

## An Analysis of Thailand's Social Policies and its Integration with SDG1 "No Poverty" to Achieve Social Inclusion

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### Abstract

From a historical standpoint, this study examines the concept of poverty in Thailand. The researcher employed the content analysis of eleven effective articles for the study. Thailand's employability, economy, and poverty have improved during the last three decades because of the introduction of democratic and social security. Innovative poverty-eradication programmes such as conditional cash transfers and noncontributory pensions for the elderly and poor have been included in social protection measures. The social protection system has reduced poverty and begun the process of social inclusion. Thailand's social policies have not only decreased poverty and fostered social inclusion but also entailed Sustainable Development Goal 1 of poverty eradication in the global scenario. The current study details these achievements, and it appears that Thailand has increased its efforts towards inclusive development and poverty eradication through effective social policy design and implementation.

**Keywords:** Social Policy in Thailand; Poverty; Social Inclusion; Social Protection; Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1

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## Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations declared 17 sustainable development goals to endorse sustainable development for all the countries on the globe. The United Nations (UN) sets goals for every member of the UN organisation to achieve these goals by 2030. Poverty is one of the paramount global challenges, having decreased from 36% in 1990 to 10% in 2015, as noted by the United Nations. However, the World Bank's projections indicate a concerning trend, with COVID-19 potentially pushing 71 million individuals into extreme poverty in 2020. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) forecasts a decline in human development and an exacerbation of poverty rates, particularly affecting women and widening the gender gap (UN,2023). In 2018, the percentage of workers living in extreme poverty reached 8%, which has since risen to 10% of the global population, equating to approximately 700 million people. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the challenges of poverty reduction, job creation, and the protection of vulnerable communities and workers, further complicating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (UN,2023).

The first SDG is 'No Poverty', which means eradicating poverty from the world, albeit it is impossible to eliminate it completely from the world. Goal 1 aims to reduce 50% of the population dwelling in poverty. To achieve this, it remains paramount to enact legislation on poverty reduction, social inclusiveness, and access to resources while building resilience to vulnerability, sudden climatic changes, political instability, and deprivation. Thailand's government made efforts to guarantee that no one should be left behind in the fight against poverty. According to the ASEAN Report 2024, the intersectionality of poverty and climate change highlights their effects on various demographic groups such as women, persons with disabilities, older individuals, vulnerable communities, children, and youth. The dialogue aimed to expedite efforts both nationally and within the ASEAN region to tackle overarching challenges, including megatrends impacting the

achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 on poverty alleviation. Additionally, there was a consensus to bolster regional cooperation and partnerships to ensure inclusivity and prevent any nation or individual from being left behind.

According to Sresunt (2011), people's experiences and understanding of poverty are entirely different from the reports of non-government and government agencies on poverty that fail in the implementation of social policies. Evidence across the globe suggests that however, the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2023 defines poverty as follows:

- **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):** The proportion of the population that is multidimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivation.
- **Multidimensional poverty headcount:** The population with a deprivation score of at least 33.3%. It is expressed as a share of the population in the survey year and the projected number of multidimensionally poor people in 2021.
- **Intensity of deprivation of multidimensional poverty:** Average deprivation score experienced by the people in multidimensional poverty.
- **Inequality among the poor:** It is calculated by subtracting the deprivation score of each multidimensional poor person from the intensity, squaring the differences, and dividing the sum of the weighted square by the number of multidimensionally poor people.
- **Population in severe multidimensional poverty:** a percentage of the population in severe multidimensional poverty, that is, those with deprivation scores of 50% or more.
- **Population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty:** a percentage of the population at risk of suffering multiple deprivations, that is, those with a deprivation score of 20 to 33.3%.
- **Population living below the national poverty line:** a percentage of the

population living below the national poverty line, which is the poverty line deemed appropriate for a country by its authorities. National estimates are based on population-weighted subgroup estimates from household surveys.

- Population living below PPP \$2.15 a day: Percentage of the population living below the international poverty line of \$2.15 (in 2017 purchasing power parity {PPP} terms) a day.

The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board 2007 stated that only 8.5% of the Thai population lived below the poverty line. Similarly, the Asian Development Bank declared that no poor has been living in Thailand since 2002 as their income surpasses one dollar. Correspondingly, the UNDP ranked Thailand 87 out of 187 countries based on per capita income and longevity in 2007. However, Thailand's 2021 Human Development Index (HDI) stood at 0.800, showing a slight decrease from 0.802 recorded in 2020 and the pre-pandemic level of 0.804 in 2019. Despite this decline, Thailand has seen a notable improvement in its HDI ranking. Over the years, the country has demonstrated resilience and implemented effective policy measures, resulting in a rise of 13 places in the 2021 report compared to 2019 and an increase of 6 spots from 2015. This upward trajectory has enabled Thailand to maintain its status in the "very high human development" category for the third consecutive year since 2019.

However, Thailand's people perceive poverty differently. The popular measurement of poverty is based upon the economic indicator called absolute poverty. The absolute poverty indicator has become more acceptable and famous as it could measure the quality of life through the level of income to spend on family expenses (World Bank, 2020). Capitalism and economic expansion created economic disparities and environmental degradation, exploitation of natural resources, and severity of poverty in many countries. Furthermore, it was understood that the severity of poverty increased, and poor people were not getting any benefits; thus, to measure development— the

Human Development Index (HDI). This HDI was introduced by UNDP in the year 1990. Therefore, HDI measured the equal access of individuals to development, income measurement, and quality of life measurements (UNDP, 2023). Thus, understanding poverty has many dimensions. Generally, poverty can be conceptualised as a social deprivation from the adequate quality of life. Poverty has qualitative and quantitative dimensions (Mabughi and Selim, 2006).

In his article *Measuring Poverty*, Whitton (2000) discusses various methodologies for assessing poverty levels. He quotes Rowntree, who is considered a pioneer in defining poverty in the 19th century, defining poverty as a physical efficiency, whereas Whitton (2000) also quotes Townsend, who has a different viewpoint, defining poverty as a relative rather than it is absolute poverty. According to Townsend and Abel-Smith (1965), communities, groups, families, or individuals are said to be in poverty if they lack access to the social custom to which they belong and cannot get basic needs like food, diet, and shelter. After 1990, the concept of poverty seems to have changed, and it tilted towards well-being and failure of social entitlements. The UNDP, within the sphere of human development, developed the idea of poverty. Thus, poverty can also be understood as denying opportunities and choices. The aim of human development emphasises a healthy life, a long life, and a quality standard of living (UNDP, 2021). This opened an inclusive development approach, which is further linked with Sustainable Development Goal No. 1, which is no poverty.

The study is organised in the following ways. It begins with a discussion of the methods and the data used in the study. Then, it critically discusses social exclusion that forms the basis for eliminating Thailand's poverty. It then goes on to measure poverty in Thailand. Finally, it discusses the country's social policies and National Development Plans, which aim to reduce poverty.

## Method

This research paper examines Thailand's social policies and their alignment with Sustainable

Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), focusing on the eradication of poverty. The paper investigates Thailand’s social policies regarding poverty and its five-year plans through a narrative review. Specifically, it addresses the research question: What is the current state of research on Thailand’s social policies for poverty eradication and their contribution to SDG 1?"

**The Data Collection Procedure Involved**

**Several Steps**

Step 1: Identification of research areas of interest.

Initially, the researcher identified relevant research articles related to the research question. Articles were for keywords such as multidimensional poverty, Thailand poverty, and social policies for poverty eradication in Thailand, Social Policy and Administration. These terms were used to search the research articles in the JSTOR database. I also searched for literature published in the last five years, from

2019 to 2024. Abstracts were examined to guide the selection process (see, Table 1)

Step 2: Narrowing down the research articles.

After compiling a list of articles covering various thematic areas related to the research question, the focus was narrowed to those specifically addressing programs and social policies aimed at poverty eradication in Thailand.

Step 3: Extraction of relevant studies.

Selected references from Step 2 were further evaluated to ensure they encompassed the thematic areas of Thailand’s social policies for poverty eradication. Literature published between 2010 and 2024 was considered for systematic review and analysis.

The researcher found 265 search results for social policies on poverty eradication and SDG1 in Thailand.

<b>Table 1: Searching Literature for Systematic Review</b>		
<b>Poverty, social protection programmes, social policies for eradication of poverty in Thailand, five-year plans of Thailand</b>	<b>Social policies focusing on the eradication of poverty in Thailand.</b>	<b>I searched for benchmark studies and already published studies, and suitable studies were selected for further analysis.</b>
<b>Source: Table generated by the researcher</b>		

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The inclusion criteria for selecting the literature have followed: peer-reviewed articles, published between 2019 and 2024, written in the English language, and focused on social policies on poverty in Thailand. The exclusion criteria were a literature that did not meet the inclusion criteria was deleted; book chapters were also not included in the study as the review focused only on peer-reviewed research articles

published in social policy and administration journals. The researcher has classified the articles according to their sources shown in Table 2.

The findings of the literature review have been synthesised into a coherent narrative. The synthesis has involved identifying common themes and patterns in literature and presenting themes in a structured and organised manner.

<b>Table 3: Summary of Selected References</b>		
<b>Research areas</b>	<b>Identified and Included References</b>	<b>Additional References</b>
<b>Poverty in Thailand</b>	<b>World Bank (2020), Human Development Report ( 2023-2024). Mabughi, N., &amp; Selim, T. (2006). Townsend, P. and Abel-Smith, A. (1965)</b>	<b>Warr, P. (2006), Sen, A. (1987) National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-71). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-76). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-81). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-86). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-91). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-96). Bangkok, Thailand, National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001). Bangkok, Thailand</b>
<b>Social Protection Programmes</b>	<b>Samchaiy Sresunt (2011), Duffy, K. (1998), Busbarat, P. (2018), OPHI, Report (2023), and UN Sustainable Development Report (2023)</b>	<b>ASEAN Report 2024, National Statistical Office and Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, Office of the Prime Minister</b>
	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Source: Author</b>		

**Social Exclusion**

According to the UNO report (2016), social exclusion describes a state in which individuals cannot fully participate in economic, social, political, and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state. Participation is affected when the masses lack access to resources, income, education, job opportunities, health care services, and shelter facilities, which is indeed the foundation of well-being as described in the sustainable development goal agenda 2030. Comparatively, social exclusion is a larger concept than poverty, which is not in material nature, but it is an inability to access and participate actively in the

political sphere and socioeconomic aspects; it is alienation and isolation from mainstream development of the society at large (Duffy,1998). Thus, social exclusion can be understood as a denial or lack of access to human rights, social rights, political involvement, and access to quality of life and overall basic needs. As a result, social exclusion is closely related to deprivation in society. Mabughi and Selim (2006) have described the typical signs of material deprivation, highlighting the following characteristics:

- Inadequate intake of 2200 calories per day indicates nutritional deprivation.
- Income sufficient to purchase second-

hand clothing indicates clothing deprivation,

- Overcrowding living in a single room with a weak interior structure indicates housing deprivation.
- Lack of access to safe drinking water and toilets.
- Lack of access to electricity.
- Living in a poor environment, such as filthy, unsanitary circumstances in slum areas, is an environmental deprivation.
- Living distances from schools, markets, and health services are indications of location deprivation.
- Education deprivation is defined as a qualification less than a basic education.
- Health facility deprivation is indicated by no or limited access to health care.
- Landlessness is a loss of property and land, and
- Working with low productivity is a loss of working conditions.

Similarly, Sen (1987) classified Sen's elementary and complex functioning, which indicated that people's well-being could be measured with indicators like do they have adequate nourishment, are they free from preventive diseases, can they avoid premature mortality, do they have adequate education; do they have essential non-food consumption goods, do they have good shelter; are they happy; taking part in community life; have self-respect; are they able to improve the intellectual standard; can they promote cultural identity. Against the backdrop of this complexity of poverty and social exclusion concepts, Thailand has developed a frame of social policy to eradicate poverty and social exclusion that aligns with SDGs.

### Measuring Poverty in Thailand

Because poverty is complex and complicated, measurement challenges are associated with quantifying it. According to Warr (2006), poverty in Thailand is quantified by household measures utilizing a single data source generated by the

National Statistical Office (NSO), known as the Social Economic Survey (SES), which is the final source for understanding poverty in Thailand. Furthermore, Warr recommends four aspects regarding poverty measurement that must be considered. First, many dimensions of poverty must be considered as they are interrelated. Second, a modern understanding of poverty is essential, as is examining the context of poverty. This means that new indicators of poverty must be added rather than using or replacing older indicators of poverty. Third, poverty assessments must avoid personal perceptions that vary from person to person and change over time. This information must be verified. Fourth, poverty estimates and outcomes are frequently politically influenced; statistical data obtained are generally from government personnel and may have been influenced by the government. Thankfully, Thailand has considered this, and Thailand's poverty estimation is uncertain. Nonetheless, assessing poverty is a time-consuming process that can be debated and allows for honest disputes. Despite the difficulties of poverty measurements and data analysis, there are several poverty agreements in Thailand (Warr, 2006) which are as follows:

- Absolute poverty in Thailand has declined over the last four decades.
- Poverty is concentrated in rural areas in northeastern and northern regions.
- Larger families are at risk of becoming poor.
- Peasants with small farms are also at risk of poverty.
- Low education of the head of the family will lead to poverty.

### Thailand Poverty Reduction Scenario

Thailand has seen significant improvements in poverty reduction and economic growth over the years (see Table 1). According to the World Bank's (2024) country profile data, the headcount index was 4.5 in 1994, declining to 3.1 in 1996 and 2.2 in 1998. Then again, it experienced a slight increase to 4 in 2000 due to the Asian economic crises, followed by a

subsequent decrease to 1.8 in 2002, 1.2 in 2004, and 0.9 in 2006. Between 2011 and 2014, the headcount ratio persisted steadily low at 0.1. Remarkably, the headcount ratio appears to have gone zero from 2014 onwards, with a slight increase detected in 2019, possibly attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic. Remarkably, the headcount ratio continued at zero in 2020. The data further signals a substantial decline in the number of people living in poverty, dropping from 4.5 million in 1994 to 0.1 million in 2020. Likewise, the GINI coefficient index decreased from 43.47 in 1994 to 34.86 in 2020. Simultaneously, the poverty gap demonstrated a stable reduction, declining from 7.3 in 1994 to zero in 2020.

The 2023 UNDP report indicates that among 110 countries surveyed, 650 million individuals, out of a total of 6.1 billion, live in monetary poverty, defined by an income of \$2.15 per day. Additionally, 1.1 billion people are experiencing multidimensional poverty, with over 80% of them residing in Sub-Saharan Africa (534 million) and South Asia (389 million). This underscores the necessity of considering poverty in a broader context beyond just income.

In the realm of poverty eradication efforts in ASEAN, Thailand emerges as a standout success, according to the UNDP 2023 report. Thailand achieved the most significant progress in reducing poverty within the region, as evidenced

by its MPI score of 0.002, the lowest among ASEAN nations. In comparison, Myanmar scored 0.176, Lao People's Democratic Republic score was 0.108 followed by Cambodia's score of 0.070. The score of the Philippines stood at 0.024, while Indonesia and Vietnam's scores, respectively, were 0.014 and 0.008. Over a span of seven years, from 2012 to 2019, Thailand effectively halved its number of individuals experiencing multidimensional poverty, decreasing its number from 961,000 to 412,000. This accomplishment positions Thailand among the 25 countries globally that achieved a 50% reduction in their multidimensional poverty index values within a 15-year timeframe. Factors contributing to this success include improvement in child mortality rates and enhanced access to fundamental infrastructure like sanitation, clean water, electricity, and housing.

The report further states that despite this progress, Thailand still faces challenges, with its incidence of multidimensional poverty exceeding that of monetary poverty by 0.5 percentage points. This suggests that even individuals above the monetary poverty threshold may still experience deficits in health, education, or living standards. Key areas of deprivation include access to education, particularly in terms of years of schooling, as well as access to adequate nutrition and cooking fuel.

**Table No 1: Poverty Line, Number of Poor, Head Count Index, Poverty Gap Index, and Severity of Poverty: 1994 – 2020**

	Poverty Line	The percentage of the population living in households with consumption or income per person below the poverty line in 2017 international prices.	HDR*	Poverty Gap	GINI (Inequality Trends)
	\$2.15	Millions	Index (%)	Index (%)	Poverty (%)
1994	2.15	4.5	4.5	7.3	43.47
1996	2.15	3.09	3.1	4.6	42.9
1998	2.15	2.18	2.2	5.1	41.46
2000	2.15	3.97	4.0	6.1	43.09
2002	2.15	1.76	1.8	4.1	42.83
2004	2.15	1.19	1.2	2.6	41.94
2006	2.15	0.93	0.9	2.0	42.54
2007	2.15	0.54	0.5	1.0	41.82
2008	2.15	0.3	0.3	0	39.76
2009	2.15	0.25	0.2	0	40.29
2010	2.15	0.27	0.3	0	39.6
2011	2.15	0.07	0.1	0	39.4
2012	2.15	0.12	0.1	0	37.46
2013	2.15	0.06	0.1	0	39.26
2014	2.15	0.06	0.1	0	37.85
2015	2.15	0.05	0	0	37.03
2016	2.15	0.04	0	0	35.99
2017	2.15	0.04	0	0	36.89
2018	2.15	0.03	0	0	36.38
2019	2.15	0.01	0.1	0	36.41
2020	2.15	0.01	0	0	34.86

Source: The author has produced the table from the World Bank (2024) data.

Note\* Head Count Ratio (% of the population)

### Thailand's Social Policies and National Development Plans for Poverty Reduction

After reviewing Thailand's poverty reduction policies, the government has adopted four main dimensions: opportunity, access, security, and community. War (2004) defines opportunity as the ability to actively participate in financial activities. Opportunity is indirectly related to poor income; as opportunity increases, so does the family's income, resulting in per-capita growth. Social policy defines security as a disadvantaged family's ability to sustain their well-being. In times of need, security provides

social insurance to low-income households. These four pillars have allowed Thailand to overcome poverty. To further assess Thailand's poverty eradication strategies, we must first grasp the country's growth ambitions.

### First and Second Economic Development Plan (1961 to 1971)

- 80% of the population resides in rural areas.
- Agriculture was a dominant occupation for bread earning, thus creating inter-dependency and reliance.



- Thailand exported rice, rubber, and timber.
- Thailand experienced political instability in the same decade due to the battle between capitalism and communism, which threatened national progress.
- Because Thai people needed necessities, national security and financial stability were prioritised.
- The single aim of the first and second economic development plans was to enhance economic growth.
- The plan focused on constructing road networks, dams, ports, and power stations. This infrastructure connected the people of Thailand, resulting in the growth of business transportation and covering the remote areas of Thailand.
- In this era, the plan identified basic social services, community facilities, social welfare, public health, and education as important aspects of development.
- This development plan lacked the people's engagement because they played a minor role in the planning, yet it significantly impacted the stakeholders connected to the development scenario.

### **Third and Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972 to 1981)**

- The third and fourth plans focused on economic growth and stability, whereas this was the first national development plan which emphasised social justice and equitable distribution of income and resources. This resulted from the past development plan, as it created an unequal distribution of resources and a lack of people's participation.
- The third and fourth plans aimed to reduce economic and social disparity by stabilising public institutions. The plans also aimed to increase employability and expand social services.
- The plan focused on education by providing school and health facilities to

maintain quality and quantity. This resulted in access to quality education and healthcare programmes by poor people.

- The plan focused on reducing population growth to lessen the burden on the government and on poor families, which resulted in a better quality of life. The plan adopted "Health for All," which enhanced people's participation in community sustainable development. Primary health care was given priority. It became the flagship healthcare programme.
- This plan also emphasised improving the nutritional status of children of 0-05 years of age.
- Social service share increased due to public spending. The nation's budget allotted 25% to education and health. This period was also regarded as a politically tumultuous period for democracy.
- Because of the 1973 oil price crisis, the government implemented a direct income transfer policy and established jobs in rural areas to eliminate poverty.

### **Fifth and Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982 to 1991)**

- Thailand was experiencing oil price difficulties throughout this period of the plan.
- The poverty rate was relatively high at about 20.6% of the total population in 1981.
- Lack of education, poor health, poor sanitary conditions, and malnourishment were the problems.
- Thus, the development plan emphasised more on restoration and rebuilding of Thailand through economic distribution.
- The fifth national development plan employed programme tactics to eradicate poverty and develop backward areas.

- The country also experienced an economic boom in this era as foreign direct investments increased.
- Due to the proper implementation of programmes, the country's economic reserves increased.

### **Seventh and Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992 to 2001)**

- 1990 was the globalisation era. So, Thailand was too modernised and faced hasty socioeconomic shifts, and competition increased in the global market.
- The country was facing new social problems like AIDS and drug abuse. Also, there were changes in the country's age strata, shifting disease patterns, increased labour forces, gender quality, and women's participation.
- Due to these elements, the seventh plan aimed to preserve economic progress, improve quality of life, and promote decentralised and participatory development.
- The Plan concentrated on secondary education and training systems to be more sophisticated and produce skilled labour forces in response to global labour market demand.
- The development strategy shifted to a more holistic approach, emphasizing public-private partnerships and putting people at the centre of the process.

Thailand's development strategy has switched to a more holistic approach from the start, and Thailand's development planning has begun to consider the role of people, society, environment, and institutions in attaining sustainable development.

### **Social Protection Policies Influencing Poverty Eradication in Thailand**

Social protection is important in fighting poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Social protection is the response of the government to tackle poverty, risk, and deprivation vulnerability

(Barrientos and Hulme, 2008). Social protection can be achieved by policies focusing on education, employability, health care, and economic opportunity. Thailand's social protection schemes focus on preventing and overcoming measures that create disparities and problems in the lives of individuals, groups, and communities' well-being. It aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting a skilled labour force, managing risk, and overcoming unemployment, social exclusion, disability problems, sickness, and problems of senior citizens. These social protection programmes focus on the economic growth of an individual and society and society's overall well-being. The Social Security fund covers a non-agricultural employee who is unemployed, and it benefits health coverage, child allowance, maternity, old age, unemployment, and disability benefits. A Provident fund provides long-term savings and income security to an employee of the government. The Government Pension Fund (GPF) provides government officials with long-term financial stability. All individuals who are not eligible for other health programmes are provided with facilities for patient treatment, maternity, childbirth, and emergency care under Universal Health Care Coverage. The Universal Health Care scheme provides in-kind assistance, skill development training, cash assistance, and scholarships to children, disadvantaged women, elderly people, low-income families, ethnic minorities, and victims of disaster, children living with HIV or AIDS.

### **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 and Policies on Poverty in Thailand**

The administration of Thailand worked hard to ensure that no one was left behind in the fight against poverty. According to Patcharanarumol et al. (2018), the Thai government developed policies to support the cost of living, pushing compulsory schooling and energy credit cards. The government also boosted employment, increased income, and produced income stability by deploying the 300-Baht minimum wage policy and the 1500-Baht compensation for bachelor graduates. In addition, the government raised agricultural product prices.

The administration has also extended the number of vocational training institutions nationwide. The Thai Women's Fund and the Business Fund Program were established to give rural areas access to funding to develop jobs. People with disabilities and senior persons received increased allowances, and social security coverage was expanded to include the informal sector. Policies to eradicate poverty and create social inclusion in Thailand include the direct cash transfer policy, which offers direct cash transfers to impoverished needy families and revolving funds to provide emergency support to the poor. This is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's public welfare department. Approximately 21000 families, or roughly 3% of Thai households, received 14.5 million Baht via direct cash transfer (World Bank, 1996). According to NESDC report 2023, the Thai economy in 2023 was projected to expand in the range of 2.7 - 3.7 %, mainly supported by (i) the recovery of the tourism sector, (ii) the expansion in both private and public investments, (iii) the continual expansion of private consumption, and (iv) the favourable growth of the agricultural sector. Private consumption expenditure and private and public investments were expected to increase by 3.2%, 2.1%, and 2.7%, respectively. The export value of goods in US dollar terms was anticipated to decline by 1.6% t. Headline inflation was estimated to be in the range of 2.5 - 3.5%, and the current account was projected to record a surplus of 1.5% of the GDP.

Income-generating programmes such as the poverty alleviation programme provide low-interest loans to the impoverished for them to engage in income-generating activities. Within the community, households earning less than 5000 Bahts are eligible for these income-generating programmes. The World Bank (2020) reports that since 1996, income-generating programmes have operated in 700 villages. The Tambon development programme by the Prime Minister's office is one of Thailand's major projects that succeeded the job creation programmes from 1980 to 1992. This programme increased rural employability by offering non-reason farm work to people

experiencing poverty by constructing infrastructure such as water supplies, roads, and irrigation facilities. The Tambon development programme allocated 5 million Baht for construction activities, with the goal of rural development. which also aimed at rural development (World Bank, 1996).

According to Busbarat (2018), the Thai government implemented a State Social Welfare system aimed at low-income individuals, who were divided into two groups: those with lower incomes and those with higher incomes. Cash cards of 300 to 200 Baht per month are available to persons with an annual income of 30,000 Baht and those with an income between 30,000 and 100,000 Baht. This card also includes a 500 Baht allowance for the Bangkok public transportation system, 500 Baht for temporary buses, 500 Baht for trains, and 45 Baht for cooking gas. The Ministry of Finance is considering increasing the household stipend to 500 Baht. Overall, the Government of Thailand announced several economic stimulus initiatives to help strengthen the economy and assist the disadvantaged. Sresunt (2011) has provided the following history of poverty reduction programmes in Thailand:

- 1975 Revolving Loan Fund: During the dry season, people worked so that they might make money. The program's name was changed to the Rural Employment Programme. This programme-built infrastructure and created jobs in villages during the dry season. The Rural Development Programme was created to eliminate poverty and improve local management.
- The Rural Development Fund was established in 1984 to give low-interest loans to farmers and their groups.
- Urban Poverty Development Programme 1992: This programme helped low-income residents in slums through the provision of finance to help them support their livelihoods and earn money.

- Poverty Alleviation Programme 1993: In the chosen villages, this programme provided training and professional development to improve employability and quality of life.
- The 1998 Social Investment Programme assessed people affected by economic crises, particularly the unemployed, impoverished, and disadvantaged, by giving job possibilities.
- During a crisis in 1999, a programme was implemented to strengthen urban poverty alleviation. This initiative aims to alleviate the poor' economic and social difficulties by offering professional and entrepreneurial development and constructing local infrastructure.
- This program aimed to tackle financial and credit crises affecting urban poverty. It supported urban poor communities in establishing savings groups, cooperatives, and professional associations circa 2000.
- In 2001, a million Baht was granted to each village fund and urban community fund as a source of finance for professional growth, job creation, and income stability.
- Three-Year Debt Moratorium and Debt Servicing Reduction for Small-Scale Farmers Initiative of 2002: This programme assisted farmers in resolving their debt and poverty issues.
- People's Bank Program of 2002: Low-interest capital was supplied to help small businesses.

As disadvantaged people used these services to eliminate poverty and improve their quality of life, the poverty alleviation initiative changed the definition of poverty. The policy had a positive impact on the economy and long-term development. The policy's implementation aided not only economic growth but also social inclusiveness. Thailand has made strides

towards poverty abolition. SDG Goal 1 in Thailand demonstrates that the country is on its path to reducing poverty by collaborating with the public, government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the corporate sector. However, the country's recent increase in poverty is due to an economic downturn and a drop-in GDP growth rate of 2.7%. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic is also one of the causes of further increasing poverty. Thailand must designate vulnerable sections to boost wages, catch up with progress, and eliminate poverty. In the future, the major concerns will be good quality of life, education, employability, access to resources, livelihood, social security, job chances, and social inclusion.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

The article has conducted an analysis of the social policies that aim to alleviate poverty, as well as their integration with SDG 1 and efforts to achieve social inclusion. Both Thai nationals and non-nationals are eligible for the country's various programmes designed to alleviate poverty, provide social safety and welfare, and promote overall social welfare. Despite this, the country quickly began to experience difficulties and obstacles in its efforts to keep up with the rate of progress brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. However, it appears that Thailand's exceptionally high level of resilience enabled the country to rebound from the crisis and build marvels. In conclusion, this study indicates that the Government of Thailand should encourage and decentralise the management of social policy at the local level to allow people to engage actively. Because people living in remote and rural areas have deep relationships with their local authorities, it is essential that these individuals be included in the process of planning and decision-making to achieve the objectives of sustainable development.

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### **Ethical Approval**

I declare that the manuscript has been prepared in accordance with the protocols of the Helsinki Declaration. Additionally, I declare that there are no financial or non-financial conflicts related to the manuscript submitted to the Journal *Space and Culture, India*.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. The author has reviewed and agrees with the manuscript's contents, and there is no financial interest to disclose. The author certifies that the submission is original work and is not currently under review by any other publication.

### **Author Contribution Statement**

Dr Mahesh Chougule is the sole author of this article. He was instrumental in the conceptualisation and research design of the study, as well as in the analysis and interpretation of secondary data. Dr. Chougule made significant contributions to the article by conducting a systematic review and implementing insightful revisions, enhancing the overall coherence and clarity of the manuscript.

### **Informed Consent**

As the study is based on secondary data, obtaining consent from participants is not applicable. References have been appropriately cited for all secondary data sources.

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### **Data Availability Statement**

The data supporting this study's findings are derived from publicly available secondary sources. Specifically, the datasets utilised in our research were obtained from the United Nations Conference on Poverty and Sustainable Development and the World Bank database. Additionally, the JSTOR database was used for the systematic review process.

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Dr Mahesh Chougule earned his PhD from Shivaji University, Kolhapur, India. He is a Social Policy and Development Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand. He teaches and conducts research in Social Policy and Development, ASEAN and Social Welfare Policies, and Comparative Welfare States. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Social Policy, Social Change and Development (ThaiJo). Dr Chougule has published 20 research papers in peer-reviewed journals, 8 in conference proceedings, and 3 books. He has also participated in and presented 20 papers at international and national conferences and seminars. Furthermore, he has served as a project investigator on two international projects in ASEAN and Taiwan.