

# Packets come with 'personal touch'

**OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT**



**Jaydeep Mukherjee and  
wife Swaguna hand over a  
food packet to a woman in  
north Calcutta**

**Calcutta:** A couple have been providing artisans in Kumartuli, sex workers and their children from Sonagachhi and daily labourers with food packets to help them live through the lockdown in the absence of livelihood.

Jaydeep Mukherjee and his wife Swaguna from Dover Lane have received calls for help from various parts of the city. One of the calls was from an artist in Kumartuli who told them many of the artisans were without work and that they needed food.

Another call came from

when we reached out to them and did not discriminate among the children or the families who needed help," Sarkar, the general secretary of Ananda Mandir, the education centre, said. "In fact they came, stood with us and distributed the packets to the families... they did not just send the food packets through someone... there was a personal touch in their giving."

Many of the artisans in Kumartuli left for their hometowns after the Centre announced a lockdown to stop

Sankar Sarkar, who is part of an education centre in north Calcutta for children of sex workers and daily labourers and street children.

“After hearing about their plight we could not just sit idle... we had to stand by these people of our society,” Jay-deep Mukherjee, the owner of a 20-year-old travel company, Meghdutam Travels, said.

The family has so far reached out to 2,000 families in various parts of the city, he said.

Each of their food packets contain 3kg rice, 1kg potatoes, 500g daal, a litre of cooking oil, biscuits/cakes, soap and even baby food wherever required.

“The Mukherjees immediately responded to our call

the spread of the novel coronavirus. At present there are 250-300 artisans in Kumartuli.

“Meghdutam Travels is one of the organisations providing the artisans with food. Many are idol-makers while some are associated with decoration,” Mintu Pal, a member of Kumartuli Mritshilpi, an association of artisans, said.

In the absence of employees, the challenge is not only to provide people with food but also to procure and pack them, Mukherjee said. “Our daughters Mahima (an ISC examinee) and Medhani (a Class VII student) and my mother Gita Mukherjee who is fighting ovarian cancer are helping us pack the food packets.”