in the United Kingdom and KBUK has been serving the Kannada Community for over 38 years in the United Kingdom. This is the only registered Kannada charity in the UK and has been involved in many cultural and educational events inviting and honouring many dignitaries from Karnataka and have contributed to charity activities in Karnataka. We have successfully promoted Kannada language in the UK through the ‘Kannada Kali’ program and with it is with pride, we say, we have ventured into new areas of promoting Kannada language through digitalization of Kannada alphabets, working in partnership with Kannada Abhivruddhi Pradhikara (KAP). Kannada Balaga works closely with several reputed organisations in Karnataka which promote education, Kannada language and culture. We remain non-political, non-religious and work with the sole intention of promoting Kannada language and culture. Our membership database exceeds 800 Kannadigas and their families from all walks of life.

### KannadigarUK (KUK)

Likewise, KannadigarUK (KUK) is a registered and incorporated as a Community Interest Organisation (Not for Profit Organisation) with an intention to promote Kannada language and culture in the UK. This organisation also began with humble roots after a handful of families decided to form a Kannada organisation in 2005 catering for vibrant younger Kannada community. Over the last 15 years, KUK has been organising social, cultural, educational, recreational and other welfare activities/celebrations for the benefit of Kannadigas in the UK. KUK launched the Kannada Kali initiative way back in 2009, formally inaugurated by the Kannada Abhivruddhi Pradhikara (KAP) President in 2011. Since then, KUK had opened/supported 11 locations across the UK with a maximum registration of 60 children in one of the locations. The KAP syllabus was followed for tutoring the Kannada language in no-fee classes. Due to COVID-19, KUK started 3 phases of virtual Kannada Kali classes in collaboration with Kannada Academy involving 300 students and 60 teachers. KUK is also a non-political, non-religious organisation and helped charities in Karnataka with donations.



## STATEMENT

The above two largest Kannada organisations with long standing in the United Kingdom representing majority of the Kannada Diaspora members and with common interests, have come together on various occasions in promoting Kannada culture and in hosting various charity events including 'Akshaya Patra' recently. The two organisations work closely and complement each other in their activities. The combined effort has had a positive impact on the Kannada Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

We understand COVID19 has impacted many Kannadigas in the UK, both physically and mentally. Though it is not possible to host physical events in these circumstances, both organisations have successfully conducted and continue to hold popular virtual events and value programmes from top ranking artists and personalities for the benefit Kannada community. We believe in working together and collaborative partnership, and therefore have agreed to work towards bringing all Kannadigas under one roof with the sole intention to promote, foster and keep alive the Kannada language, culture and heritage within the communities of Kannada origin here in the United Kingdom.

We aim to bring all members of the United Kingdom Kannada diaspora under one umbrella to achieve the unified efforts and initiatives.

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