SEPARATISTS’ STRATEGY: APPRAISING THE EFFECTS OF IPOB MONDAY SIT-AT-HOME ORDER ON POLITICAL ECONOMY (SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES) OF THE SOUTH-EAST REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract: The paper examined the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home order on political economy of the South-East region of Nigeria. Imperatively, the paper investigated the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home on socio-political and economic activities of the Southeast-Nigeria in the specific areas of commercial activities; market operations, transportations, educational system, Banks, Government institutions among others. The paper is descriptive and aligned with qualitative orientations; it employed documented evidence cum secondary sources of data; majorly media publications. The data gathered were content analyzed thematically with logical reasoning while Tacoltt Parsons and David Easton’s analysis of systems theory served as a theoretical guide cum framework to the paper. Among other findings, the paper established that IPOB Monday sit-at-home has negatively affected the socio-political and economic activities of the South-East region of Nigeria. Based on these, the paper recommended an urgent need for the Federal Government of Nigeria to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources among the six (6) geo-political zones of Nigeria via proper federal character system. More so, the Nigerian Government should try as much as possible; make quick judgment on the issue of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu (the leader of IPOB) since the Monday sit-at-home order was employed as a strategy to pressure Federal Government to free him from detention. In addition, the paper recommended, power shift cum rotation (presidential post) among all the six (6) geo-political zones of Nigeria, rather being an issue of the Southern and Northern-Nigeria. All these aforementioned served as practical possible solutions on how to resolve the issue of IPOB Monday sit-at-home order and as well; restore socio-political and economic activities of the South-East region of Nigeria.

Keywords: Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB); Insecurity; Political Economy; Southeast Region; Sit-at-home
INTRODUCTION
The ongoing Monday sit-at-home strategy cum activity of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast-Nigeria is rooted in the historical struggle towards restoring an independent state of Biafra in the old Eastern region of Nigeria. Historically, Biafra had previously existed as an independent multi-ethnic republic; encompassing majorly the Igbo; the Ijaw, Efik and the Ibibio people among few other ethnic groups. The current IPOB is traced to the declaration of Biafra by Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu for three (3) years (between 1967 and 1970). Subsequently, the tension/struggle between Biafra and the Federal Government led to the Nigerian civil war that lasted for about 3years; there were an estimated 3.5 million deaths that were seriously civilian causalities due to hunger and starvations during the war with damaging consequences on socio-political and economic activities in Nigeria (Campbell, 2017). Thus, this marked the first historical link or evidence between the Biafran struggle and political cum economic activities in Nigeria (political economy). Consequently, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and others tried to reconcile the combatants. Most countries continued to recognize Gowon’s regime as the government of all Nigeria and the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union supplied with arms. However, the international sympathy for the plight of starving Biafran children brought airlifts of food and medicine from many countries which include Gabon, Cote de’Ivoire, Tanzania and Zambia to the Biafran agitators and soldiers while France supplied them weapons (McKenna, 2021).

Consequently, the Biafran was finally routed in a series of engagements in the late December 1969 and the early January 1970; Odumegwu Ojukwu (the then Biafran Leader) fled to Cote-d’Ivoire while the remaining Biafran soldiers surrendered to the Federal Government on January 15, 1970. Consequently, Biafra, on the point of that total collapse, thereupon brought a total end to the first historical struggle towards the attainment of Biafran Nation (Akachu, 1977).

The current Biafran agitation resurfaced through IPOB, and this was triggered following the nature of Nigerian federalism cum democratic system that is perceived as disadvantage to the Igbos due to the claimed evidence of marginalization of the Southeast region majorly dominated by the Igbo people by the Nigerian government. These evidence of marginalization have been pin-pointed by scholars cum literature to include political alienation, inequitable resource distribution, extra-judicial killings, heavy military presence among similar other factors. It is against this backdrop that Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) was formed in the year 2012 by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu; with the aim of restoring independence of Biafra (Allison, 2017).

Since its formation in 2012, the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are many but the most recent and unique strategy employed by the separatist group is Sit-at home order which usually takes place every Monday. The limelight of IPOB Monday sit-at-home became known to the public following the re-arrest of the IPOB leader; Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigerian Government (Federal) on June 29, 2021. Since the arrest of the leader of the group (IPOB), the sit-at-home order has been the major strategy employed by IPOB member cum supporters to react spontaneously to the arrest of their leader; commemorating important days in the History of Biafra Struggle in showing solidarity with the leader of IPOB (Mazi and as well to make Nigerian government free Nnamdi Kanu from what they perceived as unlawful detention/prison (Omole, 2021).
The regular Monday sit-at-home and its unlawful enforcements on other weekly days across all the states in the Southeast region/zone have generated a lot of controversies between the group and the Federal Government of Nigeria with deadly consequences on socio-political and economic activities (political economy, the combination of politics and economy) within the South-east region. Politically, the region has presumably experienced different alterations of political activities resulting from IPOB sit-at-home order such as violations of civic and socio-political rights of Nigerians which include freedom of movement, right to life, panic to register for vote, come out to vote during elections cum work as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ad-hoc staff, extra-deployment of security forces to the south East region at the expense of other regions security, absence of many government workers from work on Mondays among others with deadly and destructive consequences. Economically, the sit at home strategy cum order has presumably led to the closure of market places particularly on Mondays and other commercial activities in the region, closure of Banks on every Monday and other sit-at-home days, burning of commercial vehicles and shops among similar others that serve as indictors of the sit-at-home strategy on Nigerian economic activities.

The foregoing trends occasioned the nature of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order via proposed cum perceived interrogating links in form of selected indicators on political economy (political and economic activities) of the Southeast region of Nigeria. It is against this background cum basis that the study tends to ascertain the extent to which the IPOB’s Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order has affected the political economy (political activities) of the South-East region and the forms the primary focus of this paper. The Monday sit-at-home order as a strategy employed by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) towards freeing their leader from the detention of the Federal Government of Nigeria vis-à-vis actualizing the sovereign state of Biafra has been prevalent in the Southeast-Nigeria. The frequent closure of schools cum absence of teacher cum lecturers on duty on Mondays, the closure of most banking institutions every Monday as observed within the researcher’s immediate environment, the absence of Government workers from duty on Mondays, the observation of closure of Markets cum enterprises within the Southeast-Nigeria, the fear of people to travel freely cum confidently travel from one state to another within the Southeast geopolitical zone, particularly on Monday, the excessive deployment of State repressive apparatus (security personnel) of about 40,000 personnel to Anambra state only during the gubernatorial election among other observable factors.

It is noteworthy that the above mentioned activities resulting from the IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order has presumed multi-dimensional effects on the political economy (regarding political and economic activities) of the South-east region of Nigeria. Southeast since every State within the region are being subjected to the pressure of Monday sit-at-home order despite the response of the Nigerian Government; both the Federal and State Government. Hinging on the foregoing statement, the paper is making a reasonable attempt to ascertain the extent to which the IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order has affected the political and economic activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA (IPOB) CUM MONDAY SIT-AT-HOME ORDER
Scholars cum literature have described Indigenous People of Biafra from their different views cum ideological activities of the organization and the most similar element that runs through their definitions is that; it is a separatist cum agitation organization fighting for Independence of Biafra. Meanwhile, many literature via media publications have described IPOB sit-at-
home as an order or strategy from their different views based on its effects on socio-political and economic activities of the Southeast region. However, no known scholar has given any definitional concept of the term. Thus, literature on concept will be more focused on IPOB as organization and also the comments of the people through media publications in Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order. Thus, it is imperative to first review literature on IPOB and later IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy.

Ekpo and Agorye (2019: P. 5) described Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as secessionist movement based in the Southeast Nigeria with the aim of restoring the defunct Biafra, albeit, through peaceful means. The scholars also described the group (IPOB) as an offshoot of Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) with the same aim cum objectives with Indigenous People of Biafra, but in a less radical manner compared to IPOB. The same scholars maintained that the objectives of the organization are to facilitate and advocate the Igbo’s right to self determination. In essence, from the assertion of these scholars, the IPOB as a group is fundamentally aimed towards achieving Biafra Republic.

Similarly, Jacob, Nwobi and Igboji (2020: P. 41) described IPOB based on its activities when he asserted that they defined it as a group leading the call for the secession of Biafra from Nigeria. The same scholars similarly described the group as a reformation of the weakened pro-secessionist groups of Movement for the actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM) with the aim of creating an independent state for the people of old Eastern region. Critically from the position of these scholars, the separatist struggle by the Indigenous People of Biafra is rooted in the Igbo people’s struggle for the actualization of the Biafra Nation.

Scholars have also described the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) based on its ideological philosophy. In view of this, Nwaiwu (2016); Okafor (2017) traced the formation of the group to the historical and cultural origin of the Igbos, so as to seek the secession of the Biafran Nation from Nigeria. This is seen as the remedy for what the group (IPOB) perceived gross injustice and marginalization of the Igbo nationality by the Federal Government of Nigeria. More so, the scholars maintained that the group is calling for a referendum to be conducted in Igbo territories to settle the issue of Biafra in a civilized and democratic manner. Consequently, they equally maintained that another strategy employed by the IPOB movement is the ‘sit-at-home’ protest in states in the South East in remembrance of the Biafrans that died in the 1967-1970 Nigeria-Biafra war and those that have lost their lives in the struggle for the actualization of Biafra, and also, to demand Kanu’s release from detention (when he was still incarcerated). For example, residents of South-East Nigeria (mainly Igbos) were ordered to stay at home on December 2, 2021 among many other days, usually but not only Monday.

On the phenomenon of IPOB Monday sit-at-home, a statement released by Anambra state Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment (Don Adinuba) published by Onu (2021) on The Nation newspaper on the issue of Monday sit-at-home stated “

This reminder has become imperative in view of the tendency of some people to observe in the last few months every Monday as a work-free day, in compliance with the directive by some non-state actors in an effort to press the Federal Government to free the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, who is standing trial for some charges in Abuja brought by the federal administration.....
The above statement depicts the ongoing observation of IPOB Monday sit-at-home order as a result of the detention of Nnamdi Kanu (IPOB leader) and many government workers cum citizens have been strictly abiding by the sit-at-home order. Subsequently, the Commissioner maintained that the Anambra State Government has told the residents not to entertain any fear, adding that IPOB had made it clear that no person would be harassed in any way. Critically from the statement the activities of the IPOB via Monday sit-at-home strategy has created fear in the mind of the people towards engaging in public activities on Monday and other sit-at-home days; thereby ensuring security confidence in the mind of the people.

On a similar ground, Nwauwu (2021) reported that a sit-at-home was declared/observed by the IPOB October 21, 2021 in solidarity with Nnamdi Kanu who is expected to be in court that day for trial. In essence, the statement also depicts the IPOB Monday sit-at-home as a strategy towards achieving their aims vis-a-vis freeing their leader (IPOB) from detention. However, this assertion was later disregarded by the IPOB Media and Publicity Secretary (Emma Powerful), entitled “Ignore fake news on sit-at-home on Monday and Tuesday”.

However, a report by Akpan (2021) featured the Emma Power on December 1, 2021 reads: “we wish to inform to inform Biafrans, friends of Biafra and lovers of freedom that our Leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, will be in court tomorrow, December 2, 2021 in Abuja. We therefore, urge Biafrans living in Abuja and its environs to come out en masse to solidarise with our leader with our leader” He later maintained that; there will be no lockdown tomorrow in any part of Biafra land as a result of the court appearance. Biafrans residents in Biafra land, as well as visitors to Biafra to Biafra land, are free to go about their lawful businesses without fear of molestation and intimidation. From the assertion, it can be deducted that the IPOB members cum leaders have become the determinant of the days that people are meant to move in public places in the Southeast region of Nigeria. A report published by Sahara Reporters on November 15, 2021 stated that the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Monday sit-at-home strategy has created fear and lack of security confidence in the mind of students in the Southeast region, the statement reads “commercial activities are gradually resuming on Monday in some parts of the South-east region but most schoolchildren still prefer to stay at home despite the cancellation of the sit-at-home order” (Sahara Reporters, 2021). In view of this assertion, the IPOB strategy of Monday sit-at-home has affected both the commercial and educational activities.

**SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES (POLITICAL ECONOMY)**

Over the years, various scholars cum literature have defined political economy from different perspectives cum theoretical grounds. However, the most common element in their definitions is that political economy deals with economies in a state and its relations to government and politics while few others described it as encompassing both political and economic activities in a state. Kenton (2021) described Political economy as an interdisciplinary branch of the social sciences that focuses on the interrelationships among individuals, government and public policy. The scholar equally maintained that Political economy seek to understand how history, political phenomenon, culture among similar others impact an economic system, the scholar later asserted that political economy as a global concept studies how political forces shape global economic interactions. Critically, from the assertions of this scholar, it is obvious that; political economy is the study of interactions between politics and economy in a polity. In essence, it is imperative to note that political economy resolves around political and economic activities within a state or country. Thus, any rigorous studies on political economy as a phenomenon should revolve around how cultural, social or political activities within a state affect its economic activities.
Similarly, scholars have also described Political economy as interdisciplinary studies drawing upon political science, economics and sociology in explaining how political institutions, the political environment and the economic system (be it capitalist, communist or socialist) influence each other (David 2017). From the view of this scholar, political economy deals with how socio-political and economic activities influence each other within a political system. On a separate ground, Toruno (2003) defined Political economy as the “advice given by economists to the government or public on general economic policy or on specific economic proposals developed by political scientists. The definition cum assertion of this scholar is less embracing and can be subjected to critics to as whether Political economy only deals with ‘advice’ as the scholar postulated while many western scholars have viewed it from the perspective of political and economic activities.

Put differently, scholars have defined Political economic based on three (3) sub-areas; one, as “the role of government and/or class and power relationships in resource allocation for each type of economic system; secondly; as “the international political economy which studies the economic impacts of international relations and thirdly, as “economic models of political or exploitative class processes (Weingast and Wittman, 2008). Critically, from the assertion of these scholars, Political economy is multi-faceted and its scope is dynamics ranging from local to international levels and secondly; as an ideology. In the same line of thought, Mause (2019: P. 1600) viewed Political economy in two related contexts; the first is that “it is used to denote a multidisciplinary research field in which political scientists investigate the relationship the political sphere and economic system of different societies on Earth at different points in time. Secondly as the posited by the scholars, social scientists, journalist and observers do sometimes to mean “observable interaction of politics and business in real world societies. Critically, from the assertions of the scholar; the first context cum definition gives an overview of the research field of political economy and discusses its relationship to other disciplines; such as law and economics as a research programme while second context focused more the interrelationship between economy (business) and body polity.

Scholars have also developed two major approaches that are fundamentals to the explanations of political phenomenon and economy; they are positive and normative political economy. From the positive approach, “researchers conduct analysis in the form that they describe and explain the relationship between the political and economic sphere”. In essence, scholars cum researchers doing positive Political economy research must first describe as precisely as possible the extent to which the state or other political actors intervene in the economic system of a society during research period. On a separate ground, scholars have divided Political economy into two (2) sections (Classical Political economy and Modern Political Economy); each based on age, proponents cum exponents. Classical Political economy studies the works of philosophers such as Nicollo Machiavelli, Adam Smith and Karl Marx while Modern Political economy studies the work of modern philosophers, economists and political scientists; such as, John Maynard, Milton Freidman and Friedrich Hayek (CFI, n.d).

The foregoing definitional concepts presented Political economy connotes. However, the term remains socially constructed as it found across ages, disciplines, periods or eras and societies. However, any definition on what Political economy entails should simply encompass the relationship between Politics and Economy.

METHOD
The paper is descriptive in typology and qualitative in orientation. This enabled the paper to examine the effects cum implications of IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy on the socio-political (political and economic activities) of the Southeast region of Nigeria and present its
data through logical reasoning the way they are; with the aid of textual, tabular, pictorial tools. More so, the study relies on documented evidence (secondary sources of data collection), such as; media publications, Journal articles, textbooks from the researcher’s immediate environment. The data gathered were presented in textual, tabular and pictorial forms will be analyzed thematically with logical and reasoning.

Systems theory was developed as an empirical model between 1950s and 1960s towards analyzing the socio-political systems. The major proponents of the theory are Talcott Parsons (a functionalist-sociologist) in his analysis of social systems and later developed by David Easton (a Political scientist) as a great instrument in the analysis of political systems. The leading exponents of the systems theory are David Singer, Morton Kaplan, Charles MaClelland and Karl Deutsch among others. For many decades, the theory has served as a tool of analysis of social, political cum international systems. The fundamental proposition of systems theory rests on the assumptions of Talcott Parsons and David Easton respectively. In David Easton’s dialect, the input encompasses the totality of demands and pressures placed on a political system by the environment (interest groups, pressure groups, terrorists, civil servants, ethnic groups, citizens; among others) that needs attentions; the various demands will be taken into consideration based on their importance by the gatekeepers cum throughput whose role is to always ensure that the system is not overloaded. The considered demands by the gatekeeper will go into the political system for policy formulations and implementations while others will be communicated back to the environment in form of feedback to let the environment (citizens) know; that the system is yet to meet all their demands (Akinboye and Ottoh, 2005).

In the argument of David Easton; every political system is made up of system that has component parts. Thus, each component has a vital role to play for the better performance of the system as a composite whole. In essence, each subsystem; no matter how less important it seems to be; must not be left out because each part has its own unique role to play. In Talcott Parsons’ dialect, he argued that every social (political) system must have the capacity to maintain itself against a hostile environment, which could be sometimes disastrous. In the view of Talcott Parsons, socio-political environment is not as unique or stable as other system theorists; particularly; David Easton described it. Thus, every political system is characterized by conflict of interests, ethnic crises cum agitations and all forms of demands from the environment which place pressures on the system. Nevertheless, Parsons later maintained that every system must possess the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium irrespective of the disturbances from the environment. In view of this, the socio-political system’s environment is not static neither stable based on varieties of problems such as insurgency, conflict; among others. Based on this, irrespective of the challenges cum changing situations that take place in the systems environment; it is expected of the system to always maintain itself by adjust; adapt and also respond to these changing situations cum problems in the system’s environment, otherwise it will lead to total disintegration, collapse or systems’ failure.

The fitness of the systems theory to this study is evident in its capability to enrich cum update our knowledge on how IPOB sit-at-home strategy has affected the political economy (political and economic activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria. Since the theory serves as the best tool in analyzing or determine when a political system is moving towards disintegration or failure. Here, the theory will be employed in explaining the links between the two variables in regards to Nigeria’s political system. The inability of Nigeria’s political system to ultimately respond to the pressures cum demands of IPOB has the made the
organization to continue employ different strategies towards actualizing its goals; the most recent among the strategies is the IPOB sit-at-home order which has become a quagmire that has continued posing serious security threats to the economic and political activities of the Southeast of Nigeria. The IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy has posed serious threat to the Southeast as a subsystem of Nigeria as a political entity because the demands, loads and pressure from the organization could not be considered by the Nigerian Government cum the inability of the political system to handle this crisis has made it escalated beyond the Southeast region and if not properly tackled or considered, it will continue to spread to other part of the system and consequently, lead to disintegration of the Southeast Region from other geo-political or the failure cum collapse of Nigeria as a system. Consequently, the inability of Nigeria’s political system to respond to the pressure placed on it by the IPOB has not only affected her security; but her political and economic activities (political economy). More so, this has caused disintegration within Nigeria’s political system as no one would ordinary want to his or secure geopolitical zone to an unsecure areas for any reason; whether political or business purposes. In response to IPOB activities, Nigerian government has embarked on different tactics in order to restore the region from the dangers of the IPOB group but seems to be no avail. However, the demands cum pressures from the group on subpart (Southeast) of Nigeria’s political system would continue unless Nigerian Government adequately respond to the demand of the group.

**IPOB Monday Sit-at-home order and Socio-political cum economic activities in the Southeast-Nigeria**

A report by Okoye (2021) on Vanguard (Online) reads; “...the prevailing situation of the shutdown of the South-East every Monday has continued to inflict collateral damage on the economy of the South-East States. The hoi polloi, who eke their daily livelihoods by hawking sachet beverages, vegetables, fruits and others bear the brunt of the weekly shutdown of the South-East” From the assertion of the scholar, it is evident that IPOB Monday sit-at-home order has continued to disrupt the commercial activities across the South-East States of Nigeria. The same report also maintained that “since the commencement of the observation of the sit-at-home order on Mondays, a majority of Igbo people, whose survival depends on their daily earnings, had gone to bed on empty stomachs on country nights because they had no money with which to buy food”. The implication of this assertion is that; IPOB Monday sit-at-home order has continued to suffering, hunger and poverty in the South-east region, as many people could no longer engage on their daily activities on Monday (the first business day of the week) and other IPOB sit at home days. In essence, economic activities are being questioned due to the IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy.

More so, a statement by the First Vice President of Nnewi Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NCCIMA); Chief Moses Ezukwo on September 18, 2021 reported by Ogbonnaya, Nwosu and Ogbo-Owuagwu (2021) captioned;

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........the chamber of Commerce, business owners and traders continue to compute their losses, though they put the cost of every Monday sit-at-home at about N8 billion. The development has robbed the zone comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States of over N50 billion so far; adding that the loss in the private sector amounted to over 60 percent. Of this amount........the transport sector losses at least N3 billion any day there is a lockdown in the region. An average of one million people move around, in and out of South East each day, at #3,000 per traveler. No doubt, it is assumed
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that action (Sit-at-home) has dug a big hole in the economy of the five states of the Southeast region.

In the same report, Chief Moses Ezukwo maintained “….despite the announcement of its suspension, people still observed the sit-at-home order as streets, markets, offices, motor, parks, banks, etc, were closed and deserted every Monday. It was discovered that two reasons gave impetus to this: First is the fear of being attacked by hoodlums, masquerading as IPOB members and second, being the sympathy most people have for IPOB’s cause”. The same report also maintained that “

….the combination of these factors makes the people in the zone stay at home every Monday. Indeed, when the action started in August, cities of the zone were ghost towns with streets, roads, avenues, closes, etc left desolate…..in Umuahia, Awka, Enugu, Abakaliki, Onitsha and Owerri, the situation persisted as many streets were empty even as shops and banks had their door shut penultimate Monday. Reports coming from Aba in Abia State indicate that despite the opening of some markets, traders were not seen in their shops. The same scenario played our last Monday…..

A report published by Agency Report (2021) on Premium Times (Online) reads; Economic and social activities have halted in Imo over sit-at-home order by the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) over fear of possible attacks”. More so, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) who monitored the incidence in Owerri, reported that residents of the state have deserted markets and streets of the state capital for safety. In the same report, a commercial motorist (Okechukwu Nnaji) reportedly told NAN the motorist experienced poor patronage due to Sit-at-home order by the IPOB. More so, a food vendor (Angela Eze) lamented that “the situation might affect the economy of the state drastically. From the foregoing assertions, it is evident that the IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy cum order has continued to pose series of threats to the economic and commercial activities across all states in the South-east region of Nigeria.

Onwuka (2021) reported; “….the sit-at-home has continued to hold because of fear. Some people who tried to go about their daily businesses were attacked, making others to stay indoors for fear. Offices and markets have remained closed too” The same report also maintained that those who wanted to observe the sit-at-home order by the IPOB and those who didn’t want to do so, stayed at home.

A report by THIS DAY Nigeria (Online) reads;

“….The organization (IPOB) recently upped the ante by ordering a weekly ‘sit-at-home’ protest in all the states in the Zone. By the order, businesses and normal work and social activities in the zone are suspended every Monday….Banks have been closed to the public just as markets and shops have been shuttered. Inter-state transportation has similarly been affected while educational institutions have considered it wise to observe one day (Monday) compulsory holiday every week.

More so, statement by Senator Chimaroke Nnamani in the same report maintained; “There is no evidence that the sit at home has brought IPOB and its sympathizers any closer to the attainment of their larger political objective of a ‘Biafran nation’. Instead, the economic life of the zone and the sense of order have been adversely affected. Days without banking services, closed markets and government offices have meant vast economic losses with a
cumulative dent on the wellbeing of people in the region. In essence, the Monday weekly sit-at-home order in the Southeast region has not only affected commercial activities alone but almost every sector cum facets of life have been affected.

FIGURE 1: Deserted/empty streets in Orlu, Imo State of the Southeast Region of Nigeria


The pictures in Figure 1 depict the extent to which people obey sit-at-home order is effective in Orlu on Monday. As demonstrated in the picture, people turned the main road to playing ground while the other road was empty cum deserted due to sit-at-home order across the Southeast region. In essence, people were denied to engage in their daily economic cum commercial activities.

A similar report by Njoku, Ogugbuaja, Osuji, Udeaja, Akpa and Akhaine (2021) reads; “Markets and roads were empty in the major cities of Aba, Owerri and Awka, heart of the former ‘Republic of Biafra’, in a renewed push by the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)…..” The same report equally maintained;

In Imo, economic and social activities in all the 27 local councils suffered a serious setback as everyone remained indoors. Apart from those who opted to respect IPOB’s ‘sit-at-home’ order, many others stayed away for fear of being arrested by security personnel…..The roads were deserted, markets were closed and public transport services were withdrawn by operators. Some school owners announced compulsory mid-term holiday to enable pupils remain at home with their parents…..It was the same story of empty streets, closed shops and deserted roads in Umaiha, Abia’s capital city and Aba, the state commercial nerve centre. Residents fully complied with sit-at-home order…..Though; there was no official sanction of the day in the Southeast, government institutions were grounded in knowledge by the sit-at-home directive. Banks and other corporate businesses equally shut their gates to customers for fear of being attacked by hoodlums.
A report on Vanguard News Nigeria, online (2021) on the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home on the socio-political and economic activities of the region reads; “Human and commercial activities were grounded in the South-Eastern States on Monday as residents obeyed sit-at-home order by the proscribed Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)”. The same report also maintained that people cum residents were stayed back home, leaving streets emptied, especially most busy area known as Isigate in Umuahia, the Abia State capital. More so, it was reported that “Government offices, schools, banks, shops, business centres, markets, malls, plazas and petrol outlets remained closed and also, private and commercial vehicles kept off the roads, leaving the metropolis like a ghost town” due to IPOB Monday sit-at-home order.

**FIGURE 2: Empty roads in Aba; one of the most Industrial areas of the Southeast on Monday Morning**

The figure 2 showed six different pictures from different areas of Aba. In the picture, it is obvious that all the streets captioned were empty with no activities. Aba is known to be one of; if not the most industrialized location in the entire Southeast region but all shops were shut down and no movement or human activity of any kind as IPOB Monday sit-at-home was strictly observed.

A statement observed in the report submitted by Okoye (2021) on the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home on national development cum political activities of the Southeast Region reads; “enforces of the sit-at-home order have inadvertently been dealing a fatal blow to education in the area (Southeast region). Not a few examination candidates had missed taking their examinations because the enforcers of the sit-at-home order thwarted their efforts to reach the venues of their examinations on time on days we observed sit-at-home order”. From this assertion, it is obvious that the IPOB Monday sit-at-home order cum strategy has continued to wreck havoc on the socio-political activities within the state, because Rights to education is being tampered with. Citing a practical examples, the report equally maintained thus; “In Imo State, there was a news report about the invasion and violent dispersal of
examination candidates by gun men on the days their examinations coincided with the shutdown of the South-East (Okoye, 2021). In essence, western education is one of the factors that aid national/political development, hence when people are being denied this right; it is a smack on political activities.

FIGURE 3: Uwalaka by Niger street Umuahia deserted On Monday morning due to IPOB Sit-At-Home Order


The figure 3 demonstrates the situation of things every Monday in Umuahia, Abia state capital whenever sit-at-home is being observed. Umuahia is the administrative town of the State and of course, a busy area full of socio-political and commercial activities. But in the picture, there were no activities in the street. In essence, IPOB Monday sit-at-home has disrupted the commercial activities in the state.

Similarly, a report by Ogbonnaya, Nwosu and Ogboro-Iwuagwu (2021) reads;

……..the students of a Comprehensive High School located in the remote Njaba community in Imo State were writing their English Language paper in the external examination moderated by West African Examination Council (WAEC) when the gunmen, now known as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) struck. In the same report, it was also maintained. Not just education is affected in the weekly sit-at-home strike; every sector of the economy in the zone has continued to bear the brunt.

More so, another report by Njoku, Udeajah, Nzor (2021) on the effect of IPOB Monday sit-at-home maintained; “….this has shown that IPOB is sensitive to the feelings who are being affected economically, educationally and other various ways by that order…..last Monday’s
Sit-at-home received condemnations in several quarters, especially as it affected students writing their National Examination Council (NECO) Mathematics Examination.

FIGURE 4: Empty cum deserted roads in Awka, Anambra State on Monday Morning

Source: BBC News Pidgin, (2021)

The pictures in figure 4 demonstrate the empty cum deserted street in Anambra State capital (Awka) which is also the administrative town of the State in August 2021. It was reported that Government workers were denied going to work, many students of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka who needed to enter bus to the campus could not find vehicles to reach their destinations. More so, this was the time the residents of the state were urged to register towards their gubernatorial elections. Similarly, many students who were writing NECO could not make it to their examination venue; among others due to the IPOB Monday sit-at-home order in the South-east region of Nigeria.

A report by Ogbonnaya, Nwosu and Ogbodo-Iwuagwu (2021) published on Independent Nigeria (Online) reads;

…….there have been pockets of violence recorded in some areas. For example, during the week there was an incident where some hoodlum in Enugu attacked a bus distributing bread around the old Orie Emene Market. It was learned that the driver escaped by whiskers, but the bus fully loaded with loaves of bread was looted and the bus set ablaze by the hoodlums. Similarly, two tricycles were also torched in the area before security operatives arrived at the scene to restore peace and order and shot.

The same report also maintained “

……..a tricycle operator on popular Arthur Eze Road in Awka was stopped, matcheted and his tricycle burnt into ashes…..Last two weeks, a trailer carrying spare parts worth #30m was set ablaze in Nsukka, in Enugu State, with such huge destruction how will fear allow people to come out and risk their lives and investment? Indeed, the economy of the Southeast states is worse for it as the sit-at-home continues. Many people who earn a living
through daily work are left frustrated and out of jobs. A recent and unconfirmed survey said the Southeast by the action is losing N8 to N10 billion every Monday.

In essence, IPOB Monday sit-at-home strategy has posed serious threats to the socio-political and economic activities of the southeast region but all facets of human activities were being affected.

**Conclusion**

The main thrust of this paper is to determine whether the IPOB Monday sit-at-home order has negative effects on the socio-political and economic activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria. From the analysis, it is evident that IPOB Monday sit-at-home order has posed negative multi-dimensional effects on the socio-political and economic activities of the zone, particularly in the areas of commercial activities, education, transportsations, closure of Government and private institutions every Monday and other sit-at-home days. On this basis, an urgent solution is needed. Thus, IPOB Monday sit-at-home order is a serious threat to the socio-political and economic activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

Based on findings, the paper made the following recommendations:

- There is urgent need for Federal Government of Nigeria to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources among the six (6) geo-political zones of Nigeria via proper federal character system. This will go a long way in reducing what the IPOB perceived as marginalization.

- Nigerian Government should try as much as possible; make quick judgment on the issue of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu (the leader of IPOB) since the Monday sit-at-home order was employed as a strategy to pressure Federal Government to free him from detention.

- There should be power shift cum rotation (presidential post) among all the six (6) geo-political zones of Nigeria; rather being an issue of the Southern and Northern-Nigeria. This will enable the IPOB; majorly dominated by the Igbo have a sense of belonging in Nigerian federalism.
REFERENCES


