



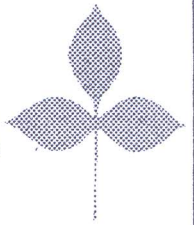
# BULLETIN

## OF THE

# CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

(SANKAR FOUNDATION)

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### WE CAN OVERCOME .....

In 70 countries, according to the 1996 UNDP Report, people are on average poorer than they were in 1980 and in 43 countries poorer than in 1970. Notwithstanding the claims of the protagonists of "the governing economic culture of the world market" the gap between the haves and havenots is widening alarmingly. Of the global GDP of \$23 trillion, the share of the developing countries is only \$5 trillion or a mere 22%. During the last three decades the share of the rich countries increased from 70 to 85 percent while that of the poorest countries dropped from "a meagre 2.3 percent to a disgraceful 1.4 percent." In a thought-provoking article titled "Highway Robbery by the Superrich" in the Guardian Weekly of July 28th, 1996 Victor Keegan shows how the 358 billionaires of the world corner wealth that equals the combined incomes of the poorest 45 percent of the world's population. If these 358 billionaires, says Keegan, decided to keep \$5 million or so each to tide themselves over and give the rest away, they could virtually double the annual incomes of nearly half the people on earth. The author's comment that "inequality has not only grown between countries but within them" confirms that humankind is not getting any closer than before to the alleviation of poverty and suffering. In a perceptive article in Foreign Affairs of May-June 1996 Ethan B. Kapstein says that "the failure of today's advanced global capitalism to keep spreading the wealth poses a challenge not just to policy makers but to modern economic "Science" as well..... Growing income inequality, job insecurity and

unemployment are widely seen as the flip side of globalization."

Market culture is based on ruthless competition which brings out the worst in man and degrades human spirit. The populist and the demagogue set the agenda for human progress and polls dictate policy. In the midst of such growing confusion India's plight is pathetic mainly because of an uncertain situation within and unfavourable setting outside. But if only we turn to those times when the historic tryst with destiny took place, for guidance and inspiration, we can find light at the end of the tunnel. Those were the times when 'the advanced west' was fascinated by 'the most creative thought coming out of the East' and when great western philosophers looked to India for showing 'a way out of the darkness.' Gandhiji said that "true economics stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life." Jawaharlal Nehru who synthesised Western liberalism, Marxist egalitarianism and Indian values in evolving a framework for India's progress reminded us of the path just a few days before his death: "In India, it is important for us to profit by modern technical processes and increase our production both in agriculture and industry. But, in doing so, we must not forget that the essential objective to be aimed at is the quality of the individual and the dharma underlying it." India can still do it. And the world at large will also stand to profit by it.

—Editor

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