Dear Friends,

Hope the first month of the New Year and the Pongal festivities have nourished you into new vigour to take on life as it unfolds under the dark clouds of yet another war near home. However, keeping ourselves on track with the Sustainable Development Goals, we are going to undertake every goal, one every month and answer the following:

a. What it is and why is this relevant
b. What are its indicators
c. What are the targets
d. Where do we stand in India?
e. What can we do to support the goal?

In these blogs, I have little to contribute on my own, except to pick-up relevant information from multiple sources on the Internet, and present them before you. I shall try to provide all references, so that if anyone is interested in probing deeper, you could do so. Hence let us begin with the first one.

**What is SDG 1 and why is this relevant**

Sustainable development and poverty cannot go hand in hand. We discussed this point last October, and I believe it is worth recalling a few parts:

“Poor people will circumvent environmental restrictions in their desperation for land, food, and sustenance”.

“Investigations show that when given the chance and access to resources, the poor are more likely than other groups to engage in direct actions to protect and improve the environment.

While the poor often survive in scandalous conditions and are forced to contribute to further degradation, they do so because they know no alternatives. The concern for biodiversity, in its broadest sense, encompasses not only threatened flora and fauna, but also the survivability of these human communities, as stewards of the natural environment and as producers”.

Either way, we see that poverty elimination is a primary task for ensuring sustainable development.

“More than 700 million people, or 10% of the world population, still live in extreme poverty and is struggling to fulfil the most basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation, to name a few” [1].

Among the multiple causes leading to poverty, the report [1] identifies “unemployment, social exclusion, and high vulnerability of certain populations to disasters, diseases” as well as growing inequality, lack of social cohesion, increasing political and social tensions and, instability and conflicts. Sadly, the number of people living under extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has increased between 1990 till 2013 by 113 million.

**What are its indicators and targets [3]?**

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

1.A Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

1.B Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions
Where do we stand in India?

India’s global rank in the 2019 report shows that it is ranked 115th among 162 nations, and it is ‘on track’ as far as the SDG 1 is concerned. The Poverty headcount ratio at $1.90/day (% population) stands at 2.9, while some challenges still remain.

What can we do to support the goal?

The following link would show how we in India have lagged behind so many Asian nations in eradicating poverty:


As Indians, aren’t we concerned? We are not a poor nation in terms of real resources, but we are continuously losing our honesty, and more and more proportions of middle class citizen are accepting corruption as inevitable, and in spite of billions being earmarked for social and infrastructural development in our country, leakages everywhere are undoing the doable. The government cannot do everything for us, unless we are willing to participate whole-heartedly in the efforts for ameliorating the conditions of the poor. Here are a few suggestions:

Try to reduce consumption of every kind, especially non-essential items like fancy clothing, gadgets etc.

Depending upon your situations and intentions, you might save the amount or donate it to reliable NGOs to support their societal services.

Try and reduce energy consumption as far as possible, especially for transportation.

Do not waste any food. Try to recycle excess food to the hungry. Buy locally grown vegetables as against packaged items.

Conserve water as much as possible.

Resist corruption in daily transactions with the government machinery, even if it causes some delays, problems etc. For example, do not pay any extra money to get your driving license quickly or otherwise.

Most importantly, pick up on any of the central government or state government welfare schemes, and pick up someone in the neighbourhood who is eligible but not getting it. Use your good offices to get this done for that individual. It could be a gas cylinder, or a scholarship or simple insurance.

In addition to the above, the UN web [3] suggest the following:

If you can, please engage in policymaking.

Share inter-generational knowledge.

Encourage innovation and critical thinking to support transformational change in people’s lives and communities.

If you work in the private sector, you can play a major role, by ensuring that the mandatory 2% post-profit support is properly utilized. You try and ‘promote economic opportunities for the poor, focusing on segments of the economy where most of the
poor are active, namely on micro and small enterprises and those operating in the informal sector' [3].

“The academic and education community have a major role in increasing the awareness about the impact of poverty. Science provides the foundation for new and sustainable approaches, solutions and technologies to tackle the challenges of reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development. The contribution of science to end poverty has been significant. For example, it has enabled access to safe drinking water, reduced deaths caused by water-borne diseases, and improved hygiene to reduce health risks related to unsafe drinking water and lack of sanitation”.

Another useful link https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ [4] shows many ways and I reproduce an interesting one below. Though it is directly connected with another SDG: Climate Change, yet, it has an impact on SDG 1, poverty as well.

**Fashion**

Making clothes has a huge impact on climate change. The textile industry contributes around ten percent of global greenhouse gas emissions—it uses more energy than the aviation and shipping industry combined, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The industry’s impact is not limited to global carbon emissions. It also produces about 20 percent of global waste water and 85 percent of textiles end up in landfills or are incinerated when most of these materials could be reused.

ActNow will invite people around the world to make their individual contributions to zero-waste fashion. The challenge: upcycle your old clothes for new looks and share your creations on social media using #ActNow.

**References**

1. Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/

2. Why it matters?


3. Goal 1: Targets

https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/

4. Act Now