



ASIA/INDIA - Half of India's population lives in poverty: the responses of the Church

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - There are 680 million Indian citizens, 56% of the population, who do not have the means to meet their basic needs of daily sustenance and access to basic services: This is what the new Report published by the "McKinsey Global Institute", commissioned by the Indian government highlights. The Report, sent to Fides Agency, considers and investigates access to basic services: food, water, health care assistance, education, shelter, fuel and social security. With regards to access to care health, drinking water and sanitation, at least 40 % of the population is under a minimum standard of human dignity.

Using specific parameters, the Report sets out a minimum line of per capita income, which is necessary to meet the basic services, to 1,336 rupees per month. It states that, in recent years, 56% of the population is below this threshold. The text makes a difference between urban and rural population, indicating that 171 million urban residents and 509 million living in rural areas are below the minimum line.

Before what is called "dehumanizing poverty", the Catholic Church is committed to "becoming a Church of the poor", as the Indian Bishops have recently said.

As reported to Fides by the "Justice and Peace" Commission of the Indian Bishops, the Catholic community intends to improve its services to education, making schools and other educational institutions closer to the poor. It also aims to combat the culture of well-being, which leads to "globalization of indifference", as Pope Francis defines it. Other sectors of vital importance in the social commitment of the Church are: the fight against corruption, the promotion of the "Food Security Bill", and special attention towards the weak and the marginalized, especially the Dalits. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/02/2014)