

## Research Paper

## Measurement and Analysis of Social Stability in Rural Areas (Case Study: Javanrood Township)

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to measure the social stability and its influencing factors among the residents of rural areas especially in rural Javanrood Township. The study population composed of all the heads in a house in villages (rural households over 20 households) of Javanrood Township (N=4484). Given the constraints facing, researchers have chosen not to examine the entire population using Cochran formula, rather 253 people who were the representatives of the township were considered for their opinions by means of random sampling. The main research instrument was a questionnaire whose validity was confirmed by experts and academics and its reliability was checked in a pilot study with a total of 30 questionnaires outside the study area. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained for the different sections of the questionnaire. The results reveal in good condition is social stability in the rural area with an average of 3.86. It is also indicated in the results between the different indicators of social sustainability, social sustainability highest impacts in rural area are five indicators of accountability, future, happiness, social interaction and community involvement, with coefficients of variation 0.276, 0.282, 0.292, 0.296 and 0.306. Multiple regression results demonstrated a significant relationship with the dependent variable of 10 variables (social sustainability) and have described a total of 4.73% of the variance Javanrood Township rural social stability. In the order of importance, are the most important variables affecting social stability are income, family size, supplies, education and land ownership.

**Keywords:**

Sustainable development, Social stability, Rural development, Javanrood township

**Extended Abstract****1. Introduction**

**T**he term social stability, as one of the three dimensions of sustainable development, began to receive attention since the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the aim of improving living conditions in the society (Nastaran, Ghasemi, & Hadizadeh Zargar, 2013). In rural areas, the

purpose of social stability is to help develop healthy living by providing the basic needs of the rural community by considering the quality of life consistent with the quality of the environment and based on economic systems in order to achieve the highest degree of life satisfaction (Pourtaheri, Zal, & Rokneddin Eftekhari, 2012).

Discussion on social stability has currently gone beyond the issue of the population's abandonment of urban residences, and the subject of social stability now covers all dimen-

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sions of the social life and the needs of the rural community such as educational facilities, health and treatment services, appropriate accessibility to art and cultural facilities, and other facilities which are necessary in people's social life. In general, achievement of social stability in rural areas by improving its components and indicators as well as the factors influencing it lays the foundation to develop the social capacities of rural residents and to enhance the ability of the rural community to make optimal use of natural, social and economic resources consistently with the objectives of sustainable development.

In the process of rural sustainable development, social instability plays a pivotal role in the achievement of the objectives of rural development. Proof for this fact is that the emergence of instability in its environmental dimensions lies in mismanagement; and economic instability whose concrete representations are evident in inducing economic instability, inequality, poverty and unemployment in rural communities is due to the lack or neglect of social stability in rural areas. Hence, emphasis on social stability directs attentions to its role and position in the process of rural sustainable development more than ever (Pourtaheri, et al., 2012).

However, social stability is a difficult concept to implement, and instability in human societies generally refers to stability along time. Therefore, this concept is not easy to measure. If social stability is to turn from a general description into an ultimate goal, it is necessary to define it in a clear, distinguishable, controllable and measurable way. Hence, it is essential to design social stability indicators.

The main indicators for measuring social stability include population dynamism; empowerment; social cohesion and unity; health and social security; quality of employment and income; quality of education, services, housing, and environment; quality of information accessibility; community involvement; quality of institutional-national structures; optimism about the future; satisfaction with the place of living and place attachment; rates of crime and divorce; equality; compatibility; co-existence; social accountability; hope for the future; sense of happiness; extroversion and social interaction; social trust; fear of prevalence of social abnormalities; sense of deprivation; satisfaction with the performance of institutions; satisfaction with the quantity of service accessibility; satisfaction with the quality of service accessibility; place attachment; exhilaration in life; participation in cultural and recreational activities; participation in religious activities; participation in local activities; interpersonal trust; civil or institutional trust; and social justice

(Salemi, Hamzeh'ee, & Mirakzadeh, 2011; Teimouri, Farhudi, Rahnamaei, & Gharakhlu, 2012; Pourtaheri et al, 2012; Fatahi, Bayat, Amiri, & Nemati, 2013; Nastaran, et al., 2013).

In addition, the indicators of social stability also include social networks, the right to choose one's life and occupation, accessibility to equal opportunities, democracy, social innovations, concrete basic needs, mental basic needs, concrete social resources, mental social resources, equal concrete opportunities, equal mental opportunities, cultural variety, cultural heritage, and equal accessibility to welfare (Osman & Spangenberg, 2002; Glasson & Wood, 2009; Colantonio, Dixon, Ganser, Carpenter, & Ngombe, 2009). Therefore, considering the various indicators of social stability, the researchers chose indicators, each containing various variables.

## 2. Methodology

The study is descriptive. The study sample composed of all heads of households in villages (rural households over 20 households) Javanrood Township (N=4484). Given the constraints faced, researchers have chosen not to examine the entire population using Cochran formula. About 253 subjects who were representatives were considered for their opinions by means of random sampling. The main research instrument was a questionnaire that was validity and confirmed by experts and academicians. Its reliability was checked using in a pilot study with a total of 30 questionnaires outside the study area.

## 3. Results

Sustainable development and its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) constitute the main foundation of the current discussions. Social stability as the most important principle of sustainable development has greater significance than the two other factors since the ultimate goal of the two economic and environmental aspects is achievement of social stability and social welfare in human societies, and all human activities are in one way or another directed toward achieving social stability in human societies in the current condition and in future. One of the paramount discussions relating to the social stability is research on the level of social stability and factors affecting it among rural, which can play a significant role in enhancing their social stability.

## 4. Discussion

Showed results in good condition is social stability in the rural area with an average of 3.86. It is also indicated in the results between the different indicators of social sustainabil-

ity, social sustainability highest impacts in rural area are five indicators of accountability, future, happiness, social interaction and community involvement, with coefficients of variation 0.276, 0.282, 0.292, 0.296 and 0.306. Multiple regression results have demonstrated a significant relationship with the dependent variable of 10 variables (social sustainability) and have described a total of 4.73% of the variance Javanrood Township rural social stability. In order of importance, are the most important variables affecting social stability, income, family size, supplies, education and land ownership.

Generally, to reinforce social stability in the study area, considering the weaknesses identified, in each of the 15 indicators and in each of the components of these indicators, priority must be given to weak indicators and components (especially the indicators of job satisfaction and service accessibility) in future planning. Besides, paying attention to and providing the means of better access to variables of social stability, especially those with greater correlation with social stability (particularly personal income and occupation) will surely help enhance social stability among villagers Javanrood Township.

## 5. Conclusion

Sustainable development and its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) constitute the main foundation of the current discussions. Social stability as the most important principle of sustainable development has greater significance than the two other factors since the ultimate goal of the two economic and environmental aspects is achievement of social stability and social welfare in human societies, and all human activities are one way or another directed toward achieving social stability in human societies in the current condition and in future. One of the paramount discussions relating to social stability is research on the level of social stability and factors affecting it among rural Society as half of the assiduous and deprived Regional population, which can play a significant role in enhancing their social stability.