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Impact of Political Instability on Social Development

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Abstract

Purpose: The general objective of this study was to investigate the impact of political instability on social development.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the impact of political instability on social development. Preliminary empirical review revealed that political instability significantly undermined social development by disrupting essential services like education and healthcare, eroding social cohesion and trust within communities, and causing economic stagnation that increased poverty and unemployment. These disruptions created a vicious cycle that perpetuated poverty and inequality, hampering long-term sustainable development. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of political instability, such as strengthening political institutions, promoting good governance, and ensuring inclusive economic growth, with international support playing a crucial role in fostering resilient institutions and effective social development programs.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory and Social Conflict Theory may be used to anchor future studies on the impact of political instability on social development. The study emphasized the importance of integrating political variables into social development theories and recommended targeted interventions to address the root causes of instability. The study urged policymakers to prioritize political stabilization through reforms and resource allocation to social sectors. It highlighted the need for enhancing social cohesion, building economic resilience, and promoting inclusive governance to mitigate the effects of political instability on social development. Additionally, it stressed the role of international cooperation in supporting these initiatives.

Keywords: *Political Instability, Social Development, Economic Resilience, Inclusive Governance, Social Cohesion*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social development is a complex, multifaceted process that seeks to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities through the enhancement of social, economic, and political structures. It aims to create a more equitable society by addressing disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and services. This involves promoting education, healthcare, housing, and employment, which are crucial for individuals to achieve their full potential and for societies to function cohesively. Social development also encompasses the empowerment of marginalized groups, the protection of human rights, and the fostering of social justice. According to Melesse (2015), social development is essential for achieving sustainable development as it ensures that economic growth benefits all segments of the population, thereby promoting social cohesion and stability. The process of social development is ongoing and requires continuous efforts from governments, civil society, and international organizations to address emerging challenges and opportunities in an ever-changing world.

In the United States, social development has seen significant progress over the years, particularly in areas such as education and healthcare. The introduction of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 marked a pivotal moment in expanding healthcare access to millions of Americans who previously lacked insurance. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the uninsured rate among adults aged 18-64 decreased from 22.3% in 2010 to 14.5% in 2019, highlighting the impact of the ACA on reducing healthcare disparities (CDC, 2020). Moreover, the expansion of Medicaid under the ACA has provided coverage to low-income individuals, significantly improving their access to necessary medical services. In education, the high school graduation rate has reached an all-time high of 85.8% in the 2017-2018 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This improvement is attributed to various federal and state initiatives aimed at reducing dropout rates and supporting at-risk students (NCES, 2020). These statistics underscore the positive impact of targeted social policies on the well-being of American citizens and the importance of sustained investment in social development initiatives (CDC, 2020).

The United Kingdom has also made significant strides in social development, particularly through its comprehensive welfare system designed to support low-income families and individuals. The introduction of the Universal Credit system aimed to simplify and streamline benefits, making it easier for people to access financial support. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there has been a steady decline in the poverty rate, from 22% in 2010 to 18% in 2018, indicating the effectiveness of welfare reforms in reducing poverty (ONS, 2019). Additionally, the UK has made considerable progress in education, with the proportion of adults with higher education qualifications increasing from 27% in 2010 to 39% in 2019. This improvement is attributed to policies that promote lifelong learning and vocational training, enabling individuals to adapt to the changing labor market demands (ONS, 2020). In healthcare, the National Health Service (NHS) continues to provide comprehensive and equitable healthcare services to all citizens, contributing to the UK's high life expectancy and low infant mortality rates (NHS, 2020). These developments reflect the UK's commitment to social development and the positive outcomes of its welfare policies (ONS, 2019).

Japan's approach to social development is characterized by a strong emphasis on education, healthcare, and social security. The country's education system is renowned for its high standards and rigorous curriculum, resulting in consistently high performance in international assessments. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Japanese students rank among the top in reading, mathematics, and science, reflecting the effectiveness of Japan's education policies (OECD, 2018). In healthcare, Japan's universal health insurance system ensures that all citizens have access to affordable and high-quality medical services. As a result, Japan boasts one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world, with an average of 84.6 years in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Additionally,

Japan's comprehensive social security system provides support to the elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals, contributing to social stability and cohesion. Despite these achievements, Japan faces challenges such as an aging population and a shrinking workforce, which necessitate continuous adaptation of social policies to sustain social development (World Bank, 2020).

Brazil has made notable progress in social development over the past few decades, particularly in reducing poverty and improving access to education and healthcare. The Bolsa Família program, introduced in 2003, has been instrumental in lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty by providing conditional cash transfers to low-income families. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Brazil decreased from 24.9% in 2003 to 21.4% in 2018, illustrating the program's impact (World Bank, 2019). In education, Brazil has made significant strides in increasing enrollment rates and improving educational outcomes. The literacy rate among youth aged 15-24 increased from 97% in 2000 to 99% in 2018, reflecting the success of education reforms (UNESCO, 2019). In healthcare, the Unified Health System (SUS) provides universal access to medical services, contributing to improvements in key health indicators such as infant mortality and life expectancy. However, Brazil continues to face challenges such as income inequality, regional disparities, and political instability, which require ongoing efforts to sustain and enhance social development (World Bank, 2019).

African countries have experienced varying degrees of social development, with some nations making significant progress while others continue to face substantial challenges. In Rwanda, for example, social development has been remarkable since the 1994 genocide. The government's focus on rebuilding the nation and investing in education and healthcare has led to significant improvements. According to the World Bank, Rwanda's life expectancy increased from 48 years in 2000 to 69 years in 2018, and the literacy rate among youth aged 15-24 rose from 68% to 87% over the same period (World Bank, 2018). Similarly, Ethiopia has made strides in reducing poverty and improving access to education and healthcare. The poverty rate decreased from 44.2% in 2000 to 23.5% in 2015, while primary school enrollment increased from 50% to 99% (World Bank, 2018). However, many African countries continue to grapple with challenges such as political instability, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure, which hinder social development efforts. Addressing these issues is crucial for sustaining progress and improving the quality of life for all citizens (World Bank, 2018).

Comparing social development trends across different countries reveals both commonalities and unique challenges. In the USA and the UK, strong welfare systems and targeted social policies have significantly improved healthcare access and educational outcomes. Japan's emphasis on high-quality education and universal healthcare has resulted in some of the highest life expectancy rates globally. Brazil's conditional cash transfer programs have effectively reduced poverty, while Rwanda and Ethiopia's focus on rebuilding and development has yielded significant improvements in social indicators. Despite these successes, each country faces specific challenges: the USA grapples with healthcare affordability, the UK with post-Brexit economic uncertainties, Japan with an aging population, Brazil with income inequality, and many African countries with political and infrastructural hurdles. These comparisons underscore the importance of context-specific strategies and the need for continuous adaptation of social policies to address emerging issues (World Bank, 2018).

Government policies play a crucial role in driving social development by allocating resources, setting regulations, and implementing programs that address social needs. In the USA, policies such as the ACA and various education reforms have significantly impacted social development indicators. In the UK, the welfare system and Universal Credit have provided essential support to low-income families, reducing poverty and improving social mobility. Japan's universal health insurance and rigorous education system are products of deliberate government policies aimed at ensuring high standards of

living. In Brazil, the Bolsa Família program is a prime example of how targeted social policies can effectively reduce poverty and enhance social development. In African countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia, government initiatives focusing on rebuilding and development have led to significant improvements in social indicators. Effective governance and policy implementation are thus fundamental to achieving sustained social development and addressing the needs of all citizens (World Bank, 2018).

Despite significant progress, numerous challenges and barriers hinder social development across different regions. In the USA, healthcare affordability remains a major issue, with many Americans still unable to access necessary medical services despite the ACA. The UK faces uncertainties related to Brexit, which could impact social development funding and programs. Japan's aging population presents a significant challenge, as the country must balance the needs of its elderly citizens with maintaining economic productivity. Brazil struggles with persistent income inequality and regional disparities that affect the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. In many African countries, political instability, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure are major barriers to social development. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that involve all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and international organizations, to create inclusive and sustainable solutions (World Bank, 2018).

The future of social development lies in adopting innovative and inclusive approaches that address the evolving needs of societies. Embracing technology and digital solutions can enhance the delivery of education, healthcare, and social services, making them more accessible and efficient. Promoting inclusive economic growth that prioritizes equity and social justice is essential for reducing disparities and improving the quality of life for all citizens. Governments must continue to invest in human capital, particularly in education and healthcare, to build resilient and adaptive societies. International cooperation and partnerships are also crucial for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change, which impact social development. By fostering collaboration and sharing best practices, countries can learn from each other's experiences and create more effective and sustainable social development strategies (World Bank, 2018).

Political instability refers to a situation where the governance structures within a country are in a state of turmoil or unpredictability, often characterized by frequent changes in leadership, government collapse, significant policy shifts, or widespread civil unrest. This instability can arise from various factors including political violence, corruption, weak governance, and external interventions. The presence of political instability undermines the functioning of state institutions, erodes public trust, and creates a volatile environment that hampers effective governance and policy implementation (Alesina & Perotti, 2012). It often leads to a breakdown of law and order, making it difficult for governments to perform their basic functions such as maintaining public safety, delivering public services, and fostering economic development. The ripple effects of political instability are far-reaching, affecting not only the political landscape but also economic performance, social cohesion, and overall quality of life.

Political instability is not a new phenomenon and has been a recurring issue throughout history. For example, the French Revolution in the late 18th century brought about significant political upheaval and changes in leadership. In more recent times, the Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, led to the overthrow of governments in several Middle Eastern and North African countries. These events illustrate how political instability can result in profound changes in the political landscape, often accompanied by violence and social unrest. According to Huntington (2012), political instability tends to occur in countries undergoing rapid social and economic changes where political institutions have not adapted to new demands. The lack of political stability often creates a vacuum that can lead to

power struggles, further exacerbating the instability and making it difficult for new, stable governance structures to take hold.

The causes of political instability are multifaceted and can vary significantly from one context to another. Common causes include economic inequality, ethnic or religious divisions, corruption, weak political institutions, and external influences. Economic inequality can fuel discontent among marginalized groups, leading to protests and demands for change. Ethnic and religious divisions can create tensions that are exploited by political actors to gain power, often resulting in violence. Corruption erodes trust in government institutions, making it difficult for leaders to govern effectively. Weak political institutions may lack the capacity to manage conflicts and provide essential services, leading to a breakdown in order. Additionally, external influences such as foreign interventions or global economic shocks can destabilize political systems. Alesina & Perotti (1996) argue that political instability is often a symptom of deeper structural issues within a society, and addressing these underlying causes is crucial for achieving long-term stability.

Political instability has a detrimental impact on economic development. It creates an uncertain environment that discourages investment, disrupts economic activities, and leads to the misallocation of resources. Businesses are less likely to invest in countries where the political climate is unpredictable, as the risks associated with such investments are high. This lack of investment stifles economic growth and development. According to Jong-A-Pin (2009), countries experiencing political instability often have lower levels of economic growth compared to more stable countries. Furthermore, political instability can lead to the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of trade, and loss of human capital, all of which are essential for economic development. The uncertainty and risks associated with political instability can also lead to capital flight, where investors move their assets out of the country to safer locations, further exacerbating economic challenges.

Social development is a process aimed at improving the well-being of individuals and communities by addressing social, economic, and political inequalities. It involves the enhancement of various components such as education, healthcare, housing, employment, and social protection. Social development aims to create a more inclusive society where all individuals have access to opportunities and resources necessary for their personal and collective growth. According to Midgley (2014), social development is crucial for achieving sustainable development as it promotes social cohesion, reduces poverty, and enhances the overall quality of life. Education, for instance, empowers individuals with knowledge and skills, enabling them to participate actively in economic and social activities. Healthcare ensures that individuals are healthy and capable of contributing to society. Housing provides a safe and stable environment for families. Employment opportunities allow individuals to earn a living and support their families. Social protection mechanisms safeguard individuals from economic and social risks.

Political instability poses a significant threat to social development by disrupting the provision of essential services and creating an environment of insecurity and fear. When political systems are unstable, governments often struggle to maintain basic services such as education and healthcare. Schools may be closed due to violence, teachers may flee, and healthcare facilities may be destroyed or become inaccessible. This disruption in services has long-term consequences for social development. For example, children who miss out on education during periods of instability are less likely to achieve their full potential, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. According to Stewart (2012), political instability undermines social cohesion by fostering distrust and division within communities. This erosion of social cohesion makes it difficult to build inclusive societies and achieve sustainable development.

Education is one of the sectors most affected by political instability. In conflict-affected areas, schools are often targets of violence, resulting in closures and disruption of educational services. Teachers may be threatened, kidnapped, or killed, leading to a shortage of qualified educators. Students may be forced to flee their homes, interrupting their education and creating long-term gaps in their learning. The loss of education opportunities during critical developmental periods can have lasting effects on children and adolescents. According to a report by UNESCO (2015), political instability and conflict are major barriers to achieving universal education. The report highlights that in countries experiencing political instability, school enrollment rates are significantly lower, and dropout rates are higher compared to more stable countries. This educational disruption contributes to the cycle of poverty and inequality, as education is a key driver of social mobility and economic development (UNESCO, 2015).

Healthcare systems are also severely impacted by political instability. In unstable environments, healthcare facilities may be destroyed, and healthcare workers may be unable or unwilling to work due to safety concerns. This results in reduced access to medical services for the population, leading to deteriorating health conditions and increased mortality rates. According to Patel, Ahn & Burke (2014), political instability and conflict are associated with higher rates of infectious diseases, malnutrition, and mental health issues. The disruption of healthcare services during periods of instability exacerbates these health problems, creating a public health crisis. Additionally, the destruction of healthcare infrastructure and the displacement of healthcare workers can have long-term effects on the health system, making it difficult to rebuild and recover after the instability subsides.

Housing is another critical area affected by political instability. Conflict and violence can lead to the destruction of homes and displacement of populations, resulting in homelessness and poor living conditions. Displaced individuals often live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, which can exacerbate health problems and create social tensions. The lack of stable housing has a profound impact on individuals' well-being and social development. According to a report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2019), political instability and conflict are major drivers of internal displacement. The report indicates that millions of people are displaced each year due to political instability, with significant impacts on their social and economic well-being. Displacement disrupts individuals' lives, separating families and communities and making it difficult for people to access essential services and opportunities (IDMC, 2019).

Addressing political instability is crucial for promoting social development. This requires a multi-faceted approach that includes strengthening political institutions, promoting good governance, addressing economic inequalities, and fostering social cohesion. Strengthening political institutions involves building the capacity of governments to manage conflicts, provide essential services, and ensure the rule of law. Promoting good governance entails reducing corruption, increasing transparency, and enhancing accountability. Addressing economic inequalities involves creating inclusive economic policies that ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. Fostering social cohesion involves promoting dialogue and understanding among different groups within society. According to Acemoglu & Robinson (2012), building inclusive political and economic institutions is key to achieving long-term stability and development. By addressing the root causes of political instability and creating an environment conducive to social development, countries can achieve sustainable development and improve the well-being of their populations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Political instability has emerged as a pervasive challenge that significantly impacts social development across the globe. According to the World Bank (2018), political instability can lead to the disruption of essential services, economic decline, and a reduction in the quality of life, thereby exacerbating

social inequalities and hindering development efforts. For instance, countries experiencing political turmoil often face challenges such as the destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and the breakdown of social services, which collectively undermine social progress. Despite the recognized negative impacts of political instability, there is a paucity of comprehensive research that systematically examines the specific mechanisms through which political instability affects various dimensions of social development, such as education, healthcare, and social cohesion. This study aims to fill this research gap by providing a detailed analysis of the interplay between political instability and social development, with a particular focus on identifying the pathways through which instability hinders social progress (World Bank, 2018). While numerous studies have explored the broad consequences of political instability, there is a notable lack of research that disaggregates the effects of different types of instability (e.g., violent conflicts, political corruption, frequent government changes) on specific social development outcomes. For example, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2019) highlighted that political instability in sub-Saharan Africa has led to significant setbacks in education, with school enrollment rates dropping by an average of 20% during periods of intense conflict. However, these findings often lack a nuanced understanding of how different forms of political instability uniquely affect various aspects of social development. This study seeks to address these research gaps by conducting a comparative analysis across multiple regions and types of political instability, thereby offering a more granular understanding of the relationship between political instability and social development (UNDP, 2019). The findings of this study will be particularly beneficial to policymakers, development agencies, and civil society organizations. Policymakers can utilize the insights from this research to design more effective and targeted interventions that address the root causes of political instability and mitigate its adverse effects on social development. Development agencies can leverage the findings to allocate resources more strategically and implement programs that strengthen social resilience in politically unstable environments. Civil society organizations can use the evidence to advocate for policies that promote political stability and social development. By providing a detailed analysis of the impacts of political instability on social development, this study will contribute to the formulation of more informed and context-specific strategies aimed at fostering sustainable development and improving the quality of life in affected regions (UNDP, 2019).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory, originated by sociologists such as Talcott Parsons and later expanded by scholars like Seymour Martin Lipset, posits that economic development and modernization lead to progressive social changes and political stability. According to this theory, as societies develop economically, they undergo significant structural changes that lead to improved standards of living, higher education levels, and more complex social institutions. These changes create a more educated and economically empowered populace that demands better governance and accountability, fostering political stability and enhanced social development (Lipset, 1959). Modernization Theory suggests that economic development is a prerequisite for social and political transformation, and instability is often a characteristic of societies that have not yet fully modernized. In the context of studying the impact of political instability on social development, Modernization Theory provides a framework for understanding how economic underdevelopment and the lack of structural transformations contribute to political instability, which in turn hampers social development. The theory underscores the interconnectedness of economic progress, social change, and political stability, highlighting the importance of holistic development strategies to achieve sustained social development.

2.1.2 Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory, formulated by scholars such as Raúl Prebisch and André Gunder Frank, offers a critical perspective on the relationship between developed and developing nations, emphasizing how the economic dependence of developing countries on developed ones perpetuates underdevelopment and political instability. The theory argues that the global economic system is structured in a way that benefits developed countries at the expense of developing ones, leading to persistent economic inequalities and social disparities. According to Dependency Theory, developing countries are often trapped in a cycle of dependency, where their economies are geared towards serving the interests of developed nations through the export of raw materials and import of manufactured goods. This economic dependency undermines local industries, limits economic growth, and fosters social inequalities, creating fertile ground for political instability (Frank, 1966). In the context of political instability and social development, Dependency Theory is relevant as it explains how external economic pressures and dependencies can lead to domestic political unrest and hinder social development. The theory highlights the need for developing countries to adopt strategies that promote economic self-reliance and reduce dependency on external actors to achieve stable and sustainable social development.

2.1.3 Social Conflict Theory

Social Conflict Theory, primarily associated with Karl Marx and later developed by scholars like Ralf Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser, focuses on the inherent conflicts between different social groups arising from inequalities in wealth, power, and status. According to this theory, societal change is driven by conflict rather than consensus, with competing interests between dominant and subordinate groups leading to social tensions and political instability. Marx argued that the economic base of society, characterized by the relations of production, determines the superstructure, including political and legal systems. Thus, economic inequalities create class conflicts that can lead to political upheavals and social change (Marx, 1867). In contemporary applications, Social Conflict Theory can be used to analyze how economic and social inequalities contribute to political instability and affect social development. It emphasizes the role of power dynamics and resource distribution in creating social unrest and highlights the need for policies that address these inequalities to foster social stability and development. The theory is particularly relevant to understanding how marginalized groups may resort to political activism or violence to challenge the status quo, thereby impacting social development (Dahrendorf, 1959).

2.2 Empirical Review

Alesina & Perotti (2012) conducted a comprehensive study on the relationship between political instability and economic growth, which indirectly impacts social development. They utilized a quantitative methodology, analyzing cross-country data from 1960 to 2010, focusing on variables such as government changes, political violence, and economic indicators. Their findings indicated that political instability significantly hampers economic growth by creating an environment of uncertainty that discourages investment and disrupts economic activities. The study recommended that countries should strengthen their political institutions and promote policies that enhance political stability to foster economic and social development. While the study provided valuable insights into the economic consequences of political instability, it did not delve deeply into specific social outcomes such as education, healthcare, and social cohesion.

Stewart (2012) explored the impact of horizontal inequalities—inequalities among culturally defined groups—on political instability and social development. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative case studies from countries in Africa,

Asia, and Latin America. The findings revealed that horizontal inequalities significantly contribute to political instability by fueling grievances and conflicts among marginalized groups. This instability, in turn, disrupts social services, exacerbates poverty, and hinders overall social development. Stewart recommended policies aimed at reducing horizontal inequalities through inclusive economic and social policies. Although the study highlighted the link between inequalities and political instability, it did not provide a detailed analysis of how different forms of political instability specifically affect various aspects of social development.

Justino (2013) examined the effects of political violence on social development, focusing on education and health outcomes in conflict-affected regions. Using a quantitative methodology, the author analyzed data from household surveys conducted in several conflict-affected countries. The findings indicated that political violence leads to significant disruptions in education, with children in conflict zones experiencing lower enrollment rates, higher dropout rates, and poorer educational outcomes. Additionally, the study found that political violence adversely affects health outcomes, with increased rates of malnutrition, infectious diseases, and psychological trauma among affected populations. Justino recommended the implementation of targeted interventions to support education and healthcare in conflict-affected regions. While the study provided detailed insights into the impact of political violence on education and health, it did not explore other dimensions of social development such as housing and social cohesion.

Patel, Kabir, Clarke & Patel (2014) conducted a study on the impact of political instability on public health systems, focusing on countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The methodology involved a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of health indicators with qualitative interviews of healthcare providers and patients. The findings showed that political instability leads to the disruption of healthcare services, resulting in decreased access to medical care, shortages of medical supplies, and deteriorating health infrastructure. The study also found an increase in mental health issues and infectious diseases in unstable regions. Patel et al. recommended strengthening health systems' resilience through better planning, increased funding, and international support. Although the study provided valuable information on the health impacts of political instability, it did not address other critical social development areas such as education and housing.

Thyne & Tir (2015) explored the effects of political instability on educational outcomes, specifically looking at how civil wars impact school attendance and educational attainment. They employed a quantitative methodology, analyzing data from multiple countries that experienced civil wars between 1980 and 2010. The findings revealed that civil wars significantly reduce school attendance and educational attainment, with long-term negative effects on human capital development. The researchers recommended that post-conflict reconstruction efforts prioritize the rebuilding of educational infrastructure and the provision of support to students affected by conflict. While their study focused on education, it did not examine other aspects of social development such as healthcare and social protection.

Imai & Weinstein (2016) studied the long-term social and economic impacts of political instability, focusing on post-conflict societies. They used a longitudinal study design, analyzing data from post-conflict countries over several decades. The findings indicated that political instability has lasting negative effects on social development, including reduced access to education, healthcare, and social services. The study also found that political instability leads to persistent economic challenges, such as reduced foreign investment and slow economic growth. Imai and Weinstein recommended comprehensive post-conflict recovery programs that integrate social, economic, and political reforms to promote sustainable development. However, the study did not specifically address the differential impacts of various types of political instability on social development (Imai & Weinstein, 2016).

Cramer (2017) investigated the relationship between political instability, social cohesion, and development outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and focus groups. The findings suggested that political instability erodes social cohesion by fostering distrust and division within communities, which in turn hampers collective efforts to achieve social development. The study recommended promoting inclusive political processes and community-building initiatives to strengthen social cohesion and support social development. While Cramer's study provided insights into the link between political instability and social cohesion, it did not delve into specific social development outcomes such as health and education in detail.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

4.0 FINDINGS

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Patel, Kabir, Clarke & Patel (2014) conducted a study on the impact of political instability on public health systems, focusing on countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The methodology involved a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of health indicators with qualitative interviews of healthcare providers and patients. The findings showed that political instability leads to the disruption of healthcare services, resulting in decreased access to medical care, shortages of medical supplies, and deteriorating health infrastructure. The study also found an increase in mental health issues and infectious diseases in unstable regions. Patel et al. recommended strengthening health systems' resilience through better planning, increased funding, and international support. Although the study provided valuable information on the health impacts of political instability, it did not address other critical social development areas such as education and housing. On the other hand, the current study focused on exploring the impact of political instability on social development.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for instance, in exploring the the impact of political instability on public health systems, focusing on countries in the Middle East and North Africa; Patel, Kabir, Clarke & Patel (2014) adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of health indicators with qualitative interviews of healthcare providers and patients. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study draws several critical conclusions that underscore the profound and multifaceted effects of political instability on various aspects of social development. First and foremost, political instability significantly undermines the foundations of social development by disrupting essential public services such as education and healthcare. When political systems are unstable, governments often struggle to maintain consistent and effective service delivery, leading to the closure of schools, deterioration of healthcare facilities, and a general decline in the quality of social services. This disruption has long-term consequences for human capital development, as children miss out on education and populations suffer from inadequate healthcare, ultimately perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

Furthermore, the study highlights that political instability fosters an environment of fear and uncertainty, which erodes social cohesion and trust within communities. In politically unstable settings, communities often experience heightened tensions and conflicts, exacerbating social divisions and undermining collective efforts towards development. The breakdown of social cohesion makes it challenging to implement development programs effectively and fosters an environment where social fragmentation prevails. This lack of unity and trust not only hampers immediate social development efforts but also creates significant barriers to long-term sustainable development, as cohesive communities are essential for building resilient and prosperous societies.

Additionally, the economic ramifications of political instability are profound and far-reaching, with significant implications for social development. Political instability often leads to economic stagnation or decline, as businesses become hesitant to invest in unstable environments, and economic activities are frequently disrupted. This economic downturn translates into higher unemployment rates, reduced income levels, and increased poverty, all of which directly affect the social development of a nation. Without economic stability and growth, governments find it challenging to fund social programs adequately, further exacerbating the negative impacts on education, healthcare, and social protection systems. Thus, the economic consequences of political instability create a vicious cycle that continuously undermines social development efforts. The study underscores the importance of addressing the root causes of political instability to foster sustainable social development. It calls for comprehensive strategies that involve strengthening political institutions, promoting good governance, and ensuring inclusive economic growth. By addressing issues such as corruption, economic inequality, and lack of political inclusivity, countries can create a more stable political environment conducive to social development. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for international support and collaboration to help politically unstable regions build resilient institutions and implement effective social development programs. In conclusion, achieving sustainable social development in politically unstable environments requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both the immediate impacts of instability and the underlying structural issues that perpetuate it.

5.2 Recommendations

The study makes several significant contributions to the theoretical understanding of the interplay between political stability and social progress. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of integrating political variables into social development theories. Traditional social development theories often focus on economic and social factors without adequately accounting for the role of political stability. This study highlights that political instability is a critical determinant of social outcomes, necessitating a more holistic approach that includes political factors. Additionally, the study suggests that future theoretical models should consider the multifaceted nature of political instability, distinguishing between different types (e.g., violent conflict, political corruption, government turnover) and their distinct impacts on social development. By broadening the scope of social development theories to include political dynamics, researchers can develop more comprehensive models that better explain the variability in social outcomes across different contexts.

From a practical perspective, the study offers several actionable recommendations for practitioners working in development, humanitarian aid, and governance. One key recommendation is the need for targeted interventions that address the root causes of political instability. Practitioners should focus on strengthening political institutions, promoting good governance, and fostering inclusive political processes to mitigate the effects of instability. The study also underscores the importance of resilience-building initiatives that enhance the capacity of communities to withstand and recover from the disruptions caused by political instability. This includes investing in education and healthcare systems that can operate even in unstable environments, as well as developing social protection mechanisms

that support vulnerable populations during periods of political turmoil. By implementing these practical measures, practitioners can help mitigate the adverse effects of political instability and promote sustainable social development.

The study provides several policy recommendations aimed at improving the resilience of social systems in politically unstable environments. Policymakers are urged to prioritize the stabilization of political systems through comprehensive reforms that enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. These reforms should include anti-corruption measures, electoral reforms, and initiatives to strengthen the rule of law. The study also recommends that policymakers allocate adequate resources to social sectors such as education, healthcare, and social protection, ensuring that these services remain accessible and effective even during periods of political instability. Additionally, international cooperation and support are essential for implementing these policies. Donor agencies and international organizations should collaborate with national governments to provide technical and financial assistance for political and social reforms. By adopting these policy measures, governments can create a more stable and supportive environment for social development.

The study highlights the critical role of social cohesion in mitigating the effects of political instability on social development. It recommends initiatives that promote social integration and unity among diverse groups within society. These initiatives could include community-building programs, dialogue and reconciliation efforts, and policies that promote equality and social justice. Enhancing social cohesion helps to build trust and cooperation among citizens, reducing the likelihood of conflict and fostering a supportive environment for social development. Furthermore, the study suggests that education systems should incorporate curricula that promote civic education and social cohesion, equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to contribute to a stable and inclusive society. By strengthening social cohesion, societies can become more resilient to the disruptions caused by political instability.

Economic resilience is another critical area addressed by the study. It recommends that policymakers and practitioners focus on diversifying economies and reducing dependence on volatile sectors that are susceptible to political instability. Economic diversification can help mitigate the impact of political disruptions on social development by providing stable sources of income and employment. The study also advocates for the development of robust social safety nets that protect the most vulnerable populations during economic downturns caused by political instability. These safety nets could include unemployment benefits, food security programs, and conditional cash transfers. By building economic resilience, countries can better withstand the shocks of political instability and maintain progress in social development.

The study emphasizes the importance of inclusive governance as a means to reduce political instability and promote social development. It recommends that governments adopt policies and practices that ensure the participation of all segments of society in decision-making processes. Inclusive governance helps to address the grievances of marginalized groups and reduces the likelihood of conflict. This can be achieved through measures such as decentralization of power, inclusive electoral systems, and the establishment of mechanisms for dialogue and conflict resolution. Additionally, the study suggests that international organizations and donor agencies should support initiatives that promote inclusive governance, providing technical assistance and funding for capacity-building programs. By fostering inclusive governance, countries can create a more stable and equitable environment conducive to social development.

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