

The Agitation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) And its Impact on Nigeria's National Development

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how the agitations for self-determination by the Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB), have impacted Nigeria's National Development. With the help of questionnaires and interviews, 400 respondents from south-eastern Nigeria were investigated using a descriptive survey methodology. Simple percentage tables were used to illustrate the data, and Chi-square tests were used to assess the hypotheses (X²). The major finding is that the agitations for self-determination by the Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB), is a setback to national development as it poses a threat to economic development, promotes political instability, and opens the country for internal and external security attacks, among other national endangerment. This entails is that the IPOB activities will destroy Nigeria's already crippled national development if a well-thought-out solution is not proffered. Based on this, it is suggested by the authors that Nigeria call for a referendum to decide on the IPOB's self-determination to quell the menace.

Keywords: Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB), Agitations, Political Stability, Economic Development, National Security.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

National development, according to Hego (2018), is a result of political stability, economic development, internal and foreign national security, and government administrative efficiency. National development, according to the author, is based on political stability and economic development, which is enabled by governments' efficiency in providing security, education, health care, infrastructure, and social amenities, among other things.

Since the formation of IPOB in 2012, Biafran separatist demonstrations have taken place in South-East Nigeria, which is dominated by the Igbo ethnic group. The protests turned violent on December 2, 2015, when two police officers and nine protestors were reportedly killed among the thousands who had blocked the important Niger Bridge in the commercial city of Onitsha, Anambra State (Nwanosike, 2015). Several assets were demolished during the riots, including the city's prominent mosque and eight vehicles belonging to the Dangote Group, a company owned by a northern businessman Aliko Dangote. Several protestors have been slain in skirmishes with security forces in Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt, Owerri, and Asaba since the December 2015 incident (Sunny, 2016). Amnesty International accused the Nigerian military

in June 2016 of killing unarmed Biafra supporters in Onitsha, ahead of the country's planned Biafra memorial in May 2016.

Opening fire on nonviolent IPOB supporters and bystanders who posed no threat to anyone, according to Amnesty International, was an outrageous use of unwarranted and excessive force that resulted in several deaths and injuries. To be true, there is a history of extrajudicial killings of pro-Biafra followers that predates the current administration. For example, fifty bodies thought to be Biafra supporters were discovered floated in the Ezu River in Anambra State in January 2013. (Mamah, 2013). Despite this, Nigerian governments have not conducted full investigations into any of the past or current killings. The arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and director of the web-based Radio Biafra, on accusations of sedition, ethnic provocation, and treasonable felony, on October 19, 2015, was the immediate spark of recent Biafran separatist rallies. The IPOB and Radio Biafra are the most visible and radical proponents of a separate Biafra state currently in existence. With prior separatist movements simmering in the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt, as well as the existence of the Boko Haram insurgency, it's critical to examine these peripheral demands in light of their consequences for national development. This study is intended to contribute to the body of knowledge by examining the different facets of this implication, particularly in terms of politics, economics, security, and government efficiency.

The breakdown of this process is a major setback to the nation, and this position is challenged by self-determination seeking units within these countries, such as the Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB), which seeks the secession of south-eastern Nigeria.

Due to their protests, attacks, and media libels and slanders, the emergence of IPOB agitations has raised a great deal of internal and external worry, affecting numerous aspects of national development such as political stability, economic development, national security, and government efficiency. In their agitations, the group employs a variety of tactics, including sit-at-home, street marches, and the use of various forms of communication, such as radio and television, to discourage electoral participation, cease business activities, stage life-claiming protests, and attack government officials, particularly in the Diaspora.

Several researchers, including Adamu and Ocheni (2016), Adangor (2017), Chinwendu (2017), and Okpukri (2012), have studied IPOB agitations, including their history, methods, agenda, and impact on political stability, but there is a gap in the literature regarding their overall impact on national development. The researchers were motivated by the foregoing issues and a vacuum in the literature to look into the actions of the Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB) and their consequences for Nigerian national development.

Objectives of the Study

The goal of this research is to examine how the Ingenious People of Biafra (IPOB's) agitations for self-determination influences Nigeria's development; more specifically, this research aims to determine how the agitations for self-determination by the Ingenious People of Biafra affects political stability in Nigeria. Determines the impact of IPOB agitations on Nigeria's economic progress. Analyzes the influence of agitations by the Ingenious People of Biafra on national security. Evaluates whether the agitations of the Ingenious People of Biafra have an impact on the Nigerian government's effectiveness.

Research Question

The following questions are formulated to address the problems raised in this study;

1. How do the Ingenious People of Biafra's self-determination movements influence political stability?
2. To what extent do IPOB agitations have an impact on Nigeria's economic development?
3. What impact do the agitations of the Ingenious People of Biafra have on national security?
4. Do the agitations of the Ingenious People of Biafra have an impact on the Nigerian government's efficiency?

Limitation of the Study

This refers to the limitations of inherent factors that may have an impact on the research outcome. In other words, it is concerned with the restrictions that prevented the writers from doing a comprehensive or detailed research. When dealing with a topic like this, one would run into a number of issues:

- ❖ **Time:** The researcher's main constraint when gathering data for the study was time. The semester lectures ran concurrently with the writing of this project. As a result, the researcher's attention was divided between competing the project and meeting up with the semester lectures.
- ❖ **Finance:** Financial restrictions compounded the time aspect, especially given the existing high transportation costs to and from the study's large territory. Without external financial assistance, locating primary data in different locations would have been nearly impossible.
- ❖ **Poor Response:** People's unwillingness to cooperate in research projects make it difficult to obtain crucial data. Because they were concerned about their personal and work security, most persons in positions of authority refused to provide crucial information. The researchers' efforts were hampered as a result of the "Why not check tomorrow, I'm too busy" attitude, but consistency saved the situation.
- ❖ **Lack of Statistical Record:** Particularly in a developing country like Nigeria, record keeping has been a challenge and abysmally low. This made gathering information from secondary sources challenging, but the researchers were able to overcome this by using internet blogs and libraries as secondary information sources.

The validity and reliability of the instruments were not harmed as a result of the researcher's efforts; thus, the research's findings are trustworthy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Indigenous People of Biafra

The IPOB is a secessionist-separatist group that claims to represent all of Nigeria's South-eastern states in calling for a referendum on Biafran state independence. The IPOB had accused the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), of

compromising the goal of the Biafra actualization movement, having collected bribe from the Nigerian government. It promises to embody Biafra's authentic spirit.

IPOB's online and offline liberation campaigns have become increasingly extreme and militant since its formation in 2012. Its comments on the internet have sparked debate, including some statements by its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who doubles as the Director of Radio Biafra and Biafra Television. Kanu has been charged with hate speech and incendiary words that have the potential to further divide ethnic groups (Alkassim, 2017). Unlike MASSOB, IPOB appears to be preparing for military struggle and potentially, another civil war in order to liberate the Igbo people. Nnamdi Kanu, for example, requested arms at a World Igbo Congress in the United States to oppose Nigeria's federal government in a You-Tube (video) statement posted on October 26, 2015. Furthermore, on July 17, 2017, an IPOB member wrote on Facebook something that appears to indicate the group's genuine position in their online and offline actions.

It says, "The time for debate has passed." The Nigerian military slaughtered over 10,000 unarmed #Biafrans with impunity. Will they be resurrected through dialogue? We will not stop until the remaining 70 million people have been killed. Nigeria must choose between a referendum and taking our lives. (17 July 2017, 112K views) (Facebook, Emeka Gift, 17 July 2017, 112K views) This is in stark contrast to the BCG's previous assertion of nonviolent agitation (Figure 1). [AQ] The IPOB leader's separatist position and online statements have been attacked in the media as tribalistic and unprofessional. The IPOB leader was arrested by Nigerian security forces at Abuja Airport on October 16, 2015. After 16 months in detention, he was granted bail on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, and released on medical grounds, although he was forbidden from attending public demonstrations and giving media interviews. Following his release from prison, however, IPOB and its members in Nigeria and the diaspora have waged an online and offline rhetorical war. In certain states, the demonstrators have been accused of harassing and killing non-members of the group, prompting police interventions. Unconfirmed claims and images on social media have also highlighted certain sad occurrences in the south-east and south-south states, where the police have carried out illegal mass executions of IPOB members.

An Amnesty International investigation, according to Dixon (2016), accused Nigerian security forces of waging a "chilling campaign" of torture and killings against the pro-Biafran independence movement. According to the report, the Nigerian military murdered at least 150 Biafran protestors, with the figure likely to be far higher. The world community strongly denounced the deployment of a special army formation to the South-east states and the implementation of the 'egwu-eke 2' (python dance 2) military exercise, which the Nigerian army said was intended to clear the Igbo states of 'criminals.' In the so-called python dance 2, media reports and recordings on social media displayed disturbing photographs of torture and executions of demonstrators by army officers (Ujumadu and Okoli, 2017).

During the invasion, the residence of the IPOB's leader was stormed, and some IPOB members were arrested and killed (Ujumadu, 2017). The Nigerian army designated IPOB a terrorist group in September 2017 on charges of multiple security violations, as if calling a dog a terrible name to hang it. IPOB's designation as a terrorist organization drew widespread condemnation both domestically and internationally, particularly from the United States and the European Union (EU).

With political pressure mounting, the governors of the South-east issued a communiqué on Friday, September 15, 2017 at a meeting of the South East Governors Forum in Enugu, banning

IPOB and its activities in all Igbo states and directing the group to channel all grievances to the committee of governors, the Ohaneze Ndigbo, or National Assembly members, through the South East governors (Uzodinma, 2017). In addition, on September 17, 2017, Nigeria's President signed a presidential order prohibiting or banning IPOB because of the group's "involvement in terrorist activities," according to the government. IPOB and its operations in Nigeria are now illegal and punishable under Nigerian law as a result of this ban.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the research design is a qualitative survey method. The information were gathered via a questionnaire instrument, which was supplemented by an in-depth interview for qualitative data. This research was conducted in South-Eastern Nigeria, a region of conflict that includes five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo). The study focuses on IPOB's actions and their implications for national development, with a special focus on South-Eastern Nigeria. The population of this research is made up of people from the five south-eastern states, and the Nigeria Population Commission's 2021 population projections are as follows:

Abia	3,927,347
Anambra	5,827,809
Ebonyi	3,080,383
Enugu	4,611,119
Imo	5,708,756
Total	23,155,414

The purpose sampling technique used in this study was based on the criteria of individuals who are literate and willing and able to complete the questionnaire. This is dependent on the study's intention or goal. Only those elements from the population that are most appropriate for our research were chosen.

To achieve both face and content authenticity, our supervisor and other MAPD Department research professionals were given the research instruments for constructive criticism and corrections. Their corrections, on the other hand, were all incorporated into the study.

The reliability test was conducted in a test-retest format. This was accomplished by administering the questionnaire instruments to the respondents at two-week intervals, using Cronbach's alpha test to correlate their responses. Survey questions are a set of well-written questions that are given to responders and filled out completely. The questionnaire included a brief introduction that explained how to answer specific questions provided by the researcher to the respondent who were to fill it out.

The survey included closed-ended questions that examined the demographic and thematic concerns addressed. It was simple to hand deliver the questionnaires and collect them at a mutually agreed-upon time with the responders who were deemed suitable to answer the questions. Because the study is solely for academic purposes, the respondents were promised that all of the information they provided would be kept private. The study used an oral interview conducted by the researchers to obtain information from the respondent in order to confirm their position expressed in the surveys.

RESULTS

Respondents were given 400 copies of the questionnaire in this study. Only 380 of these were recovered and certified for this analysis, with the remaining 20 lost in the process. 380, of which 95 percent of the total distributed questionnaires were deemed sufficient for statistical analysis (Hego, 2018).

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The gender, age, education level, religion, and marital status of respondents were all gathered. Table 1 contains the information acquired on their sex.

Table 1: Sex Distribution

Sex	Total	Percentages (%)
Male	210	55.26
Female	170	44.74
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

In this study, there were more male respondents, though the discrepancy from the number of females is not that large.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age	Total	Percentages (%)
18-30yrs	125	32.89
31 - 45yrs	165	43.42
46yrs and above	90	23.69
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

The respondent age range indicates that only adults were utilized in the poll, ensuring the legitimacy of their opinions. There were more respondents between the ages of 31 and 45 years.

Table 3: Education Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Total	Percentages (%)
FSLC	20	5.26
SSCE	170	44.74
BSC/HND	160	42.11

MSC and above	30	7.89
Total	380	100

More than 90% of the respondents have at least a senior secondary school certificate, while at least 50% are graduates or have higher educational certificate.

Table 4: Religion of Respondents

Religion	Total	Percentages %
Christianity	340	89.1
Islamic	15	4.1%
Traditional	25	6.8%
Total	380	100%

Respondents indicate that south-east is predominantly Christians, with little spices of traditional worship; Islamic adherents are seldom in the region.

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Total	Percentages (%)
Single	140	36.84
Married	200	52.63
Divorced	40	10.53
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

There are more married respondents that the single and divorced add together. This may be considered an indicator of high social responsibility among the respondents.

Research question 1: How do the agitations for self-determination by Ingenious People of Biafra affect political stability?

Item 1: IPOB through its various media condemns the entire political system in Nigeria

Table 6: Responses on whether IPOB through its various media condemns the entire political system in Nigeria

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	320	84.21
Disagreed	60	15.79

Total	380	100
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Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

There is enough evidence to empirical prove that IPOB through its various media condemns the entire political system in Nigeria based on the survey result presented above.

Item 2: IPOB disrupts political activities such as rallies in south-eastern Nigeria

Table 7: Responses on whether IPOB disrupts political activities such as rallies in south-eastern Nigeria

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	290	76.32
Disagreed	90	23.68
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

This result confirmed that political activities like rallies are been disrupt by Pro-IPOBs in south-eastern Nigeria.

Item 3: IPOB encourages non participation in Nigeria Electoral processes

Table 8: Responses on whether IPOB encourages non participation in Nigeria Electoral processes

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	310	81.58
Disagreed	70	18.42
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

Major respondent affirmed that IPOB discourage participation in Nigeria Electoral processes, this position shows that IPOB is outright against registration, contesting and voting, in Nigeria elections.

Research question 2: To what extent do IPOB agitations affect economic development in Nigeria?

Item 4: IPOB disrupts economic activities through their sit-at-home protests

Table 9: IPOB disrupts economic activities through their sit-at-home protests

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	320	84.21

Disagreed	60	15.79
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

Statistically speaking this table provided sufficient evidence as to the disruptions cause by IPOB sit-at homes to the businesses in south-east Nigeria. According to the interviewed respondents, the sit-at-home order hampers economic activities, especially at public places like markets, offices, banks and schools.

Item 5: IPOB Discourages indigenes from investment outside south-east

Table 10: Responses on whether IPOB Discourages indigenes from investment outside south-east

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	320	84.21
Disagreed	60	15.79
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

The table above formed an empirical platform to prove that IPOB discourages indigenes from investment outside south-east, this is against economic principle of free trade zone that is enjoyed internally in every nation, and this thereby limits the economic potentials of Nigeria.

Item 6: IPOB discourages external investors from investing into Nigeria

Table 11: IPOB discourages external investors from investing into Nigeria

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	280	73.68
Disagreed	100	26.32
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

Considering the numbers on this table, IPOB actually discourages external investors from investing into Nigeria; this was confirmed also through few granted interviews of the respondents that IPOB uses their radio media to talk down on Nigeria economy which discourages external investors from investing in Nigeria.

Research question 3: What are the effects of Ingenious People of Biafra agitations on national security?

Item 7: IPOB agitations and protests leads to loss of life and property

Table 12: Responses on whether the IPOB agitations and protests lead to loss of life and property

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	290	76.32
Disagreed	90	23.68
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

The figures above proves that majority of the respondent agreed that the IPOB agitations and protests leads to loss of life and property. Their street protests and processions often clashes with anti-IPOB groups or the Nigeria security agencies as affirmed by the respondents interviewed.

Item 8: IPOB alliance with foreign countries is a threat to National security

Table 13: Responses on whether IPOB alliance with foreign countries is a threat to National security

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	315	82.89
Disagreed	65	17.11
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

There is an empirical evident on this table to accept that the IPOB alliance with foreign countries is a threat to National security. The interviewed respondents affirmed that the IPOB has some kind relationship with United Kingdom, United States, Germany and Israel, but largely unofficial, which puts the country at the risk of invasion using insiders like the Pro-IPOB citizens.

Item 9: IPOB activities affect the safety peaceful co-inhabitation of non-pro IPOB citizens.

Table 14: Responses on whether the IPOB activities affect the safety peaceful co-inhabitation of non-pro IPOB citizens

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	290	76.32
Disagreed	90	23.68
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

This table provides an inference to the verity that the IPOB activities affect the safety peaceful co-inhabitation of non-pro IPOB citizens. This discovery put the lives and properties of ordinary citizen in danger especially in the IPOB’s dominate areas of the south-east like Aba in Abia State.

Research question 4: Whether the Ingenious People of Biafra agitations affect the efficiency of Nigerian government?

Item 10: IPOB agitations attracts internal condemnation on Nigerian government

Table 15: Responses on whether the IPOB agitations attracts internal condemnation on Nigerian government

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	325	85.53
Disagreed	55	14.47
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

An exploration of this table revealed that the IPOB agitations really attract internal condemnation on Nigerian government. The agreement of the respondent is statically wide from the disagreement, this is the highest range of difference in this study.

Item 11: IPOB carries out physical and verbal attacks on Nigeria government officials

Table 16: IPOB carries out physical and verbal attacks on Nigeria government officials

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	275	72.37
Disagreed	105	17.63
Total	380	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2021.

Most respondents affirmed that the IPOB carries out physical and verbal attacks on Nigeria government officials, most affirmed this through interviews and internet evidences of physical attacks on Ike Ekweremadu (former Senate President of Nigeria) ,and that of Rotimi Amaechi (Nigeria Minister for Transport) among others, while verbal attacks are frequent on their radio Biafra, where all the government officials especially from the south-east extradition are been washed.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of this study, Ingenious People of Biafra's agitations for self-determination is a major setback to national development. Due to their protests, attacks, and media libels and slanders, the emergence of IPOB agitations has raised a great deal of internal and external worry, affecting numerous aspects of national development such as political

stability, economic development, national security, and government efficiency. In their agitations, the group employs a variety of tactics, including sit-at-home, street protests, and the use of various forms of communication, such as radio and television, to discourage electoral participation, cease business activities, stage life-claiming protests, and attack government officials, particularly in the Diaspora. The implication of this finding is that IPOB activities will destroy Nigeria's already crippled national development if they nothing is done to address the issue. Based on the findings of this study, it's recommending that, In order to reduce political instability, the nation should hold a referendum to IPOB's request for self-determination, the IPOB's operations should be controlled by the riot act and other protest-related regulations so that economic activity, particularly in the South-east, is not grounded. Security operatives should ensure that any pro-IPOB member who poses a security threat is prosecuted, all IPOB media that engages in verbal attacks on the persons of Nigerian government officials should be shut down by media authorities in order to curtail the menace.

CONCLUSION

It is important for the federal government of Nigeria to work towards restoring peace in the country because, every day, individuals discuss the importance of peace in their lives, their families, their countries, and the globe at large. There isn't a day that goes by without someone or two talking about the need for peace. In that remark, I will state that peace is a requirement for human survival. According to Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, "the objective of every human individual is happiness." This indicates that every human being, consciously or unconsciously, aspires and works toward the realization of happiness. Happiness is a condition of well-being, while serenity is the totality of happiness. It's crucial to remember that both the rich and the poor, the Christian and the Muslim all require peace. Regardless of ethnic, religious, geographic, political, social, or educational background, peace is a basic human need. In the absence of peace, instability, weak institutions, and limited access to justice continue to pose a serious threat in not only Nigeria, but the world at large.

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