Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1. Introduction:

Sustainable Development Goal 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and have overall poverty within 15 years. It prioritizes poverty reduction for all, regardless of gender, age, or social status, and promotes social protection for vulnerable groups. The goal emphasizes equal access to economic and natural resources, technology, and financial services. It seeks to build resilience among the poor, especially against climate-related shocks, and calls for resource mobilization through development cooperation and pro-poor, gender-sensitive policies to accelerate poverty reduction.

2. Context:

Since the independence of the country, Bangladesh has made poverty alleviation as the major driver of economic salvation in its national plan. All the Five Year Plans (FYPs) from 1973-2025 had the primary focus on poverty reduction. Over the last three decades, the country experienced a sharp decline in poverty. During the 1990s, the rate of poverty had declined relatively slowly - from 56.7 per cent in 1991-92 to 48.9 per cent in 2000. However, the post-2000 era witnessed an accelerated decline in the rate of poverty. To be specific, the pace of poverty reduction in the 2000s was more than double the rate of the 1990s. The strategies followed by the government for reducing poverty are many, however, important ones are: promoting growth by sustaining increases in labour productivity, increasing farm income, enhancing the access of the poor to production inputs and to institutional finance, expanding employment opportunities in lagging regions by improving connectivity with growth poles through better infrastructure, investing in human capital, stimulating women's participation in the labour force, promoting overseas employment including women migration, improving access to and quality of education, health and nutrition services, strengthening the coordination, targeting and coverage of social protection programmes, enhancing the access to microfinance, ensuring stable food prices, and mitigating the adverse consequences of climate change.

By 2016, extreme poverty stood at 12.9 per cent while the overall poverty headcount reached 24.3 per cent. The government is firmly committed to emancipate its people from the curse of poverty. As per the HIES Data of 2022, the poverty headcount ratio dropped down to 18.7 while the extreme poverty rate decreased to 5.6. According to the poverty estimates, the overall poverty and extreme poverty will descend to 7.02 per cent and 2.55 per cent respectively by 2030.

3. Progress against targets

Sl	SDGs Indicators	Baseline figures (source of data)	Latest Available figures (source of data)	Target 2030	Comments (if any)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.1.1	Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location (Urban/rural)	13.5 (PovcalNet, WB 2016)	9.6 2022	0.00% 2030	
1.2.1	Promotion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	1.2.1 (a) (Upper Poverty Line) 24.3 (National) (HIES, 2016, BBS) 1.2.1 (b) (Lower Poverty Line) 12.9 (N) (HIES, 2016, BBS)	1.2.1 (a) (Upper Poverty Line) 18.7 (National) (HIES, 2022, BBS) 1.2.1 (b) (Lower Poverty Line) 5.6 (N) (HIES, 2022, BBS)	(a) 7.02 2030 (b) 2.55 2030	
1.2.2	Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	MPI 0.106 HC 24.05 Intensity 44.16 (BBS 2019)	-	-	
1.3.1	Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	28.7 (HIES, 2016)	50 (HIES, 2022)	40%HH	
1.4.1	Proportion of population living households with access to basic services Basic Services: 1. Drinking water 2. Sanitation 3. Hygiene 4. Clean Fuels and Technology 5. Mobility 6. Waste collection Services 7. Healthcare services 8. Basic Education	2.56 (SVRS, 2021)	12.54 (SVRS, 2023)	-	

4. Challenges

1. Reducing poverty is a multifaceted problem that demands for a whole-of-government strategy. Forty-four Ministries/Divisions are participating in addressing this objective, according to the mapping of Ministries for various SDG targets. A hurdle to success is the efficient coordination of these several departments and divisions.

2. Over 40% of the population in Bangladesh is currently covered by social protection. This enormous number of recipients receive their allowance from more than 120 programs. Sometimes a beneficiary is getting his allowance from more than one program at a time due to lack of single registry MIS, it is therefore exceedingly difficult to detect duplication. It also makes it more difficult to add new people to the social protection program. Therefore, deduplication is another challenge for social protection of Bangladesh.
3. Bangladesh has faced additional obstacles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine and Middle East crisis. These issues have led to a significant increase in the cost of products, putting a large number of people at risk of falling below the poverty line. Due to these issues, social protection is under a lot of pressure to increase the number of beneficiaries it covers.
4. Two specific economic transitions could make Bangladesh vulnerable. One of these is the problem associated with LDCs graduation; another one is the upcoming structural transformation and the 4th industrial revolution. Both of these events may result in job loss, which is a prime concern for poverty alleviation. Bangladesh faces frequent floods, droughts, cyclones, hailstorms and other natural disasters that make implementation of SDG 1 greatly challenging particularly in the coastal areas.

5. Way forward

1. There is no single recipe for attaining SDGs. Concerted efforts from different sectors need to be pushed in a way so that we can conquer our challenges of poverty alleviation. We need to increase the sectoral growth rate of GDP in agriculture and the average growth elasticity of agriculture is to be improved if the growth elasticity of poverty is to be reduced. In this case, continuous innovation of technology is required to increase agricultural productivity.

2. A single registry MIS for social protection provides several key benefits including: increased efficiency in identifying eligible beneficiaries, reduced administrative costs by minimizing data duplication, improved targeting of beneficiaries, enhanced transparency and accountability, better monitoring of program impact, and the ability to tailor interventions to specific needs of beneficiaries by consolidating data from various social protection programmes into one centralized system, allowing for more streamlined and effective program delivery. For successful implementation of social security programmes, Single Registry MIS needs to be formulated.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Bangladesh's efforts to achieve the goal of "End poverty in all its forms everywhere". There are several key effects of the pandemic on poverty alleviation efforts in the country such as Reduced Incomes, Job Losses, Impact on Daily Wage Earner, Disruption of Social Safety Nets programs, Increased Healthcare Costs, Education Disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to Bangladesh's efforts to eradicate poverty. To effectively address these issues, it is crucial to implement adaptive strategies that focus on inclusive recovery, strengthen social safety nets, enhance access to education and healthcare, and support vulnerable populations. By prioritizing these areas, Bangladesh can work towards achieving the goal of ending poverty in all its forms and building a more resilient society.

4. The urbanization is to be decentralized properly, and education and training are required to enhance the employability of the poor. In order to increase the market access of the poor faction,

financial inclusion is to be spread out. In this way, marginalized people will be mainstreamed into society. To achieve a poverty free state the government needs to meet the challenge of generating employment for an increasing labour force by fostering the creation of productive and inclusive jobs in the economy.

6. **Effects of COVID-19 in implementing the goal in Bangladesh and how the challenges are resolved/tackled can be used in a box:**

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to social protection in Bangladesh, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable populations. One of the primary difficulties was the need for an accurate and comprehensive database of beneficiaries. The reliance on mobile phone usage data for identifying households in economic distress highlighted the limitations of existing social protection systems. Many potential beneficiaries lacked access to mobile phones or had limited digital literacy, complicating their inclusion in the support program. Additionally, the verification process revealed systemic issues, such as the registration of multiple mobile numbers under a single National ID (NID) and the exclusion of deserving households due to discrepancies in data linkage. The exclusion of government service holders, pensioners, and existing social security beneficiaries from the final list, while necessary, added another layer of complexity to the screening process. The program also had to ensure that recipients did not possess significant savings or assets, further narrowing the pool of eligible beneficiaries. Despite these hurdles, the innovative use of mobile financial services facilitated the distribution of aid, though the initial technological and logistical barriers underscored the need for a more resilient and inclusive social protection framework to better respond to future crises.

7. **Best practices/best cases:**
   - Bangladesh has made significant strides in social protection, particularly in the areas of empowerment, access to land and resources, and improving access to basic services and governance. Each of these areas showcases best practices that aim to enhance the well-being of vulnerable populations.
   - Empowerment is a focal point of Bangladesh's social protection strategy, particularly concerning human and gender development. The government has established a dedicated cluster to address these issues, implementing programs such as nutrition initiatives, stipends for students, and the Mother and Child Benefit Programme. These initiatives are designed to empower women and children, promoting better health, education, and overall quality of life. The emphasis on gender development is crucial, as it not only uplifts women but also fosters inclusive growth within communities. By addressing nutritional needs and providing financial support, these programs contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty and enhancing the capabilities of marginalized groups.
   - Access to Land and Resources represents another critical area of social protection in Bangladesh. The government has initiated programs to allot Khas lands to landless individuals, providing them with essential resources for sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, the provision of housing and building materials further supports these families in establishing a stable living environment. By facilitating access to land, the government empowers the landless, enabling them to secure their livelihoods and contributing to poverty alleviation. This approach not only addresses immediate needs but also promotes long-term socio-economic stability for vulnerable populations.

- In terms of improving access to basic services and governance, Bangladesh has implemented several effective mechanisms. The establishment of Citizen Charters enhances transparency and accountability in public services, while Grievance Redress Systems ensure that citizens can voice their concerns and receive prompt responses. The Right to Information (RTI) Act further empowers citizens by promoting access to information, fostering a culture of openness within government institutions. Additionally, the National Integrity Strategy provides a comprehensive framework aimed at improving governance across sectors. The adoption of e-governance solutions has streamlined service delivery and increased efficiency, ultimately enhancing the overall governance landscape. Together, these practices contribute to a more responsive and inclusive system that prioritizes the needs of the population, ensuring that social protection efforts are effectively implemented and accessible to all.

8. Innovative cases :

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh demonstrated significant innovation in social protection by balancing life and livelihood. The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) 2015, aligned with the government's vision of Digital Bangladesh and Smart Bangladesh, played a vital role in this effort. This strategy emphasized digital transformation, proving essential in managing the crisis effectively. A key innovation was the selective closure of factories, allowing essential sectors to remain operational. This approach minimized economic disruption for low-income groups, preventing a complete economic standstill and protecting livelihoods.
- The beneficiary selection process showcased novel data strategies. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) collaborated with mobile phone operators to analyze usage patterns, identifying households in economic distress. This data-driven method helped compile a comprehensive list of eligible households. The BTRC initially identified 5 million mobile numbers, which were refined to a pool of 15 million to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable.
- Verification involved linking mobile numbers to the National ID (NID) database, excluding numbers not registered under an NID. An automated system cross-referenced data from the NID authority and IBAS++ database, excluding government service holders, pensioners, and beneficiaries of other social security programs. Additionally, mobile numbers linked to significant savings or saving certificates over 5 lakh taka were disqualified. The digital cash transfer program was another innovation, aiming to provide a one-time payment of 2,500 taka (around 30 USD) to 5 million beneficiaries total 1250 million taka (150 million dollar). By October 2020, 3.5 million beneficiaries had received the payment, totaling nearly 100 million USD. Distribution through mobile financial services (MFS) platforms like Nagad, Bkash, Rocket, and Surecash ensured swift and efficient fund transfers.
- Overall, Bangladesh's innovative strategies during the pandemic highlighted a robust model of social protection. The balance between life and livelihood, combined with advanced data analytics and digital financial services, underscored the country's commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and strengthening a resilient social protection system.

9. Business cases:

National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh

- The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh stands as a prime example of an effective framework aimed at addressing poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization through a structured social protection system. Rooted in the constitutional commitment to social security, the NSSS aligns with national goals outlined in Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan 2010-2021, with a focus on transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country. The primary objective of the NSSS is to reform the existing social security system to enhance resource efficiency, strengthen delivery mechanisms, and create an inclusive framework that addresses lifecycle risks for the most vulnerable populations.
- The socio-economic impact of the NSSS is expected to be significant, with projections indicating substantial reductions in poverty levels and improvements in human development indicators. By consolidating various safety net programs into a lifecycle approach, the NSSS aims to provide targeted support that meets individuals' needs at different life stages. This not only addresses immediate financial requirements but also promotes long-term economic participation. Furthermore, effective implementation is anticipated to reduce leakages in current programs and enhance targeting efficiency, thereby increasing the overall value of transfers to beneficiaries.
- Financially, the NSSS requires robust government commitment alongside support from international donors such as UNDP and DFID. A clear budget plan is essential for sustainable funding, with contributions already exceeding $9 million. Given the rising per capita income in Bangladesh, investing in social protection is both affordable and crucial for maintaining economic stability. The governance structure established under the NSSS ensures accountability through a Central Monitoring Committee, while continuous stakeholder engagement will refine program design and enhance community ownership. Ultimately, the NSSS serves as a cornerstone for fostering inclusive growth and improving societal well-being, making it imperative for Bangladesh's sustainable economic development.

10. Collaborative cases:

- Bangladesh has demonstrated significant collaborative efforts in social protection, with the Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) strategy being a standout example. This strategy integrates social protection, disaster response, and climate adaptation into a cohesive framework, leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple sectors and stakeholders. The National Social Protection Strategy (NSSS) laid the foundation for this integrated approach, evolving from a primary focus on disaster response to a comprehensive system capable of addressing various shocks, including natural disasters and economic crises.
- Enhanced coordination is central to ASP's strategic objectives. The formation of an Inter-ministerial Committee on ASP and field-level Social Security Management Committees ensures alignment of strategies across social protection, disaster management, and climate adaptation sectors. Capacity building is also a critical focus, with comprehensive training programs for Social Security Focal Points and key committee chairpersons, including government officials, NGO representatives, and public representatives, to integrate ASP into various policy frameworks and on-ground implementations.

- ASP emphasizes readiness and anticipatory measures, such as continuous information collection for early risk identification, administrative preparedness, and community awareness. Providing anticipatory allowances to vulnerable communities enhances their resilience. The strategy leverages big data and digital sources for efficient and accurate beneficiary targeting, ensuring timely support for those in need.
- The "Guidelines on Adaptive Social Protection in Bangladesh" offer a strategic, forward-thinking approach to enhancing the resilience and adaptability of the nation's social protection systems. They provide a comprehensive roadmap for policymakers, stakeholders, and practitioners, ensuring the framework's adaptability to current and future challenges. This strategic blueprint prioritizes the well-being and security of all citizens, especially the most vulnerable, and stands as a testament to Bangladesh's dedication to sustainable development. The guidelines serve as an exemplary model for other nations facing similar challenges, demonstrating the power of collaborative efforts in social protection.

11. Leave No One Behind:

- Bangladesh has made significant strides in ensuring inclusivity in social protection through the "Leave No One Behind" initiative. The cornerstone of these efforts is the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), which envisions a comprehensive social protection system for all deserving citizens. The NSSS adopts a lifecycle approach, ensuring that social protection is provided from childhood through old age. This approach includes programs tailored for various stages of life: children, school-age individuals, youth, working-age adults, and the elderly. By addressing the needs of different age groups, the government aims to create a robust and inclusive social protection framework that supports not only the poor but also vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- For children and school-age populations, the government has implemented numerous programs to ensure their well-being and development. Initiatives like the Primary Education Stipend Program (PESP) and school feeding programs aim to reduce dropout rates and improve nutritional status, ensuring that children from low-income families have access to education and adequate nutrition. These programs are designed to break the cycle of poverty by providing children with the resources they need to succeed in school and beyond. Additionally, targeted interventions for vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities or those from marginalized communities, ensure that these groups receive the support they need to thrive.
- The NSSS also addresses the needs of youth, working-age adults, and the elderly through various initiatives. For the youth, skills development programs and vocational training are provided to enhance employability and reduce unemployment. For working-age adults, the government offers social insurance schemes and unemployment benefits to protect against income shocks and job loss. The elderly population is supported through pension schemes and old-age allowances, ensuring financial security in their later years. These programs are designed to provide a safety net for all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status. By adopting a lifecycle approach and implementing targeted interventions for marginalized groups, the government of Bangladesh demonstrates its commitment to leaving no one behind in its social protection efforts. This comprehensive strategy not only aims to reduce poverty but also to promote social inclusion and equity, contributing to the overall development and well-being of the nation.