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ASIA/INDIA - More scholarships for tribal Christians and Dalits: the President of India's appeal

Bhopal (Agenzia Fides) - Increase scholarships for Christian students in India: is what the president of the Indian Federation, Pranab Mukherjee, two non-governmental Organizations made up of Christian laity in the state of Madhya, in central India have asked. As reported in a note sent to Fides Agency, the two organizations, "Rastriya Secular Manch" and " Isai Maha Sangh" met Mukherjee, pointing out a series of issues that affect the Christian community in India. Among those considered urgent are: to increase scholarships for Christian students, given the difficulties faced by families in order to fulfill the procedures necessary to obtain education allowances. The main difficulties stem from a discriminatory mentality rooted in the civil administration: rights are denied, in particular, to the Christians belonging to the lowest castes and to tribals, stresses Fr. Anand Muttungal, coordinator of "Isai Maha Sangh"
The two NGOs handed over a memorandum to the President stressing that the Government of Madhya Pradesh, in the last nine years, led by the nationalist "Bharatiya Janata Party" (BJP), has followed the criteria that in the administration has strongly penalized religious minorities such as Christians and Muslims, giving space to the Hindu extremist movements. The document emphasizes above all that "the financial resources of the state have been used to protect and promote the development of the faithful of the Hindu community," and that many policies adopted are "contrary to the spirit of the Indian Constitution." For this reason, associations are calling for respect and guarantees on the adoption of the right policies, typical of a secular state that does not discriminate against citizens belonging to a religious minority. (SD-PA) (Agenzia Fides 12/06/2013)

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