JOPAG
JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Journal of Politics and Governance
16(2), May – August 2026

Social Policy for Addressing Climate Change: A Multidimensional Perspective on Social Well-being and Impacting Service Industry

Sanhakot Vithayaporn[1] *

[1] Faculty of Business and Technology, Stamford International University, Thailand.
* Current Workplace at Graduate School of Environmental Development Administration (GSEDA) National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand,
© Authors

Article history:

Received: May 3, 2025

Revised Date: July 18, 2025

Accepted Date: July 21, 2025

Keywords:

Climate Change, Social Policy, Social Well-Being, Social Problems, Service Industry

Abstract

In this study, the roles that social policy plays in the mitigation of the negative effects resulting from climate change on social well-being, with a specific focus on Thailand within a broader global context, were examined. Assessment of the ways that social policies can address climate-related damage, make communities stronger and more resilient, and increase the level of equity among affected populations is the primary aim. Employing a systematic literature review, this study synthesizes findings from both Thai and international case studies, with a particular focus on regions that have experienced significant climate-induced disasters. These cases reveal heightened social vulnerabilities—such as displacement, poverty, and diminished well-being—resulting from events such as floods, droughts, and storms. In consideration of these challenges, the implementation of social policies that are endorsed by national health assemblies, with an emphasis on both area-based and issue-based approaches to the improvement of social well-being, are examined. According to the findings, there is a critical need for adaptive policy frameworks that are grounded locally and equity-driven and combine disaster response, social protection programs, and long-term planning for resilience. Moreover, the findings of this study can provide beneficial insights into how effective such policies are in providing both immediate recovery and sustainable development within the context of climate change.

Introduction

Long-term changes in the Earth's climate system, for example in temperature, precipitation, and wind patterns, are increasingly accelerated by human activities, in particular, during this period following the Industrial Revolution (Iamtrakul & Chayphong, 2023). Although changes in climate can occur naturally, the current accelerated pace of change represents one of the most important challenges of our time. Therefore, a transformation in public policies in order to foster sustainable development is required. Due to the rising sea

 © Authors

levels, extreme weather events, and global warming, climate change disrupts ecosystems, worsens social vulnerabilities, and causes negative impacts on human well-being and social cohesion. Thus, it is necessary to develop forward-thinking policies in order to respond (Johnson et al., 2020).

The adverse effects of climate change, such as the greenhouse effect, rising temperatures, and increasing sea levels, are now leading to more frequent natural disasters and an increase in global concerns (Hung, 2024). Thus, the need for effective public policy responses is growing, and consequently there must be a shift from reactive responses to proactive strategies in order to promote environmental conservation and the resilience of society (Iamtrakul & Chayphong, 2023). The Paris Agreement Commission represents a global commitment to adapt to the challenges of climate change, but translating an international treaty into practical policies is a complex task (Jakob & Steckel, 2014; Rahman et al., 2023). In urban areas, which are especially vulnerable to climate change, there is a need for targeted policies for sustainable development (Ober & Sakdapolrak, 2020). Thus, this study explores the ways in which contemporary policies can be effectively implemented in order to facilitate climate change adaptation.

As a result of climate change, the Earth's systems are being disrupted, with natural factors such as volcanic eruptions and solar radiation variations contributing to human activities such as industrial emissions and deforestation. Rojpratak and Supharatid (2022) stated that social stability and human well-being are undermined by these changes. Social well-being encompasses our quality of life, access to resources, equity, and community harmony, all of which are threatened by climate change. Effective social policies are therefore crucial to the mitigation of these impacts. This study draws on the theories of environmental justice, resilience, social capital, and collective action to argue that current policies must prioritize the adaptation of vulnerable communities to climate change (Siriporananon & Visuthismajarn, 2018).

Case studies from Thailand, involving flood management and agricultural adaptation initiatives, provide insights into the social policies implemented in developing countries (Thailand Environment Institute, 2017). At the international level, countries such as the Netherlands and the UK can offer models for the management of climate change and the integration of resilience into policies (Satchatham & Dokho, 2024). In Thailand, a vital role in addressing social and human well-being is played by the National Health Assembly, which creates mechanisms to implement policies aimed at resolving social problems (National Health Commission Office of Thailand [NHCO], 2025). Therefore, this study examines the approaches that social policies can apply in order to mitigate the damaging effects of climate change on social well-being and to strengthen resilience and equity, with a focus on both the global situation and that occurring in Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, a systematic review of the literature that adheres to the methods of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was employed for a thorough synthesis of the findings of previous research. Thus, the establishment of a rigorous theoretical framework was conducted as an essential foundation for the achievement of the objectives of this study and the summary of its conclusions.

Critically, the construction of this theoretical framework was based on four major theoretical perspectives: environmental justice, resilience, social capital, and collective action. For a comprehensive understanding of climate change adaptation, particularly with regard to vulnerable communities and the development of effective policy implementations, employment of this type of integrated approach is considered to be optimal.

 © Authors

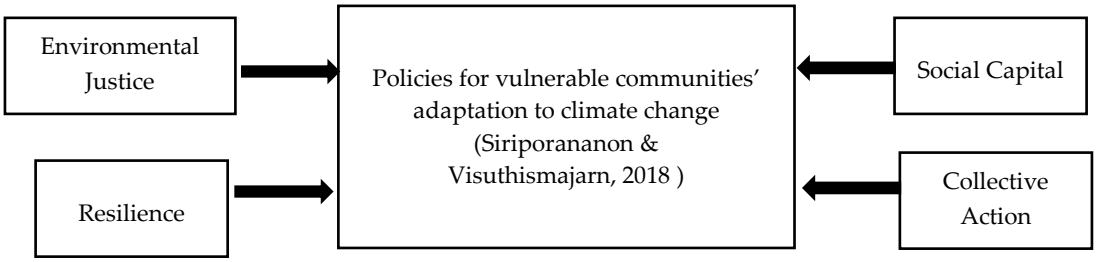
Key Theoretical Perspectives

- According to Figueroa (2022), the topic of environmental justice has become prominent throughout a wide range of academic disciplines due to the significant expansion of its scope and conceptualization over recent decades. The occurrence of this evolution included three main phases. First, the earliest studies that examined environmental justice expanded the boundaries of the field by questioning the conventional definitions of 'environment,' and through the exploration of injustice beyond mere inequality, which lead to a broader interpretation of social justice. More recently, the concept has been extended across a more expansive range of issues by considering global-scale injustices and a deeper conceptual scope so as to include the relationships between humans and the non-human world.
- Resilience theory originated from research conducted on the subject of adversity, particularly with regard to the ways that the challenging life experiences that we experience can have negative effects on individuals. Olsson et al. (2015) described this perspective as 'pathogenic,' with an emphasis on the causes of illness or, within the field of social work, the deterioration of social functioning and well-being, and argued that this focus has long been dominant in both the social and medical sciences. The research on resilience of one notable scholar, Emmy Werner, evolved from her examination of vulnerability to the conducting of extensive longitudinal studies lasting over several decades on children who were raised among adverse social environments (Van Breda, 2018; Olsson et al., 2015).
- Social capital theory is focused on the norms of reciprocity and active participation occurring within communities that are commonly viewed as a grassroots mechanism for worldwide alleviation of poverty. Moreover, the World Bank has stated that social capital is essential for sustainable development and is an important asset for those at the lowest economic levels of society (Portes, 2024).
- Collective action and social norms are considered to have a significant influence on individuals' health and risk-related behaviors. The previous research conducted in this field has primarily been focused on the social norms that individuals are exposed to within their daily social contexts, such as their immediate peer groups (Barcina Lacosta et al., 2025; Weldon et al., 2024).

Subsequently, the creation of the theoretical framework of this study involved the integration of these four key perspectives.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



Source: Developed by the author

 © Authors

Review Methods and Resources

In this study, a systematic literature review approach was used to provide a rigorous framework for an evaluation of the existing research (Benita, 2021). After the research theme for the exploration of the literature was finalized, the search process using various academic databases, including Web of Science, Google Scholar, Scopus, and the Thai Citation Index (TCI), was conducted in order to identify and retrieve the relevant articles, primarily research articles, peer-reviewed journal publications, and reports from well-known organizations.

Multiple keywords, for example "Climate Change," "Mitigation, Social Well-being, and Adaptation of Social Policy," and "Impacts of Climate Change in Domestic and International Contexts" were used, which provided a substantial amount of literature. Next, the PRISMA guidelines on conducting a systematic literature review were followed in order to systematically organize the results using keyword categorization and full -text analysis. In order to accurately identify the relevant literature, this process was divided into three key stages.

1. Initially, the screening was conducted from a dataset of 50 relevant sources consisting solely of articles extracted from well-reputed journals, from which conference papers, book chapters, and dissertations were excluded. Subsequently, 15 articles that were found to be duplicated or otherwise ineligible were removed, resulting in a total of 35 articles available for further evaluation.

2. In the second stage, the eligibility assessment for the relevance of the remaining articles was conducted through the abstracts and full texts to ensure content rigorousness. Their relevance to the topic under study was used to determine their eligibility.

3. Finally, in the inclusion phase, all of the selection, consisting of inclusion, exclusion and eligibility, were considered. Consequently, a final dataset totaling 20 relevant studies that were identified as highly relevant was compiled for further in-depth analysis. Moreover, five additional studies were obtained based on expert recommendation, and thus, there was an increase in the total number of articles analyzed to 25. Through this systematic selection process, it was ensured that the final dataset comprised high-quality, relevant, and methodologically sound research studies, thereby establishing a solid foundation for the subsequent synthesis and analysis.

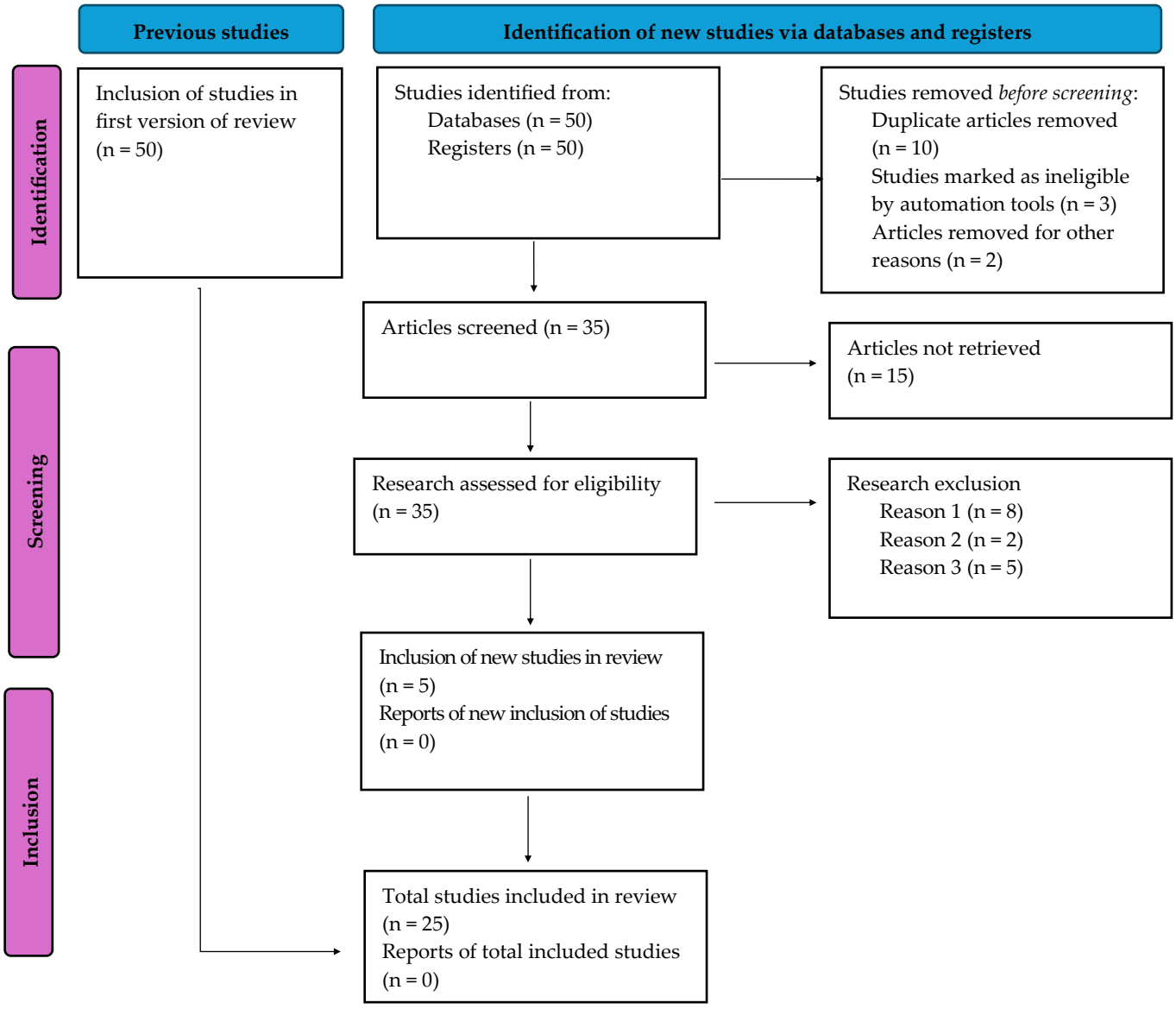
Impacts on Social Well-being Caused by Climate Changes in Domestic and International Contexts

By addressing the intersection of environmental and social issues with significant academic and policy relevance, an understanding of social well-being in the context of climate change can be provided. Social well-being is related to the quality of life, which comprises physical and mental health, social cohesion, economic stability, and access to resources and opportunities. Meanwhile, social inequality is exacerbated, and communities, livelihoods, and mental health are disrupted by climate change. Therefore, climate-driven factors such as extreme weather events can have severe impacts on food insecurity and displacement (Bandh et al., 2021). As a result, due to its disruption of the environment, the economy, and society, climate change also strongly impacts social well-being (Chirico, 2021). These effects can manifest in various forms, such as loss of livelihood, health risks, and deepened inequalities.

© Authors

Figure 2

PRISMA Diagram of Searching

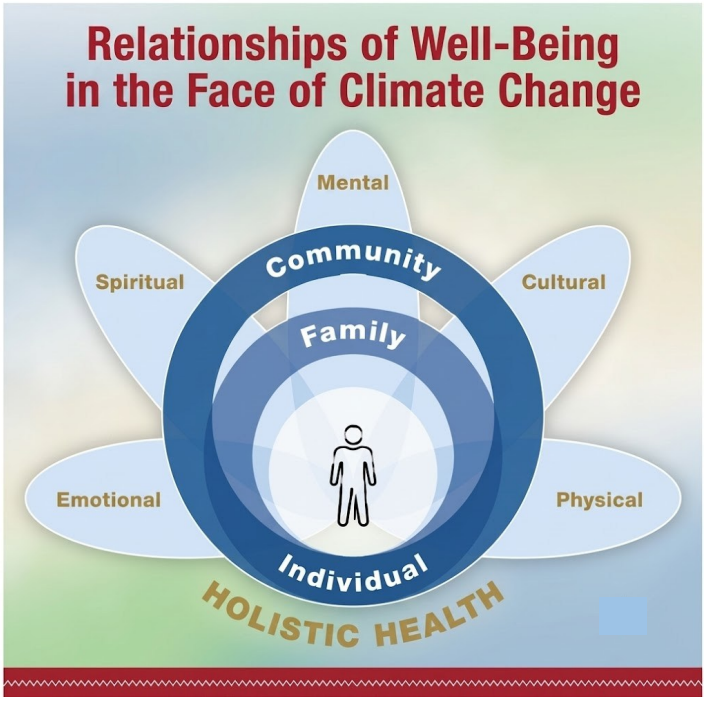


Source: Page MJ et al. (2021

© Authors

Figure 3

Areas of impact of climate changes on human and social well-being



As seen in Figure 3, the relationships between the various aspects of well-being in the phenomena of climate change are interlinked, and thus, the relationships between climate change and social well-being are particularly critical from both the domestic and international perspectives. Human life is reliant upon the resources of the Earth, so when major changes result from environmental impacts on social and human well-being at the individual, family, and community levels, there are negative effects on both physical and mental health. Furthermore, climate change also poses significant threats to social well-being at the global level, ranging from loss of homes and livelihoods to an increase in widespread risks to health and the fragmenting of society. In both international and domestic contexts, vulnerable groups, such as low-income populations, rural farmers, indigenous communities, and the elderly, disproportionately suffer from these consequences of climate change.

Internationally, case studies from the Philippines, Bangladesh, and the Pacific Island Nations highlight the ways in which health systems can be disrupted, communities displaced, and social cohesion eroded by the effects of typhoons, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events. The prevalence of inadequate infrastructure, weak social protection systems, and limited access to health care and education often compounds these negative impacts.

Domestically, a wide range of climate-related crises have been experienced in Thailand, from drought in the northeast Isan region to heatwaves in Bangkok, and coastal erosion in the Gulf of Thailand. Household incomes, access to basic services, community mental health, and intergenerational stability have been directly impacted by these events. Pressing social challenges, including rural -urban migration, loss of traditional livelihoods, and growing health disparities are among the long-term results of these crises.

© Authors

In order to mitigate these multidimensional effects of climate change, Thailand's climate response strategies have increasingly been integrated with concerns regarding social well-being and health equity. This policy adjustment has most notably been accomplished by the National Health Assembly (NHA), which advocates participatory public policy development and places significant emphasis on the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach.

This policy framework combines three approaches that are interlinked as follows.

1) The Area-Based Approach is a strategy that prioritizes local participation and place-specific solutions, based on the recognition that there are significant regional variations in the impacts of climate change. For example, in the drought-prone Isan provinces communities are engaged in NHA -facilitated dialogues for the co-creation of localized policies that are specifically tailored for agricultural communities, including water management plans, models for climate-resilient farming models, and programs that support mental health.

2) The Issue-based Approach is applied when critical cross-cutting issues, including air pollution, food security, and health risks are identified by the NHA, which then mobilizes a variety of cross-sector stakeholders to collaborate on the creation of comprehensive policies that can address these specific challenges. For example, the rising temperatures in Bangkok and the city's persistent issues regarding air quality have been addressed using the Issue-based Approach, which strategically links the sectors of urban planning, public health, and environmental management with an specific emphasis on providing protection to vulnerable populations in urban areas. The NHA's integrated approach provides a link between the community, provincial and national levels, and in this way, effectively aligns the agendas regarding the environment, society, and public health. Development of policies has been conducted in order to integrate reduction of disaster risk, increase the preparedness of the public health system, and plan for sustainable tourism in areas that face specific challenges, for example the coastal erosion that occurs in Southern Thailand. This integration and collaboration ensures that the measures that address climate adaptation equally support both the preservation of the ecosystem and the well-being of human populations.

3) The Integrated Approach is used when the area- and issue-based strategies are combined with an aim to address the multiple dimensions of social well-being, such as coastal communities, where there are threats from climate change to both livelihoods and social cohesion. Integrated approaches can also blend strategies for livelihood diversification with those that provide assistance with mental health and communities rebuilding. For example, policies involving community-led relocation programs that provide training and create livelihoods and social spaces for displaced populations can be implemented. In this way, comprehensive responses to the broad range of negative effects resulting from climate change can be ensured.

In both the global and country-level contexts, a holistic perspective on social well-being is required for an effective climate policy. Thailand's NHA model provides a valuable example of the ways that participatory governance, when rooted in local realities and strengthened by cross-sector integration, can facilitate responses to the impacts of climate change on society that are more equitable and resilient.

Case Studies of Social Well-being Affected by Climate Change in Thailand

Significant risks to Thailand are still present due to the shifting patterns of precipitation, rising temperatures, and extreme weather events that endanger both ecosystems and communities (Rojpratak & Supharatid, 2022). However, the impacts of these events are not felt equally across the various segments of the population. Women,

 © Authors

particularly those living in rural areas, are disproportionately burdened as a result of the "feminization of agriculture," which is caused by the out-migration of male labor. With the growing number of households headed by females, the vulnerability of women with regard to extreme weather events increases as it means that they can experience a lack of alternative sources of income (UNESCAP, 2022).

Agriculture, accounting for 55% of the land area in Thailand, is significantly impacted by climate change as disruptions in rainfall put the livelihoods of farmers at risk. For example, in Northern Thailand's Mekong River region, a 30% loss in rural GDP was caused by climate change in 2018 (Amnuaylojaroen et al., 2022). From 1995 to 2009, there was an increase in average temperatures of 0.95 °C and significant fluctuations in rainfall patterns. Severe flooding in 2011 and droughts during 2015–2016 additionally exacerbated these threats. Thus, it is increasingly being recognized that climate change has become a major challenge to social well-being, especially in communities that are already vulnerable.

In Thailand, the social well-being of numerous communities, particularly those engaged in agriculture, farming, and cultivation and located nearby the natural resources on which their economies depend, are steadily more severely affected by climate change, and the impacts, which range from urban heatwaves to severe rural droughts, are strongly affecting numerous social sectors across the country. The significant case studies that follow illustrate these effects.

Case Study 1: Extensive Drought in the northeast Isan Region

Prolonged drought has profound effects on agricultural communities in the Isan region of Thailand as they rely on regular seasonal rainfall. Thus, the farmers located in this area face major challenges such as crop failures, significant loss of income, and accumulation of debt, which are directly linked to increased food insecurity and elevated psychological stress. Furthermore, the resulting out-migration of young workers in search of employment opportunities in urban centers has reduced the strength of traditional family structures, forcing the older generations to live independently and causing issues such as rural depopulation and social isolation to worsen.

Social Policy Response: In response, emergency transfers of funds and distribution of water provide immediate but short-term relief. Additionally, long-term plans involving the implementation of small-scale systems for irrigation and promotion of crop varieties that are resistant to drought aim to increase these communities' ability to adapt to climatic changes.

Case Study 2: Bangkok's Urban Inequality and Heatwaves

In Bangkok, risks to health have been intensified by rising temperatures, an occurrence that disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, primarily the elderly, outdoor laborers, and low-income residents who live in poorly ventilated housing. This social inequality is further exacerbated by the urban heat island phenomenon, as the vulnerable segments of society suffer due to the inequitable access to adequate cooling infrastructure throughout the city.

Social Policy Response: As a response to these problems, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) launched campaigns to increase public awareness and implemented temporary cooling facilities in vulnerable neighborhoods. Additionally, pilot programs to evaluate the efficiency of green urban planning strategies and initiatives for extensive planting of trees in order to alleviate exposure to urban heat were conducted.

© Authors

Case Study 3: Rapid Decline of Tourism Among Thailand's Southern Islands (2020–2021)

The simultaneous occurrence of events related to both climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic during the years 2020 and 2021 caused international tourists arrivals to almost completely drop, which resulted in severe economic problems among the southern islands of Thailand, particularly Phuket, Koh Phi Phi, and Koh Lipe, a downturn that led to the widespread closure of small business, a sudden rise in unemployment, and numerous informal workers being left without sufficient social protection, all of which significantly undermine household well-being.

Social Policy Response: The government's response was to implement stimulus packages offering travel subsidies intended to support domestic tourism. In additional, programs for local employment with an emphasis on environmental conservation and public health initiatives were launched in order to provide affected populations with alternative work opportunities.

Case Study 4: Erosion of the Coastline in the Gulf of Thailand

In the provinces located along the Gulf of Thailand, such as Samut Songkhram and Chachoengsao, shoreline retreat has recently accelerated due to the rising of sea levels and extensive deforestation of mangrove areas. This environmental degradation, particularly the loss of fisheries and land, has directly resulted in threats to both the local economy and the long-standing cultural traditions that are intrinsically linked to coastal ways of life.

Social Policy Response: These challenges were addressed through the mangrove reforestation conducted by the communities and the active assistance of partnerships between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which promoted eco-tourism programs for income generation and social empowerment for the affected communities. In this way, the efforts toward social relief were effectively combined with the steps for environmental recovery that were provided by these initiatives.

The perspective that views the impacts of climate change in Thailand as extending beyond the effects on the environment, and including the occurrence of major social challenges and economic problems related to adaptation that directly impact the well-being of communities, is demonstrated by these case studies. Thus, in order to be sufficiently effective, it is necessary that policy responses must be inclusive and develop forms of engagement that are community-based so that the social well-being of vulnerable populations can be sustainably maintained. As a result of its geographical characteristics, Thailand is currently at high risk from a range of hazardous climate-induced events, such as flooding, drought, coastal erosion and heatwaves. As shown in Table 1, these are the major climate-related disasters that have significantly profound environmental and social impacts on the well-being of Thai people nationwide.

Table 1

Severe disasters caused by climate change impacting social well-being in Thailand

Threats caused by climate change	Social well-being impacts	Social policies implementation
Drought and Water Scarcity in the Northeast (2019–2020)	Thailand's northeastern region, reliant on agriculture, faced severe drought in 2019–2020, reducing crop yields, threatening livelihoods, and worsening poverty. Water shortages affected farming and daily use, prompting migration to cities for work.	Response of the Government - Assisting Farming Families Financially:

 © Authors

Threats caused by climate change	Social well-being impacts	Social policies implementation
		By acting through the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), the Thai government introduced an emergency financial assistance program that was specifically intended to support smallholder farmers. This initiative was designed to assist with household income, including direct cash transfers and low-interest loans, in order maintain basic living standards and reduce the amount of migration resulting from financial stress. Focus on Social Well-being: The aim of this policy intervention was to alleviate immediate difficulties, maintain the stability of communities, and ensure food security. By providing affected farming families with the capability to fulfil their basic needs in spite of major crop losses, the program made direct contributions to the improvement of the social well-being of these communities.
Heatwaves and Rising Temperatures in Bangkok	Bangkok currently faces more frequent heatwaves due to global warming, with urbanization intensifying the heat island effect. During the hot season, temperatures often exceed 40 °C (104 °F), worsening public health risks. Extreme heat particularly affects the elderly, children, and outdoor workers, increasing cases of heatstroke and dehydration. Air pollution worsens respiratory issues, while the healthcare system struggles with rising demand. In addition, many low-income individuals face economic hardship due to limited access to medical care.	Government Response: Urban Heatwave Mitigation In collaboration with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Ministry of Public Health, temporary cooling centers were established in various public buildings, including community halls, temples, and libraries. Concurrently, heat health alert systems were rolled out to provide early warnings and public advisories during periods of intense heatwaves.

© Authors

Threats caused by climate change	Social well-being impacts	Social policies implementation
		Social Well-being Focus: This policy intervention directly promotes the well-being of urban residents by mitigating heat-related illnesses, enhancing public awareness regarding heat risks, and ensuring equitable access to safe and cool public spaces during extreme temperature events.
Impact on Tourism on Thailand's Islands (2020–2021)	Thailand's tourism industry faces severe climate challenges, including extreme weather, rising sea levels, and coral bleaching in key destinations. Environmental damage threatens biodiversity, tourism-dependent communities, and jobs in hospitality and fishing. The COVID-19 pandemic further reduced international arrivals.	Response of the Government: Travel Subsidies for Tourists When responding to this crisis, the Thai government, launched comprehensive recovery initiatives via the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. These domestic tourism stimulus packages included the "We Travel Together" promotion that provided Thai citizens with subsidies for travel costs, thereby actively encouraging domestic tourists to visit the affected islands, for example Koh Samui, Koh Phi Phi and Phuket. Furthermore, there were schemes that alleviated community unemployment. by generating temporary jobs for displaced tourism workers in the fields of environmental conservation and public health. Social Well-being Focus: The objective of this policy intervention was specifically the sustainment of the local economies, prevention of poverty stemming from unemployment, and the preservation of community cohesion. Through the offer of alternative sources of income and stimulation of local demand during a severe decline in tourism, affected communities received direct contributions to their social well-being from these initiatives.

 © Authors

Global Case Studies of Social Well-being Affected by Climate Change

Internationally, the impact of climate change on social well-being varies by region but shares common trends of disruption to livelihoods, health, and societal cohesion (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2024).

International case studies: climate impacts and social policy responses

Several international case studies have further illuminated the multifaceted issues surrounding the social impacts of climate change and the efficacy of targeted social policies. In the Philippines, a nation that is highly susceptible to typhoons, climate change significantly exacerbates social vulnerability. For instance, Typhoon Haiyan (2013) caused extensive destruction, displacing millions and leading to prolonged social instability, with affected communities facing severe challenges in rebuilding their lives due to the loss of livelihoods, homes, and essential services, compounded by long-term psychological distress and social disintegration (Vergunst & Berry, 2022). In response, the Philippine government and NGOs implemented community-based disaster risk-reduction (CBDRR) programs, empowering local communities in risk mapping, emergency planning, and livelihood restoration, thereby enhancing both preparedness and social resilience.

Similarly, Bangladesh faces substantial threats from rising sea levels and flooding in coastal areas, which erode livelihoods and intensify poverty owing to its large agricultural and fishing-dependent population. This leads to declines in food production, widespread food insecurity, and increased migration to already crowded urban centers, fostering social fragmentation. To counteract this, the Bangladeshi government, supported by international partners, launched climate-resilient livelihood programs, including climate-adaptive farming initiatives and cash-for-work schemes, enabling vulnerable households to sustain income and food security despite the environmental shocks.

Finally, Pacific Island Nations like Fiji and Tuvalu are severely affected by rising sea levels and extreme weather, causing the displacement of entire communities and the erosion of cultural identity linked to ancestral lands. In Fiji, Planned Relocation Guidelines were developed to ensure that displaced communities are resettled with dignity, thereby preserving cultural practices, land rights, and vital social ties that help to maintain their collective identity and well-being. These cases collectively demonstrate that social policy interventions have proven highly effective in mitigating the profound impact of climate change on the well-being of vulnerable groups in various countries worldwide.

Addressing Social Policy in the Context of Developing Countries

Currently, climate change resilience is cultivated as a response to the numerous natural disasters affecting the world's population. The Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) is an Asian network project that receives support from the Rockefeller Foundation and was established with the aim of helping people in areas affected by climate change cope with these impacts. As a project that assists and supports many large Asian cities to plan, prepare for, and cope with disasters caused by climate change, ACCCRN implements collaboration for the planning, preparation, and dealing with such disasters, including associates and members from the various sectors of each country through the Office of the Public Sector Development Committee. In response to the effects of climate change in major urban areas with large populations, namely the largest cities in Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Vietnam, which can cause severe loss of assets and human lives, the focus of ACCCRN has been on enhancing resilience to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable

 © Authors

populations by fostering partnerships and teamwork. Moreover, there are plans for the network to expand its coalition in order to increase climate change resilience throughout the various regions of Asia.

In countries such as India and Bangladesh, similar social policies have been implemented through the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), focusing on improving maternal and child health, nutrition, and healthcare infrastructure in rural areas. These programs combine direct support (health care, food, and nutrition) with community involvement and education in order to create lasting improvements. In developing countries, addressing social policy often requires a holistic approach that combines immediate interventions, such as providing food and health care, with long-term strategies, such as building infrastructure and improving education. This helps create a more resilient, healthier population, which contributes to the overall socioeconomic development of these countries.

Conclusion

Through an examination of the social policies intended to enhance social well-being in the face of climate change-related challenges, this study's aim was to investigate the role played by social policy in the alleviation of the negative impacts on social well-being brought about by climate change. In particular, an exploration of the policies of an autonomous government agency established under the National Health Act of 2007 in Thailand, known as the National Health Assembly (NHA), was conducted.

The NHA operates under the slogan "Synergy for Well-being" and has a primary focus on health; however, the agency has also adopted a broader mission related to factors that have indirect effects on social well-being. At the 17th National Health Assembly, two key items: (1) the transformation of the healthcare sector workforce to enhance the well-being of society and (2) the promotion of a novel tourism strategy that increases economic sustainability and improves well-being, were identified for discussion. Two strategic frameworks, area-based approaches and issue-based approaches, are employed by the NHA in order to facilitate the effectiveness of the implementation of social-level national policies. Through the integration of these perspectives, social policies can be modified in order to provide a focus on particular issues and regions, which contribute to enhancing the well-being of society and the population in the current situation resulting from the negative effects of climate change (NHCO, 2025).

Nevertheless, while the work of the NHA primarily emphasizes health outcomes, policies must also give attention to the extended social well-being dimensions, including social cohesion, economic resilience, and mental health. In order to successfully battle against the effects of climate change, consideration should be given to integrated and expanded social policies as follows:

1. Targeted Regional Approaches Using an Area-Based Approach:

By going beyond the focus on access to health care, the expansion of area-based approaches can be applied in order to highlight additional society-based determinants of well-being, including the security of livelihoods and the resilience of communities. For example, the policy agenda could give priority to programs promoting economic adaptation, such as community-based disaster risk management, sustainable agriculture, and alternative livelihoods in emerging fields like eco-tourism and green energy, in areas that experience catastrophic drought or flooding. As a result of these interventions, local populations would receive assistance with the preservation of the social structure of their communities, thereby reducing the pressure to migrate to urban areas while adapting to climate stressors.

© Authors

Additionally, the urban areas that are impacted by the issues of pollution and heatwaves would receive beneficial outcomes from policies that prioritize social infrastructure that includes access to facilities for cooling, affordable housing that has green spaces, and improved social services. Through the integration of these initiatives with support for mental health, the provision of comprehensive care from local governments to vulnerable urban populations, particularly those living in informal settlements, can be ensured.

2. Issue-Based Approaches: Expansion Beyond Health in Order to Address Broader Well-being

Issue-based approaches should implement an expansion that goes beyond specific concerns related to health in order to encompass holistic strategies that focus on the economic, environmental, and social vulnerabilities that climate change intensifies. For example, the issue of the aging population can be integrated with policies of intergenerational solidarity, in which elderly citizens not only receive medical support but also the social services that can persuade them to more actively participate in society, subsequently reducing isolation and encouraging social cohesion.

Another area that should be included as a priority of issue-based approaches is economic resilience. Green jobs in climate adaptation projects, such as development of renewable energy and management of natural resources, could be promoted by these policies, which would provide immediate economic relief to the affected areas as well as long-term employment stability. Economic well-being would also be enhanced by these policies though the creation of new opportunities and the reduction of poverty in communities that have been severely impacted by events caused by climate change.

Moreover, the expansion of the environmental health agenda to include policies that enhance social support systems, such as universal social safety nets, food security programs, and mental health initiatives, could be realized with an aim to buffer against the social stresses that are linked to climate changes.

3. Integrated Approach: Multidimensional Policies for Social Well-being

In the integrated approach, area- and issue-based strategies can also be combined in order to address the multiple dimensions of social well-being. For instance, in coastal communities, where there are threats from climate change to both livelihoods (e.g., through the collapse of the fishing industry) and social cohesion (e.g., through forced migration), integrated policies can combine strategies for livelihood diversification with those that support mental health and efforts to rebuild communities. In addition, community-led relocation programs that provide training for the creation of livelihoods and social spaces for populations that have been displaced, so that they have a chance to rebuild their personal networks, could be the focus of these policies.

Furthermore, with regard to the children living in these vulnerable regions, nutrition and health could be the targets of area-based approaches, whereas national policies that address child poverty, education access, and emotional well-being could be advocated by issue-based approaches. In this way, it can be ensured that there is a comprehensive response to the impacts caused by climate change on the well-being of younger generations in the future.

By leveraging the existing frameworks of the NHA to encompass policies that enhance economic, social, and emotional resilience, Thailand can enhance the health of its population as well as improve the overall well-being of society in spite of the challenges of climate change. Within such a context, the integration of health policies with general social policies is necessary if a holistic approach to climate adaptation and sustainable development is to be achieved. By applying these policies to specific regions and issues, the protection of vulnerable communities and their empowerment to prosper in an increasingly uncertain climate can be ensured.

© Authors

Finally, complicated and far-reaching challenges that go beyond environmental degradation and deeply affect the socioeconomic fabric of societies are presented by climate change. In this study, the essential role of social policy in addressing these multifaceted impacts through the protection of livelihoods, promotion of equity, and strengthening of community resilience is highlighted. If governments can successfully integrate the relevant economic, environmental, and social perspectives into their policy frameworks, the well-being of society can be safeguarded in a climate-affected world. Ultimately, social policies that are adaptive and inclusive are not only vital tools for the mitigation of climate-related risks but also the foundation for achieving development that is both sustainable and equitable.

Suggestions for future studies

The investigation of this study delved into the roles that social policy plays with regard to the enhancement of social well-being under the conditions of climate change, and as a result, there are a number of areas that have not yet been fully explored and thus can offer the potential for further academic examination. With an aim to broaden the available knowledge on successful policy interventions and expand the scope of the research conducted in this interdisciplinary field, the following recommendations are offered:

In future research, the long-term impacts of NHA policies on community well-being across regions should be assessed. Insights into the long-term sustainability and adaptability of both area- and issue-based policies, particularly those implemented in response to evolving climate disasters, could be provided by a longitudinal approach. Moreover, an analysis comparing Thailand with other countries that are also climate-vulnerable could reveal the best practices and contextual limitations of employing social policies for well-being. An evaluation of the potential to transfer participatory policy models, such as that of the NHA, to other socio-political environments would be provided by such studies.

In addition, future research on the integration of social sciences, public health, environmental studies, and economics should be conducted in order to improve our understanding of the interconnected effects caused by climate change. Interdisciplinary models would allow for a more detailed examination of the ways that various sectors, such as education, labor, housing, and mental health, interact with climate resilience strategies. Thus, frameworks for evaluations that assess the outcomes of these integrated policies that combine health, environmental, and social interventions on the overall resilience of communities need to be developed, as they can subsequently be applied as guidelines for the refinement of social policies and allocation of resources.

Important Note: This article declares that AI was utilized merely for the purpose of enhancing language readability and grammar. AI was not employed in data analysis, figure or table creation, or result interpretation.

References

Amnuaylojaroen, T., Limsakul, A., Kirtsaeng, S., Parasin, N., & Surapipith, V. (2022). Effect of the near-future climate change under RCP8.5 on the heat stress and associated work performance in Thailand. *Atmosphere, 13*(2), 325. https://doi.org/10.3390/atmos13020325

Bandh, S. A., Shafi, S., Peerzada, M., Rehman, T., Bashir, S., Wani, S. A., & Dar, R. (2021). Multidimensional analysis of global climate change: A review. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research, 28*(20), 24872–24888.

Barcina Lacosta, T., Vulto, A. G., Turk, F., Huys, I., & Simoens, S. (2025). Drawing on collective action theory to foster sustainable biosimilar markets: Insights from co-creation workshops with UK and Belgian stakeholders. *Expert Opinion on Biological Therapy, 25*(4), 437–446.

 © Authors

Benita, F. (2021). Human mobility behavior in COVID-19: A systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. *Sustainable Cities and Society, 70*, 102916.

Chirico, F. (2021). Spirituality to cope with COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and future global challenges. *Journal of Health and Social Sciences, 6*(2), 151–158.

Figueroa, R. M. (2022). Environmental justice. In *The Routledge companion to environmental ethics* (pp. 767–782). Routledge.

Hung, J. (2024). Policy implications for the nexus between climate change and gender-based issues in Thailand: A case study of waste management. *Environmental Reviews, 32* (4), 726–733.

Iamtrakul, P., & Chayphong, S. (2023). Factors affecting the development of a healthy city in suburban areas in Thailand. *Journal of Urban Management, 12*(3), 208–220.

Jakob, M., & Steckel, J. C. (2014). How climate change mitigation can harm development in poor countries. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change, 5*(2), 161–168.

Johnson, S., Dalton-Locke, C., Vera San Juan, N., Foye, U., Oram, S., Papamichail, A., Landau, S., Rowan Olive, R., Jeynes, T., Shah, P., Sheridan Rains, L., Lloyd-Evans, B., Carr, S., Killaspy, H., Gillard, S., & Simpson, A. (2021). Impact on mental health care and mental health service users of the COVID-19 pandemic: A mixed methods survey of UK mental health care staff. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 56*(1), 25–37. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-020-01927-4

National Health Commission Office of Thailand. (2025). *17th National Health Assembly: NHA Resolution 17.1 and 17.2*. https://en.nationalhealth.or.th/nha-17-2024/

Ober, K., & Sakdapolrak, P. (2020). Whose climate change adaptation barriers? Exploring the coloniality of climate change adaptation policy assemblages in Thailand and beyond. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 41* (1), 86–104.

Olsson, L., Jerneck, A., Thoren, H., Persson, J., & O'Byrne, D. (2015). Why resilience is unappealing to social science: Theoretical and empirical investigation of the scientific use of resilience. *Science Advances, 1*(4), e1400217.

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). Updating guidance for reporting systematic reviews: Development of the PRISMA 2020 statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 134*, 103–112.

Portes, A. (2024). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. In *New critical writings in political sociology* (pp. 53–76).

Rahman, M. S., Huang, W. C., Toiba, H., Putritamara, J. A., Nugroho, T. W., & Saeri, M. (2023). Climate change adaptation and fishermen's subjective well-being in Indonesia: Is there a link? *Regional Studies in Marine Science, 63*, 103030.

Rojpratak, S., & Supharatid, S. (2022). Regional extreme precipitation index: Evaluation and projections from the multi-model ensemble of CMIP5 for Thailand. *Weather and Climate Extremes, 37*, 100475. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wace.2022.100475

Satchatham, K., & Dokho, M. (2024). Pioneering sustainable waste management models for Thailand: Four lessons learned how to bring innovative ideas tested at one university to life nationwide. *United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from https://www.undp.org/thailand/blog/waste-management-model

Siriporananon, S., & Visuthismajarn, P. (2018). Key success factors in disaster management policy: A case study of Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network in Hat Yai City, Thailand. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences, 39*(2), 269–276.

Thailand Environment Institute. (2017). *Climate adaptation project*. Retrieved from https://www.tei.or.th/en/ourwork_project.php?aid=1

United Nations Development Programme. (2024). *Thailand's fourth national communication*. https://www.undp.org/publications/fourth-national-communication

 © Authors

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2022). *Disaster and climate change: Policy brief*. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/gender-equality-and-climate-change

Van Breda, A. D. (2018). A critical review of resilience theory and its relevance to social work. *Social Work, 54*(1), 1–18.

Vergunst, F., & Berry, H. L. (2022). Climate change and children's mental health: A developmental perspective. *Clinical Psychological Science, 10*(4), 767–785.

Viñuales, J. (2024). Analyzing antimicrobial resistance as a series of collective action problems. *Policy Studies Journal, 52*(4), 833–856.

 © Authors