



# TOGETHER, WE CAN!

A brief look at Prantakatha's work  
during the Covid-19 pandemic



Today, human-kind seems to be at odds with itself and with nature. The world seems to be in tatters all around us. A plague seems to be engulfing us and that is not just the coronavirus. There appears to be a massive unrest brewing within the consciousness of human civilisation. Everywhere we look there is hunger, war, destruction and death. And hatred-lots and lots of hatred!

People are poised to kill each other over their religion, skin colour, gender, caste, and their position in society. We have been turned into money chasing machines in order to acquire a pittance to survive, in a system that has been inherently rigged to protect the powerful and elite. In the face of the COVID-19 health crisis, people have been forced to take cognizance of all that is wrong around them. Religious prejudice, too, has not taken a back seat even in the throes of a pandemic. The virus has highlighted the lack of scientific awareness in our society, which has made the fight against the virus all the more difficult. People are confused about the situation, and the establishments have also failed in responding in a competent and systematic manner. Being locked up in their own homes, the immense pressure and trauma of trying to rationalise a broken system that does not care for them, has left a deep impact on the psyche of people. More and more instances of mental illness have surfaced in the face of the pandemic. Domestic violence against women and children, specifically trans-children, have increased manifold. We see our fellow people dying due to starvation and negligence by the government, simply

because they are poor, and hence, disposable. Our labourers have been denied the dignity of fair treatment to the extent that they were compelled to walk hundreds of kilometres to return home while little to no help was extended to them.

But the human spirit refuses to back down or break, without a fight. We may get knocked down, not once, not twice, but several times, and every time we strive to stand right back up. And we do this, by extending solidarity and support to each other, putting out a hand, to pull up another. This has been the essence of resistance that people have shown against all odds, even now. This is only achieved with the relentless belief in uniting against adversity and coming together to tackle the crises, without losing hope. Even if our belief and trust in the system has faltered, and rightfully so, our willingness to thrive as a community and our unwillingness to give up has persevered successfully. We see around us, countless people, general civilians, banding together, to help fellow citizens in need. People are tearing through their own constraints to help those who neither have the privilege nor the opportunity, to even help themselves. We have seen friends, families, students, professionals and many others coming together with people in their own communities to do as much as they can. It is the power of this perseverance, this struggle to keep living and ensuring others thrive as well, that defines the grandness of the human spirit. The collective effort to rectify the wrongs, to do the needful, to resist- this is what helps us truly shine even in the most ink-

black nights that envelop our reality. To be able to act as support systems, to be able to reach out and pat one on the back and reassure them that all is not lost, is what makes humanity thrive. It pushes us to believe that, even in the face of a monstrous darkness, there still exists the flickers of hope that will help us sail through all adversity. This togetherness strengthens us and threatens the very core of all that is oppressive and destructive.

We at Prantakatha have also strived to do our bit, in the little ways we can. We believe that in this epochal moment in human history, when darkness seems to be the order of the day, we must keep our faith in goodness and our ability to create change, intact. Ever since the lockdown started, our work has only gained more intensity and our activities were carried out with an unstoppable zeal.

## Numerical Summary

**Total number of beneficiaries**

**6010 family**

**Total no of area - 9**



Prantakatha is proud to have started an initiative called *Ador*, which translates to affection in Bengali. Supported entirely by generous individuals in Kolkata, without any national or international grants, this initiative provides support and assistance to 35 old ladies who used to beg for alms on the street. As the lockdown started to get implemented due to the Covid 19 health crisis, we ensured that these elderly women who are more vulnerable to the disease be kept indoors in safe spaces with ample provisions to bar them from having to venture out. We not only provided them with month long ration kits, but also new sets of clothing, other necessities like umbrellas and also free medical support. We have also been able to arrange for temporary night shelters, with the help of the government, for those who didn't have a roof over their heads



With the help of our friends and well-wishers, Prantakatha has been able to support around 100 mother-child families in the red light area of Kalighat. Sex workers are one of the worst hit during this pandemic, and despite the government providing them with free ration, various other necessities still remained. We reached out with nutritional food items for the mothers and various kinds of snacks for the children, stocking them up for an entire month.



A trans-woman, who is also the first transgender OT technician in the reputed Medical Super Specialty Hospital in Kolkata, was facing immense challenges in commuting to and from the hospitals for treating patients, due to the lockdown. We proactively reached out to a young fellow from a red light area known to us, who provides Rapido bike service. After getting approval from Kolkata Police, we arranged for him to take the trans-woman nurse to work and then back home, every day, for a nominal monetary amount.

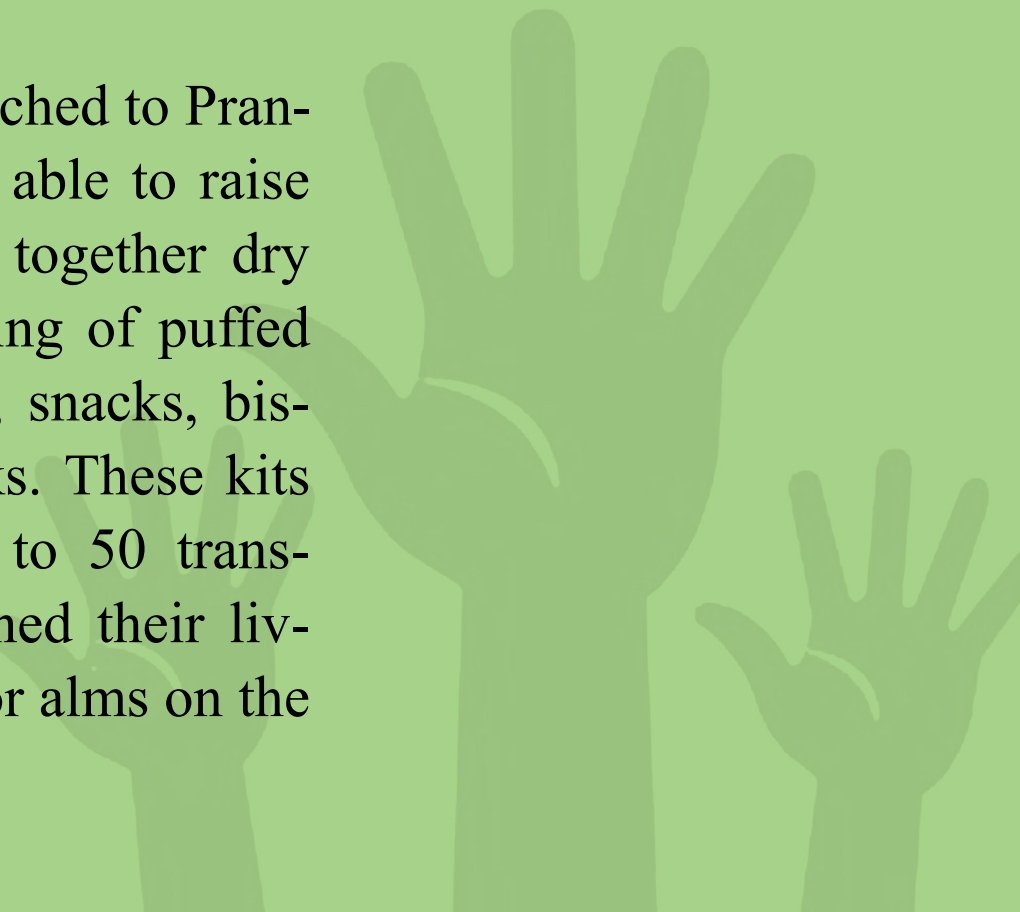


We have also supported 200 families with rations in a slum near Panchanantala area, which is close to our office in South Kolkata. Most of the families residing there were daily wage earners whose lives were severely affected due to the lockdown.





A Youth Group attached to Prantakatha has been able to raise donations to put together dry food kits consisting of puffed rice, mustard oil, snacks, biscuits and Horlicks. These kits were distributed to 50 transpersons who earned their living by begging for alms on the streets.





After receiving an SOS from one of our ex-UNICEF friend, we got to know about two Armenian Youths who were stranded in Kolkata due to the lockdown. With help from the police, we were successful in arranging a shelter for them and also transport facility to get them to the shelter safely.



Prantakatha has been able to extend some humble support to the marginalised sections of the Muslim community as well. We are providing regular food supplies and nutrition for mother and child to 140 families in Rajabazar. In this case as well, the families are all daily wage earners whose source of income got hampered due to the lockdown.



To be able to reach out to and provide support to the people living in containment areas, Prantakatha has actively worked with the Kolkata Police, specifically the Gariahat, Topsia and Patuli Police Stations.



Prantakatha was also involved with the Community Kitchen run by Gariahat Police Station. With the help of this initiative by the Gariahat P.S., we were able to provide food twice a day to 100 people living under the Gariahat Flyover and also 100 other families in and around the area.

None of this would have been possible if we had tried to tackle these issues on our own. It was the collective effort by the members of the community to come together and work as allies that has resulted in such support being extended to the vulnerable and marginalised. We believe in the power of collaboration and with that in mind, we would like to thank all our friends, well-wishers and supporters for their undying commitment to do what was necessary.

Partners who supported us:



Apart from our partner organisations, countless individuals came forward to support this initiative. Without their mention, this document and this initiative would have been incomplete-

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Thank You