

National Post, May 3, 2006

Put Indian poverty in perspective

Re: India's Rising Star Eclipsed by Extreme Poverty, Hunger, May 2.

This report was rather biased in its presentation of facts. It mentioned that there are 57 million undernourished Indians compared to 41 million in Africa: the fact that India has a much larger population than Africa was omitted. Similarly, Pakistan and Bangladesh have 8 million undernourished each, but each nation has about one-ninth the population of India.

Another point is that China, as a dictatorship, routinely manipulates its statistics to project a positive image. Non-democratic nations do this frequently; democratic India is an open society where negatives cannot be so easily concealed.

UNICEF and other agencies ought to apply a grain of salt with many of these 'comparative statistics', based on suspect numbers provided by unelected governments.

Ron Banerjee
Director, Hindu Conference of Canada