

ONFIGHROAD TO PROGRESS

CLIMATE, WOMEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SILVER JUBILEE SPECIAL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Addressing poverty, inequality and climate change

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The outcome document of Rio+20 conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, 20 years after the Earth Summit was held there, is called The Future We Want. The document outlines the various conditions to be fulfilled for the world to be sustainable through generations. In fact, the pursuit of material gains, particularly by the now developed countries, since the mid-19th century, generally without considering or realising how may it adversely affect the nature and, also, spur unprecedented inequality within and across nations.

The tryst with socialism in different parts of the world and at different times notwithstanding, the thirst for economic and political power has prevailed to dictate overwhelmingly the human behaviour as well as the behaviour of nation states, particularly of the richer and powerful nations and richer and powerful segments of the populations of individual countries. This has been particularly so since the 1970s through the implementation of the Washington Consensus or neoliberalism. The same period has also seen an unprecedented growth in global wealth creation and unparalleled scientific and technological advancements in various fields, including in the fields of information and communications and transportation. But, the control structure of this wealth and scientific and technological advancements is predominantly in the hands of the rich



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countries and super-rich people, who, by and large, in the first place, supported and facilitated these developments. Thus, now, the global order is characterised by large-scale inequalities as between the rich countries and the large number of poorer countries and

inequalities being a deeply divisive reality within nation states.

Globally, it may be seen from a recent Oxfam study that 85 super-rich people control the same wealth as that held by the bottom 3.5 billion (roughly about the bottom half) peo-

ple. Another recent Oxfam study shows that by 2016, richest one per cent of the global population would be in control of half the world's wealth; that is, the world's wealth will be divided half and half between the super-rich 1% and the rest (99%). One of the world's most

unequal countries is the USA, where 1% super-rich controls 40% of the national wealth. The inequality syndrome will worsen further if the ruling paradigm keeps ruling.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

