

INTRACTABLE IPOB POLITICAL DEFIANT SIT-AT-HOME STRATEGY AND ITS GRAVE CONSEQUENCES ON THE SURVIVAL SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the intractable Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) political defiant sit-at-home strategy and its grave consequences on the survival of Southeastern Nigeria. With exploratory and cross-sectional survey research design, anchored on relative deprivation and systems theories, a multi-stage sampling frame was used in selecting 12 key actors, while semi-structured copies of a questionnaire were administered on 420 respondents to elicit relevant information on the study. Qualitative data were content analyzed while quantitative data were analyzed using the statistical mean and frequency. Data revealed that the sit-at-home strategy was a reaction to leadership and infrastructural marginalization of the region and the continued incarceration of the leader of the separatist abducted by agents of Federal Government of Nigeria in Kenya. This strategy has institutionalized unimaginable violence on the economic and political life of the zone. Against this background, the study recommends the release of Nnamdi Kanu, a constitutional restoration of true federalism and a combination of kinetic and non-kinetic security approach to tackling the fall out of the IPOB sit-at-home order.

Keywords: Agitation; Consequences; Imo State; IPOB; Strategy

Introduction

The Nigerian state has been slowed down by several crises since independence and one of such issues is the marginalization of groups by the central Government which has suffered from ethnic or regional domination. The Southeastern region of Nigeria has been at the receiving end of national politics since 1970. The Southeastern region has not been fully accommodated and integrated into the political leadership structure and it appears that the region has been excluded from some crucial positions in the country; be it in the security agencies, the presidency of the country and having access to, and occupy strategic economic positions, where they can influence certain policies to benefit the citizens of the region.

Marginalization is deep rooted in Nigeria, and the people of Southeastern have clamored for an inclusive government and recognition of the abundant talents that are available in the region. However, the neglect of the region due to the outcome of the civil war has triggered tension, insecurity, discrimination against the educated youths from the region, denial of access to national resources except for the individual effort made by citizens of the region. This subtle economic and political war generated the emergence of separatist groups, of which the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has remained more active since the emergence of Mohammedu Buhari as President of Nigeria in 2015 and he made it clear that those who gave him 5% cannot expect anything from him. As a premeditated plan, he excluded prominent citizens of the Southeastern region from the core government circle and this provided this new group led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the arsenal to confront the Central government.

Initially, this group was a flag carrying group without arms agitating for the inclusion of the prominent Igbo people into the super structure in governance in the Central Government. But the government unleashed terror on these youths and since then, the group has become violent. This reached its crescendo when the leader of IPOB was abducted in Kenya by the security operatives of the Federal Government and in solidarity with the incarcerated leader, the IPOB imposed an order of sit-at-home on Mondays in the region, to protest the incarceration of their leader. This was also extended on other days he would appear in court. This agitation and strategy used by IPOB has become intractable and it has had unimaginable consequences on the development of the region. Ugorji (2017) opined that the renewed separatist agitation has disrupted the educational system, scared foreign investors, the emergence of criminality and unquantifiable economic predicament. The sit-at-home defiance is enforced by members of IPOB in both rural and urban areas and anybody who tried to defy their order would be met with death and destruction of his business and other property. Poverty has deepened and there is a heavy toll on the youthful population of the region who are regularly murdered in the name of fighting the IPOB members. It is against this view that this research investigates the defiant political strategy, its modus operandi and how it has impacted on the social well-being of the region.

Statement of the Problem

Sit-at-home defiant strategy adopted by the IPOB, a separatist group protesting the marginalization of the Southeastern Nigeria has become an unending battle which pitched the IPOB with the combined security forces of the army, police and the unconventional group recruited by state governments in Anambra, Ebonyi, and Imo. In Ebonyi and Imo. Governments in the five states of region have tried to counter the orders of IPOB by discouraging citizens from observing the sit-at-home and in the process, the states have witnessed something close to bloodbath on Mondays. Many lives are lost including economic resources

The IPOB imposed sit-at-home has challenged the state security agencies because they cannot fathom the idea of non-state actors masquerading as IPOB and unknown gun men impose their authority on the people, as a result, the governments of the five states have declared war on IPOB, after much appeal to suspend the imposition of the defiant strategy. Unfortunately, the strategy has remained intractable in cities and rural communities. Those who disobeyed their orders in Enugu, Abakaliki, Aba, Owerri, Onitsha, Nnewi, Awka, Orlu, Okigwe and other semi-urban centres either pay with their lives or destruction of property. Fear has become the greatest weapon whereas security agencies seem to be incapable of containing them.

Conflict is a confrontation between parties any resistance toward the achievement of a goal is regarded as an obstacle and must be eliminated. Identity politics involves self-conception and self-definition of an individual or group and loyalty to membership of the group is not negotiable because it helps to define the social, political, economic, and territorial interest of the group (Dokubo and Oluwadare, 2011). The identity issue surrounds the existence of the IPOB. In so far as their leader is still incarcerated, the defiant strategy would continue to define the political and social life of the people. Presently, there is persistence violence in most of the capital cities and some surrounding communities in the region and these areas have not known peace. There has always been total compliance in the core rural in all the states of the region. Therefore, the sit-at-home strategy has remained an intractable issue that has hindered development in the five states of Southeastern region of Nigeria, other Igbo communities outside the region. Thus, the study highlights the factors that led to the imposition of the sit-at-home strategy, examine the effects and impact on the survival of the region bearing in mind the development needs.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to investigate the Intractable IPOB Political Defiant Sit-at-home Strategy and its Grave Consequences on the Political economy of Southeastern Nigeria Since 2021. The specific objectives are:

1. To highlight the factors that led to the imposition of the sit-at-home strategy;
2. To examine its effectiveness and impact on the social well-being of the region; and
3. To suggest how peace and development could be restored in the region.

Marginalization and Political Resistance

Marginalization is a process where a person or thing is accorded lesser respect. It is a social phenomenon by which a minority or subgroup is denied their right to participate or enjoy some basic resources. It also shows a pattern of ignoring a group or individual when it comes to having access to a collective patrimony. Marginality is an experience that prevents certain subgroups from enjoying what is due to them is marginalization. It is a historical reality structured into the national life of the society. In Nigeria, it is an exclusion or isolation of a section of the society from the main political, social, economic mainstreams. Southeastern Nigeria, where the greater population of Igbo people occupy, has been schemed out of the mainstream politics which is the commanding height of national resources. The aftermath of the war has remained the bane of development in the region and since politics influences other spheres of life, the exclusion of the Igbo has retarded development and unemployment predominates. The consequence of this neglect gave birth to MOSSOB, Biafra Zionist Group and the IPOB (Mark, Obi and Oham, 2002;).

Political Resistance

The concept of resistance has been widely used by individuals and groups. It is the act of fighting against something that is attacking you or refusing to accept something. This relationship shows that there is an attacker and a defender. It involves fighting an existing political order (Bowman, 1979). In Nigeria between 2015 and 2023, the IPOB, representing the interest of the entire Igbo race alleged that the Buhari led Federal Government, dominated by Fulani ethnic bloc denied the Igbo access to power and in reaction, the Federal Government has since applied force to quell the resistance. And the governors of the five states have collaborated with the Federal government to bring the resistance to a halt by using all forms of non-state actors and the security agencies to restore peace and security but all these efforts have remained futile as the sit-at-home order persist. This violence has psychologically emboldened the IPOB and other underground groups.

Indigenous People of Biafra and sit-at-home strategy

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a separatist organization in all Igbo dominated areas in Nigeria comprising the five states in Southeastern Nigeria and parts of Rivers and Delta states. This organization was a child of circumstance formed in 2012 by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu. It was a splinter group of MOSSOB, formed over perceived excessive abuse of power by the Nigerian State which has been denying the Igbo race their due right in the Federation. As a result, the IPOB has demanded for self-government from Nigeria. This quest for independence has been perceived as an affront to the Federal Government because it reminds the rest of Nigeria of the civil war between the Old Eastern Nigeria and the rest of the country, 1967 and 1970.

The leader of the group mounted media attacks on the government of Mohammadu Buhari and this led to his arrest, incarceration for months and later released on bail, only to sneak out of the country to sustain his barrage of attacks through his Radio Biafra. By 2021, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, was abducted by

the Nigerian security in Kenya and bundled back to the country. As part of the resistance against perceived domination and marginalization, and in solidarity with the incarcerated leader of IPOB, the organization introduced the 'sit-t-home political defiance strategy to force the Federal government to release him. This was also to pressurize the state governors to lobby the Central government to accede to their demand of releasing their leader to continue the fight against perceived injustice.

The IPOB sit-at-home strategy has taken a toll on the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo, and part of Delta and Rivers states. In fact, it was extended to Lagos and in some cities in Northern Nigeria until Igbo businessmen and women were threatened with expulsion. The imposition has become a tool for flagrant disobedience of the laws of the land, thus, the state has unleashed violence against the members and sympathizers of the group in the region and across the Niger.

Insecurity and security

Insecurity conceptualizes a climate of lawlessness, absence of freedom from threats. Security on the other hand is the absence of threats to stability, national cohesion, peace, and development (Igbuzor, (2011:1); Nwanegbo and Odigbo, (2013:36). Against this explanation, security in the sense of Nigeria emphasizes justice, national and integrated policy of development. Unfortunately, instead of harmonizing the benefits of diversity in aggregating the potentials of the large population, the country's rulers promote divisiveness through ethno-religious policies. Some regions have ganged up against Southeastern Nigeria in all spheres of governance. There is also the challenge of the elite capture which has complemented the sectional marginalization to make peace elusive. The net results of all these are unemployment, mass poverty, political crisis, and absence of patriotism. The presence of all these have created a society where there is continuous disruption of progress; people no longer enjoy their freedom to fulfill their God given talents. The political and economic environment is choked by all manner of criminality such as electoral malpractice, kidnapping, formation of separatist organizations, the 'unknown gun men', armed robbery, economic terrorism being carried out by the political class and the creation of unlawful militia groups by governors to kill and maim political opponents. Governance has become difficult because some forests have been ceased and occupied by these non-state actors and the burden of funding development has gone into security matters.

Theoretical Framework

The researched shall be guided by the relative deprivation and system theories.

Relative deprivation theory explains that critical triggers of violence are social and economic forces that operate in the society. This theory was adopted in explaining the social inequality that existed in England in the twentieth century. During this period people were denied their right and justice, money, and status. Ruciman's theory was better conceptualized by Gurr (1970) with his argument that human beings tend to act violently when frustrated. Anger most times degenerate into violence. This theory explains the deprivation of Southeastern, shut out of having access to national resources and critical infrastructure. This state of things incubated the rise of separatist organizations forced to act violently and their acts have cost the Southeastern Nigeria a lot on Mondays and the unwarranted sit-at-homes.

System Theory

This Talcott Parson's functionalism influenced David Easton's analysis that every socio-political system is characterized by conflict of interests. A system is like an organ which functions effectively when every part responds to the achievement of a common goal. But when the system is dysfunctional, the system become disabled with crises and agitations as is the case in Nigeria.

Empirical Studies

Scholars have conducted research on the Biafra agitation and the sit-at-home order, and each revealed its negative impact on the region. Mark, et al (2022) examined the ills of IPOB sit-at-home and its implications on the economy of the Southeastern region. The study explains its adverse effect. The study was based on secondary sources while it adopted the relative deprivation theory as its framework. Data were content analyzed. The study recommends dialogue as a tangible tool for recreating peace and development. In Owoeye, et al (2022), the study evaluated the effects of the Monday sit-at-home order on political economy and revealed the effects of the imposition on commercial activities in the region. The study adopted a descriptive design with qualitative orientation. Talcott and Easton's systems' theory guided the study, and the research recommends rotational presidency as the panacea to the lingering problem in the Southeastern Nigeria. Finally, in Alumona, Azom and Iloh's (2019) work, they traced the genesis of the Biafra struggle, the protests, government brutality against the agitators, and inability of Government to stem the tide of insecurity. The paper adopted secondary sources of data collection and revealed that the challenges of nation-building have implications on peacebuilding and development.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive design using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. A semi-structured questionnaire to interview 420 respondents and 12 key informants was used for data collection while statistical mean and content analysis were used for data analysis. The sit-at-home strategy has become an emotional tool to influence the larger part of the Southeastern and care is taken to avoid the key actors.

Result

Table1: Showing the factors that led to the imposition of sit-at-home

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	x
1.	Southeastern is marginalized politically by the Federal Government	122	234	58	6	420 1312	3.1
2.	The region has been neglected since the civil war	121	145	101	53	420 1174	2.8
3.	The arrest and detention of IPOB leader	256	102	49	13	420 1441	3.4
4.	Sit-at-home is a reaction to the neglect of economic and infrastructural needs	98	212	121	110	420 1380	3.3
							3.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

From the table above, data revealed that the issues that led to declaration of the sit-at-home political defiant strategy were the marginalization of the Southeastern region and out of 420 respondents, 122 strongly agreed, 234 agreed while 56 disagreed and 6 strongly disagreed with the view. With the mean value of 3.1, the assertion was accepted. On item 2 on the neglect of the region since the civil war, out of 420 respondents, 121 respondents strongly affirmed, 145 respondents confirmed the assertion, while 101 respondents disagreed and 53 strongly rejected the view. With the value of 2.8, respondents showed their agreement with the assertion. Item 3 on the arrest of IPOB leader as a catalyst for imposition of the sit-at-home order, out of 420 respondents, 256 respondents expressed their strong agreement with the view, 102 respondents supported the view, while 49 responses rejected it and 13 other views strongly disagreed with it. With 3.4 mean value, data revealed that the assertion was accepted as the immediate factor that led to

the declaration of the sit-at-home strategy. Finally, item 4 which says sit-at-home is a reaction to neglect of infrastructure and access to economic resources at the centre was tested, out of 420 respondents, 98, responses strongly affirmed the view, 212 respondents supported the view while 121 respondents rejected the view while 110 strongly had a contrary view. With the value of 3.3, the assertion was accepted. Arising from the analysis, with the cumulative mean of 3.2, data provided the factors led to the imposition of the sit-at-home order in Southeastern Nigeria.

To what extent was the order effective and what were its impacts on the well-being of Southeasterners?

Table 2: Showing analysis on the effectiveness and impact of the sit-at-home on the well-being of Southeastern Nigeria: LE=Large Extent, E=Extent, NQ=Not Quite; LE= Large Extent

S/N	ITEMs	LE	E	NQ		Total	x
5.	Sit-at-home has been very effective in rural communities and cities	59	312	23	26	420 1244	3.0
6.	The fear of capital punishment forces citizens to observe sit-at-home	310	110	0	0	420 1570	3.7
7.	Sit-at-home has paralyzed economic activities in Southeastern Nigeria	235	121	32	32	420 1399	3.3
8.	The fear of sit-at-home has denied citizens full participation in political activities in the region	78	156	128	58	420 1094	2.6
9.	Foreign investors are afraid of investing in the region.	123	167	104	26	420 1227	2.9
10.	Sit-at-Home has defied all attempt by government to stop it in majority of our cities and rural communities	124	281	5	10	420 1361	3.2 3.1

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

From table 2 on item 5, analysis revealed that out of 420 respondents, 59 to a large extent agreed that the order to sit at home has been effectively complied with, 312 responses agreed to an extent while 23 views to an extent disagreed, and 26 respondents to a large extent disagreed with the view. With the mean value of 3.0, the assertion that the sit-at-home strategy was and is still observed effectively in the rural areas and in some cities was largely accepted. On item 6, analysis confirmed that out of 420 respondents, 310 to a large extent affirmed that fear for one's life forces people to sit at, 110 to an extent supported the view, while no respondent disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the view. With the value of 3.7, the assertion was largely accepted. On item 7, out of 420 respondents, analysis revealed that 235 responses to a large extent strongly agreed that the sit-at-home order has paralyzed economic activities in the region, 121 responses to an extent supported the view while 32 to an extent disagreed and 32 responses largely rejected the view. With the mean value of 3.3, the view was largely accepted. On item 8, analysis revealed that out of 420 respondents, 78 respondents to a large extent accepted the fear of losing one's life has denied citizens full participation in political activities in the region, 156 responses to an extent agreed with the view while 128 respondents to an extent rejected it and 58 responses to a large extent rejected the view. With the value of 2.6, the assertion was to an extent accepted. On item 9, out of 420 respondents, 123 largely affirmed that foreign investors are discouraged to invest in the region because of insecurity, 167 responses to an extent supported the view while 104 responses rejected the view to a certain extent, and 26 largely rejected the view. With the value of 2.9, the view was accepted. Finally, item 10 which tested the intractability of the sit-at-home, analysis revealed that 124 responses to a large extent accepted the view

that the order has defied government effort to stop it, 281 responses accepted this to an extent, while 5 dissenting views to an extent rejected it and 10 views largely rejected the view. With the value of 3.2, the assertions were largely accepted as having made the imposition intractable. Data revealed that with a cumulative mean of 3.1, some of views revealed that the order has been largely effective, and its impact has been grave for the region.

What are the strategies that could restore peace and development in Southeastern Nigeria?

Table 3: Showing the possible strategies to be adopted to restore peace and development in Southeastern Nigeria

S/N	ITEMs	SA	A	D	SD	X	Remark
10.	Security agencies should use force	52	89	238	18	420 969	2.3
11.	Mazi Nnamdi Kanu should be released as directed by the Appeal Court	208	212	0	0	420 1468	3.5
12.	A positive economic environment should be restored.	110	189	103	18	420 1231	2.9
13.	Security must be maintained to protect lives and property	223	146	20	31	420 1401	3.3
14	There should dialogue with IPOB organization	57	204	105	54	1104	2.6

Cumulative Mean: 2.9

From the table above, data revealed that out of 420 respondents, 52 responses strongly supported the view that security agencies should use force to dislodge the IPOB organization for peace to reign, 89 views accepted the assertion, while 238 responses rejected the view, and 18 respondents unmistakably rejected the view. With the value of 2.3, the assertion was rejected. This could mean that majority of respondents were in support of peaceful resolution and not force. On the view that the leader of IPOB should be released as directed by the Court of Appeal, 208 responses emphatically supported this view, 212 responses also supported the assertion, while no responses rejected the view. With the value of 3.5, the strategy was largely accepted. Out of 420 respondents, 110 responses supported the suggestion that a positive economic environment should be restored in Southeastern Nigeria as it used to be for development, 189 responses supported the view, while 103 responses rejected to view and 18 emphatically rejected it. With the value of 2.9, respondents in the majority suggested that the solution to the insecurity caused by the sit-at-home is to restore the peaceful climate that would usher development. Out of 420 respondents, 223 responses supported the view that security should be maintained to protect lives and property, 146 responses supported this assertion while 20 vies disagreed and 32 others completely rejected it. With the 3.3 value, the suggestion was accepted. Finally, out of 420 respondents, 57 responses agreed with the suggestion that dialogue would solve the challenges of the IPOB sit-at-home defiance, 204 respondents supported the view while 105 responses rejected it and 54 totally rejected the suggestion. With the value of 2.6, the strategy was accepted.

Discussion of Result

Reasons why IPOB declared the Sit-at-home in all Igbo dominated Areas

The phenomenon had its root in the perceived marginalization of the entire Igboland particularly the Southeastern region which had borne the brunt of defeated in the civil war 1967-1970. Since then, the people of this region have been treated as third class citizens (Nkemjika, 2023). Findings revealed that the region is politically denied the opportunity of occupying strategic security and political positions: presidency, the chief of army except for the short stay of General Ihejirika during President Jonathan's government; Onovo also stayed briefly as Chief of Police Force. All these are perceived as forms of injustice because youths of the region believe that the occupation of such sensitive positions creates opportunities that would make and influence policies that would alleviate the deplorable conditions of the region through job creation, and stimulation of development. Data also revealed that the IPOB had accused those running the Federal government of neglecting the critical infrastructure such as the seaports at Port-Harcourt and Calabar which are outlets for goods produced in the region; it is also for importation of foreign goods. These had provided so many job opportunities for people but since the downgrading of these ports, economic activities have suffered (Ijioma, Ibeh, Ijioma and Uzuegbu, 2022: 96); Owoeye, Ezeanya and Obiegbunam, 2022.

However, the immediate reason for the imposition of the sit-at-home political defiance strategy was the abduction and incarceration of the IPOB leader, under President Muhammadu Buhari. This was also in solidarity with the IPOB course, and Mondays of every week became a solidarity day whenever their leader would appear in court. Unfortunately, it has become antithetical to development in the region. The economy of Southeastern region is flattened every Monday and some analysts have put the cost to billions. This cost keeps tumbling every week as Aba, Enugu, Nnewi, Onitsha, Abakaliki, Owerri, Awka, Umuahia and partially Asaba experience shut down of business, whereas these are the economic nerves centres of the region. Agricultural is at the lowest ebb and there is continuous destruction of existing infrastructure.

Nature and impact of sit-at-home on the wellbeing of Southeastern Region

Sit-at-home defiant strategy started as a solidarity action for Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and every Monday was observed in compliance with the IPOB and later other days that the IPOB leader went to court. Compliance was total in both the cities and the rural areas. Since most of the members of IPOB had been forced to retreat into the bushes, compliance was hundred percent in the rural areas but with time, the governors of the various states in the region and the security forces introduced measures that limited compliance in the main urban areas. Data revealed that fear of facing capital punishment forced people to observe sit-at-home because failure to do so attracted destruction of property and instant death. In recent time, several people were killed at Abakiliki, Enugu, Akwakuma junction in Owerri. Ebonyi state experiences regular attacks for non-compliance, and there are sections of some states where government officials fear to visit on other days besides the regular Monday sit-at-home. This has pitched the security forces against the IPOB. Moreover, the insecurity issue has been compounded by the 'unknown gunmen', a new form of threat aimed at destabilizing the social and economic wellbeing of the region. Those who designed it succeeded in suppressing votes in several areas in Southeastern Nigeria during the 2023 General election.

Criminality of all sorts are committed such as attacks on security forces particularly police personnel, prominent individuals such Dr Akunyili; the Late Cairman of Aguata Local Government who was beheaded; a prominent politician from Arondizuougu was also beheaded; traditional rulers from Orlu Zone and recently in Izombe and Mbaise, and a prominent politician from Northern Nigeria, Ahmed Gulak, who was killed while on a visit to Imo State. There were attacks on the Correctional Centre in

Owerri and the Police Headquarters, (Ebere, 2023) and the widespread attacks and destruction of ballot papers and other sensitive documents of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) in the five states of the region. The intractable nature of the sit-at-home order has undoubtedly been hijacked by faceless individuals. And with the usurpation of the leadership of IPOB by the Finland based Simon Ikpa, a new dimension of sit-at-home has been observed for a week while waiting for the next which he announced would start from July 30 – August 14. It has become clear that the negative impact of this defiance has come to stay if nothing drastic is done to stop it.

The sit-at-home political defiant strategy has created a humungous monster that has come to stay with the people of Southeastern Nigeria, and it has become an albatross to recovery from all manner of marginalization. It is self-inflicted and has deepened neglect, destruction, and under-development. Onitsha and Aba, which are two centres of commerce in the region have experience low productivity and the safety and future of the youths engaged in the Igbo apprenticeship scheme is highly threatened. Movements are restricted and there is persistent loss of the youthful population.

Findings also revealed that economic activities are at a lull since the introduction of this strategy. Businesses are lost; foreign investors and indigenes that have the intension to invest at home are scared and prefer Lagos and Abuja as destinations for investment. This view was corroborated by HomeNews, (2019). This has affected existing infrastructure, and with the militarization of the region with police and military checkpoints harassing youth and innocent citizens in the entire region, political activities have been hijacked by some sponsored agents of insecurity. Unemployment soars to a new height; there is increase in rural-urban migration to escape from the areas the faceless people have absolute control over. Some parts of Ebonyi, Imo and Anambra are under siege by faceless criminals and the onslaught of state security agencies, but any crime committed is attributed to IPOB.

Strategies to Restore Peace and Development in Southeastern Nigeria

Peace and development are symbiotic in nature. A harmonious climate drives development through promoting the wellbeing of a people. But a hostile environment drives away the self-esteem of people and productivity would be low. However, for the region to recover from this menace, the state governors should pile pressure on the Federal Government to without further delay, release Mazi Nnamdi Kanu from detention and dialogue with the IPOB. Also, all manner of injustice and discrimination against the people of the region and the entire Igbo within and outside Southeastern region must be redressed. As argued by Okaatu (2023), if Igbo are given their rightful place in Nigeria, nobody would complain. And the Igbo race just as other races in Nigeria would unleash the potential in them to ensure rapid development of the country. Moreover, security must be restored, and the kinetic approach of tackling insecurity should be replaced with other peacebuilding strategies restore a robust peace-engendering development for both the individual and the entire region. As argued by Anyaele, Ijioma and Onyeonu (2017) the Southeastern region is strategic to Central Africa and other West Africa countries in sustaining their economy in some goods produced in the region. Currently, Innoson motors is the major assembly plant in the region that supply vehicles to some countries along the coast of West Africa. Without peace there would not be a conducive climate to produce. The overall strategy should be dialogue and security of lives and property.

Conclusion and Recommendations

IPOB sit-at-home political defiant strategy imposed to fight injustice has become a set back to the political economy and total wellbeing of Southeastern Nigeria and the entire Igbo land because criminal elements have hijacked the process to perpetrate evil against the people and security agencies. Businesses in the region are almost in a state of atrophy; social and political activities are grounded, and these do not

promote development. It is against all these that this research therefore recommends the re-activation of Gowon's three Rs (Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation) to bring development back to all Igbo areas in Nigeria; also, other regions should reintegrate the Igbo into main stream politics to allow qualified Igbo citizens occupy prominent positions as the president of Nigeria and critical service chiefs; there should be a revival of the Port-Harcourt and Calabar ports which would include linking Igbo land to the sea through Oguta and Orashi river. Furthermore, Onitsha linkway through the River Niger to the Atlantic Ocean should become a reality to make the port receive containers. Government should be encouraged to dialogue with IPOB to tame insecurity. Of great importance is that the governors of Southeastern states must be creative in designing programmes that would generate self-employment to stem the tide of criminality in the region. Finally, Nigeria must return to true federalism.

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