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Economic Impacts of Separatist Agitation on Various Sectors Within the South-Eastern States of Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examines the impact of separatist agitation on socioeconomic development. a survey design was employed, utilizing structured questionnaires administered in Anambra, Imo, and Enugu States. The study population comprised three local government areas from each state, selected through a combination of simple random and purposive sampling techniques. A total of 298 respondents were sampled. Data collection involved qualitative methods through primary sources, including institutional and official documents, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression to identify predictors of the impact of separatist agitation. Logistic regression analysis identified significant predictors of the impact of separatist agitation on economic activities. The study highlights that separatist agitation significantly disrupts economic activities, social cohesion, and infrastructure development in South-Eastern states. The findings suggest a need for targeted economic recovery programs for men and individuals with higher education, focused urban infrastructure rehabilitation, and integrated community support programs. Addressing urban-rural disparities and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks are essential for effective recovery and development. These recommendations aim to mitigate the adverse effects of separatist movements and support sustainable socio-economic growth in the region.

Keywords — **Agitation, Rehabilitation, Socio-economic, Separatist, Agitation**

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of non-state actors as separatist agitators has in Nigeria has introduce a violent dimension, hitherto unknown, on the criminal space in Nigeria. Series of bombing killing, mainly arson, destructions have been carried out by these individual agitators which have effects on socioeconomic development. Even the federal government assets and properties in various locations are not spared in the violent spree in rich as well as poor countries, violent agitations exert a heavy tell on national economics. It is inevitable that the economic impact of the violent separatist agitation would be more felt in unsophisticated non-cultural low-income economic there they would be felt in highly advanced, diversified industrial economics.

Separatist agitations which have been a regular feature of Nigerian politics, remain a veritable tool for the expression of discontent with the Nigerian state and a platform for demanding adequate political accommodation. With the aid of hindsight, these separatist agitations that date back to the era of British colonial administration cannot be adequately explained outside the context of poor leadership and the absence of an ideology with mass appeal (Tamuno, 1970). The interplay of power and forces between different ethnic nationalities that resort to separatist agitations has constantly threatened the continued existence of the Nigerian state.

Unfortunately, the dominant political elites have not found any practical solution to this challenge.

The return of democracy in 1999 raised hopes that the enormous challenges besetting the Nigerian state, including separatist agitations, would be concretely addressed. The expectation was that democratic practice with its ideals of fairness, freedom, justice, equity and participation could provide a platform for accommodation that could address the issue. But events since then have shown that the challenge rather than being solved is exacerbating. By 1999, the Odua People's Congress was the main group making separatist demands because of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election which was believed to have been won by late MKO Abiola, a Yoruba from the Southwest. Today a plethora of separatist groups and social movements, with diverse aims and targets, exists in the six geopolitical zones of the country. The division of the country into six geopolitical zones (although not constitutionally recognized but which has become a platform for political accommodation by the government) seems to have aggravated the proliferation of separatist groups since it has made ethnic mobilization a bit easier for the specific ethnic groups occupying the different geopolitical zones.

It is within the above context that we can locate separatist agitations among the Igbo ethnic group in Southeast, Nigeria. The existence of separatist movements such as the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) all point to the perceived feelings of marginalization and discrimination of the Igbos. These ill-feelings which are part of the issues that led to the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War between 1967 and 1970 have persisted till date. The post war character of Nigerian politics in which the Igbo ethnic group appears to have been permanently denied the apex political position has not helped matters. Ironically, despite the cries of marginalization among the Igbos, the ideology and modus operanda of these separatist movements have always been in conflict with that of the mainstream Igbo political elite and leadership. Hence, often, they all appear to speak in discordant tunes.

On 30 May 1967, Lieutenant Colonel C. Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu, the military governor of Nigeria's eastern region, declared the independence of the 'Republic of Biafra Ojukwu led a breakaway movement composed primarily of ethnic Igbos who had suffered persecution and massacre at the hands of supporters of Nigeria's Federal Military Government (FMG). Refusing to acknowledge the secession, the FMG, led by Major General Yakubu Gowon, invaded Biafran territory in July, commencing a brutal civil war that spanned two and a half years and claimed the lives of between half a million and two million Nigerians Lester and Coster (2006).

After the civil war, unfortunately, Nigerians are still grappling with the issue of unity in a heterogeneous nation. Akin to the Biafra separatist agitation and its militia is the stated goal of MASSOB, as noted by Okonta (2012) which is the peaceful dissolution of Nigeria and the re-emergence of a new sovereign state in the Eastern part of the country to be known as the 'United States of Biafra. Additionally, the bone of contention among the Biafra separatist agitations against the Nigerian government is based on the fact that the Igbos have been marginalized and neglected since the military rule era in the country, which has led to the denial of provision of infrastructure, social amenities and livelihood opportunities in the federal government sector. This marginalization of the Igbos in the countrys economic and political life is indeed a continuation of the 'war against the Igbo by other means Okonta. (2012).

The federal character principle is one of many policies for the integration of different ethnic groups in the country. It suggests an attempt to build a nation where equal opportunities abound and where every individual can feel that he/she has equal chance to participate in society and politics without the bias of ethnic affiliations Lenshie (2014), unfortunately, the federal character principle has under-represented different ethnic groups in Nigeria and has not been fair as it should be. This statement is supported by Bello (2012), who points out that although 'the purpose of the principle of federal character is laudable, unfortunately, the application and operation of the principle tended to differentiate rather than integrate Nigeria. Ukpere (2012), Nonetheless, Okolo argues that, against the ills of federal character principle, national integration is pivotal and absolutely necessary for the stability of the country Bello (2012).

Many challenges and problems have emerged to put pressure on Nigeria's fragile economy and social security, factors which are leading towards state failure. The most pressing issue concerning security for the Nigerian people is the issue of terrorism amongst Nigerians themselves. The needs of every person in society revolve around food, shelter and clothing. Currently, support for a separate state of Biafra is resurging in Nigeria, which mainly takes the form of separatist agitation, including terrorism in a minority of extreme cases. There are widespread dissatisfactions among South-Eastern Nigerian protesters with the way that the Nigerian government governs the country. In this study, due emphasis is given to the stresses and strains encountered by Nigerians.

Thus, disintegration, secession, civil strife, civil war, minority agitation, and violent conflicts, all of which would normally be considered aberrant to 'normal' state formation, are quite common threats or actual occurrences in divided states. It is not surprising therefore that divided states have devised some of the most innovative and delicate systems of government. Most states practice some variant of the federal solution, with the emphasis on political accommodation and inter-segmental balance. This emphasis has made it necessary and expedient to adopt instrumentalities that mitigate the effects of majoritarianism, as well as promote inclusion, equity, and distributive justice between the different salient groups. Yet, and despite the precautions taken, divided states remain perennially unstable and many survive on the brink of collapse and disintegration (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972).

Although these analyses are rich and revealing, they essentially suffer from disjointed empiricism, and as such unable to adequately illuminate the understanding of the renewed Yoruba Nation separatist agitations. There is, thus, a need to address this knowledge gap in an effort to further enrich the extant literature. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to problematize the implications of political leadership for the rising wave of Ibo separatist agitations in the South Eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria, in addition to exploring the linkages between political governance and deteriorating material conditions of people that have affected the socioeconomic development of the region.

Conceptualization and Literature Review

Separatist Movement: Secession is the most extreme form of separatism which may be defined as the advocacy of a state of cultural, ethnic, tribal, religious, racial or political separation from the parent state and its majority population. Separatism may take a variety of forms and is a matter of degree, rather than a binary (all-or-nothing) feature, consisting in a range of positions along a continuum of independence from the state's authority to include:

(a) claims for special rights, permissions, privileges, benefits or exemptions concerning the group's cultural rites and traditional practices; (b) preferential access to resources controlled by the state; and (c) a measure of political autonomy and self-rule up to and including independent statehood. At the extreme end of this continuum lies independent statehood that is the outcome of secession (Wood, 1981).

While secessionists are by definition also separatists the inverse is not necessarily true becouse many separatist groups pursue an agenda that stops short of independent statehood. However, despite this conceptual distinction, a clear division between separatism and secessionism is unsustainable. For example, many secessionist groups start as separatist, pursuing lesser forms of autonomy than independent statehood, and become secessionist as these demands are rebuffed. Similarly, many secessionist groups may be prepared to settle for a lesser degree of autonomy than independent statehood and employ the demand to secede as a bargaining tool to achieve separatist goals.

While there is nothing inherent to separatism that requires the use of violence in its pursuit, most states fiercely resist attempts by sub-groups to secede or attain a significant measure of political autonomy by employing coercion, this always prompts an equally violent and uncompromising response from separatists for whom the state's tactics only serve as a validation of their demands. The consequence of this mutually reinforcing obduracy is an escalating war of attrition as each side attempts to demonstrate its ability to 'out wait' the other while placing itself in a superior position to extract concessions in future negotiations. Many attempted and successful secessions in recent history, only a small minority have not resulted in significant violence, destruction of property or loss of life, e.g. the Quebecois in Canada, the departure of Norway from Sweden in 1905, the secession of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 and the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993 (Young, 1994).

A negotiated settlement requires a degree of rationality amongst the belligerents who must agree a common framework in order to critically evaluate and adjudicate rival claims, that neither assumes the impermissibility of secession, nor leaves any participant worse off than before the settlement. In contrast, if the reasons underlying the decisions and behaviors of separatists are not amenable to rational analysis but are instead 'hardwired' into the group's members or attributable to emotive, irrational or naturalistic factors then there can be no practical purpose to a negotiated settlement since the various parties to it could not be relied upon to abide by its terms. In emphasis: where a group's desire to secede and willingness to use violence in its pursuit is innate or beyond the purview of a rational cost/benefit calculation directed towards securing the group's long-term welfare, then even a settlement that maximized the group's interests may be insufficient to secure peace. Therefore, the corollary of failing to affirm the premise of rationality is to endorse the proposition that the only viable way of ending separatist conflicts is for one side to achieve a military victory that renders all other parties unable to continue hostilities, i.e. an enduring peace is only possible once a clear victor has emerged.

Socioeconomic Development: Socioeconomic development, like the definition of development adopted here, emphasizes progress in terms of economic and social factors within a geographic unit. Economic development is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Social development, on the other hand, refers to the complexity of social dynamics and focuses on (1) the social concerns of the people as objectives of development and (2) people-centered, participatory

approaches to development. Social development is about inclusiveness, social justice and the common good. Indicators of social development provide comparative information about areas such as income, poverty, employment, employment security, education, health, crime and civic participation. Sometimes social development indicator lists also have included information about the environment. Richard Estes, a co-developer of Hong Kong's social report in 2000, noted that the report included a subindex on environmental quality with ratings of solid waste recycling, beaches, public open space and fresh water consumption.

The purpose of economic development is to improve the social and material well-being of all individuals and social institutions with the goal of achieving the highest possible level of human development. Socioeconomic development, therefore, requires the integration of economic and social development. Progress in the quality of social and economic life should only be seen as progress if it is rights based and minimally affects, conserves or improves the natural environment

Nationalism and Ethnicity: Though the concept of nationalism is not new however there is no consensus among scholars about the concept. This ambiguity and confusion is not only with the concept of nationalism but with most concepts in social sciences have plurality of meaning. This fact is universally admitted and that's why John Hall (1993) declared "as the historical record is diverse so too must be our concepts". Hayes (1928) one of the pioneers in the study of nationalism, emphasized the political and emotional nature of nationalism when he said that nationalism is "a condition of mind in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one's national state is superior to all other loyalties and of which pride in one's nationality and belief in its intrinsic excellence and its mission are integral parts." Kohn (1951) corroborated Hayes view, that nationalism as first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness.

However, according to the Encyclopedia of nationalism (200). Nationalism is an ideology promoting nationhood, a strong sense of collective identity and solidarity among a wide population (also called nation) on the basis of their common language, culture heritage, religion or citizenship in a state. International encyclopedia of the social science (1968) examines nationalism as a political creed that underlies cohesion of modern societies and legitimizes their claim to authority. Nationalism centers the supreme loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the people upon the nation state, either existing or desired. Nairn (1977) postulate that "Nationalism is the pathology of modern development history, as inescapable as, "neurosis in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity, attaching to it, a similar built-in-capacity for decent in to dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world and largely incurable."

Deutsch (1969), the American political scientist represents the school of thought that sees nationalism as the product of modernization and social mobilization. He opined that nationalism accompanies "the growth of market, industries and towns and eventually of literacy and mass communication." He defines that there is a state of mind by which "national messages, memories and images receive a preferred status in social communication and a greater weight in the making of decisions in Deutsch's opinion, a nationalist devotes greater attention to those messages which carry specific symbols of nationality, or which originate from a specific nationalism as "national source". Gellner (1993) postulated that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not

exist." His point of view is that nationalism is primarily a political principle which joins political and the national units together. In his opinion, nationalism as a sentiment or as a movement can be defined in terms of this principle.

However, Smith (2004) examine nationalism as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a group deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential "nation" He went further that nationalism often seeks to create, the nation, even if it pretends that the nation already exists. Nationalism is more than a collective sentiment or discourse which combines an ideology with a potential movement with clear goals of national autonomy unity and identify. Furthermore, to this end, nationalism posits a nation that is continuous, developing over time, and rooted in a specific terrain. Nationalisms importance lies in its ability to provide a blue print of nationhood for aspiring ethnics, at the end Smith described nationalism in the following way. "The world is divided into following way." "The world is divided into nations, each with our character, history and destiny, secondly, the nation is the sources of all political power, and thirdly, an individual primary loyalty must be to her or his nation. Fourthly, to be free, individuals must realize themselves in the nation". Fifthly, all nations must have maximum autonomy and self-expression and finally, a world of peace and justice require free nations (Smith, 2004).

Nationalism is hence taken to be a largely dynamic principle capable of endangering hopes, emotions and action. It is a vehicle for activating human beings and creating political solidarity amongst them for the purpose of achieving a common goal (Alter, 1989:9). Bradford (1986) succinctly examines nationalism as a love for one's own country coupled with a disregard if not dislike for other countries. An extraneous force or threat, an outside antagonism can create, heighten, or adoption. This elementary nationalism springs from the basis "us" versus "them" conflict.

Bradford (1986) elaborated further that nationalism is that of a group consciousness that attributes great value to the nation state, to which answering devotion is tendered, the individual closely identifies with the state and feels that his wellbeing depends to a large extent, if not completely on its wellbeing. In the 20th century, nationalism has generally been regarded as an agreement among the inhabitants of a given area – which, for one reason or another, identify with one another to maintain their unity, independence, and sovereignty and to pursue certain broad and mutually acceptable goals. Be that as it may, it is possible to identify certain factors that contribute to the development of nationalistic feelings. The nation usually occupies an integral territory and has a common language frequently a majority of the inhabitants share the same religion, basic political ideas in common and display similar traits of character.

Regionalism: Regional cleavages and identities evolved from the structures created and consolidated by the colonialists in the process of state formation in Nigeria. The most fundamental of the cleavages is that between the North and South, these being the initial structures of the colonial state which were administered separately even after the two units were amalgamated in 1914. The other cleavages emerged with the introduction of a three-region structure (North, East, and West) in 1946. A fourth region, Mid-West, was created in 1963, but partly because of its status as home to minorities, the creation did not fundamentally alter the tripartite regional structure existing before the First Republic was sacked by the military in 1966. The ethnic majority-minority cleavage and the majoritarian basis of politics took roots within these structures. The

emergent elite were regionalized from inception, and especially after 1946 when the political space was opened to more Nigerian participation, the majority elite segment deployed strategies of ethnic mobilization and exclusionary politics to establish hegemonic control of the regions.

With the meaning of regionalism reduced to "North for Northerners", "East for Easterners" and "West for Westerners", a discriminatory system under which people from other regions living in these areas were deprived of rights and privileges and excluded from the political process has become entrenched. This was how the infamous distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes strengthened. Although the erstwhile regions were abrogated in 1966, they remain crucial political cleavages for reasons which have already been advanced. They also provide the basis for new forms of exclusionary politics that have evolved alongside new political-administrative structures and reinforced discrimination against non-indigenes, namely 'statism' and 'localism'.

Another category of regional identities that has gained currency is the one that developed around the six geo-political zones into which the country was divided in 1996 for the purpose of sharing and rotating federal power and resources – Northeast, Northwest, North central, Southwest, Southeast, and South south (cf. Agbaje 1998). To a large extent, the zones reinforce the old regional cleavages: the Southwest and Southeast are coterminous with the Yoruba core of the old West and Igbo core of the old East respectively; Northwest covers the so-called 'core-North'; Northeast is the core of the old 'Borno axes of the North; North central encompasses the old Middle Belt. In fact, leaders of this zone have a strong clamour for the name to reflect the old reality); and South south covers the old league of Southern minorities. Even so, the old regional divisions remain very strong, particularly with the efforts by the various elite segments to re-organize along old regional lines. A case in point is the Northern elite, which, through organizations like the Northern Elders Forum and the Arewa Consultative Forum, has continued to mobilize around the theme of pan-regional unity.

Empirical Review

Impact of Separatist Movement on Socioeconomic Development in Nigeria

The final set of identities which fall under Geertz's category of civil ties, are those further distinguished by their non-territorial character. The main identities here include class, gender, and a host of generational identities, of which the most important is youth. In the 1970s and 1980s, when the modernization-radical political economy debate dominated the scene, an examination of identities in Nigeria would have been reduced to a debate of whether class or ethnicity was more real, but the matter has been resolved in terms of the acknowledgement that both have important consequences for each other. Class interests underlie supposedly ethnic mobilization and demands, but at the same time, ethnic divisions have stymied the process of class solidarity (Otite 1979). Gender and youth have also emerged as critical and active identities, especially in the struggle for rights and privileges. What is more, gender and youth identities in many parts of the country have strong ethnic complexions, especially in the Niger Delta region where violent minority nationalism has been on the rise since the 1990s.

Having outlined the various functional identities in Nigeria, and the ways in which they are inter-connected, the next task is to further elaborate on them in terms of definition, prevalence and action trajectories. For this purpose, the focus will be on what may be called primary identities that provide the most basic divisions or cleavages from which other identities take their cues and are constructed.

Broadly, the basic identities are ethnicity, religion, regionalism, class, gender and youth.

Aiyede (2006) examine ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with interaction among different ethnic groups. To him, ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by communal character of their boundaries. Aiyede (2006) opines that, the relevant communal factor may be language, culture or both. Akombo (2009) postulate that ethnicity has continued to bread the sense of antagonism, confrontation, intimidation and marginalization as well as victimization. Augustine (2003) opined that the differences which exist in most countries, but observe that the differences are insignificant and states that ethnicity can only be understood if it is related to opportunities for economic survival.

However, Boaten (2000) succinctly examine ethnicity as a group of people with a common socio-cultural identity such as language, common worldview, religion and common cultural traits. Kendall (2007) corroborates that ethnicity is s collection of people distinguished by others or by themselves primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics. These characteristics may include; (a) unique cultural traits such as language, clothing, holidays, religious practices, (b) a sense of community, (c) a feeling of ethnocentrisms, (d) ascribed membership from birth and (e) territoriality or the tendency for an ethnic group to occupy a distinct geographical area by choice and or for self-protection. Ethnicity as a concept evolved from a Greek word ethnos, which means "people of the same ancestry" (Lenshie & Johnson, 2012). Ethnicity is a group of people who share a common and distinctive culture (Imobighe, 2003). According to Nnoli (1978) ethnicity is an act of ethnocentrism, which he identified as attitudinal, meant to demonstrate ethnic prides and belonging to an ethnic group. Ethnicity at this point is not harmful because it objective is to re-enforce mutual trust and connection amongst people of the same cultural affinities. This means that ethnicity is functional to generating the required internal cohesion and solidarity and also re-enforces the need to provide natural security for each other, and to also promote a sense of identity (Nnoli, 1994).

Notwithstanding, ethnicity can also be transformed to enhance one competitive efficiency in the political market place. Nnoli (1995) in this connection buttresses that ethnicity, due to political struggles over power, control of the means of allocating resources in multiethnic state; it is capable of generating ethnic conflicts. Ethnic paroxysm transforms ethnic groups into militia groups mobilized to assert for ethnic dominance or change in the status quo of any society, Barth (1969) Connor (1978) Berghe (1981) and Smith (1982), they corroborated that ethnicity as having socially and politically constructed boundaries, based upon one or more of the above characteristics that are socially attributed by both the in-and- out-groups.

However, Nnoli (1978) opined that ethnic groups are distinct social groups with cultures norms and values been the defining attributes. Ethnicity therefore is the fallout of the interaction between members of ethnic groups, mostly within a plural society. Furthermore, Nnoli (1978) intends that ethnicity result from the contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of some exclusive criteria such as language, boundaries and culture and that it was a creature of the colonial and post-colonial order. Otite (1990) corroborated Nnoli view by contending members of one group against others on the basis of differentiate systems of socio-cultural symbols.

Azeez (2004) succinctly examine ethnicity as a sense of people hood that has its foundation in the combined remembrance of past experience and common aspiration. It is therefore evidence as Eteng

(2004) observed that ethnicity is a derivative of the ethnic group, which forms the basis of its articulation and activation, that is, it the existence of the group that makes ethnicity possible. According however, ethnicity does not exist outside the unit or group that embodies it. To this Enloe (1978) postulated that "ethnicity is looked upon as unreal, an artificial basis of identification and collective organization, insured up by outsiders looking for an efficient instrument of political and economic control." It is therefore considered a strategic weapon chosen by a disadvantaged group as a new mode of seeking political redress, or by a privileged group in order to protect its advantages. Thus, Cox (1970) see ethnicity or ethnic group generally as a socio-cultural entity while inhabiting the same state, country or economic area, consider themselves biologically, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and most often view their relation in actual or potentially antagonistic terms.

Hutchinson and Smith (1996) opined that ethnicity is the sense of kinship, group solidarity and common culture to which it refers it as old as the historical record, ethnic communities have been present in every period and on every continent have played an important role in all societies. The sense of a common ethnicity remains a major focus of identification of individual even today. Jenkins (2008) succinctly put "we must take seriously the fact that ethnicity means something to individuals and that when it matters, it can really matter. Ethnicity is a powerful tool which will continue to sharp Nigerian politics because it circumscribes components of political organization and institutional mechanisms within which citizens articulate their political and other interest (Salih, 2001). Ethnicity is a sense of collective identity by which a people perceive itself as sharing a historical past and a variety of social norms and customs (Shareader, 2005).

However, Jenkins (2008) elaborated that ethnicity as a collective and individual externalized in social interactions and the categorization of others and internalized in person self-identification. Doorknobs (1998: 28) succinctly examine ethnicity as potential as a liberating force, he argues that if ethnicity can indicate a route to the discovery of meaning, a recapturing of cultural identity and the recreation of solidarity, there can be no dispute about it enigmatic force and its liberating potential. Lenshie (2012) opined that ethnicity is a socio-political concept associated with race, culture and traditions of people with common descent, ancestral connection and affiliation which to construe their behavior and enhance interaction among them.

Giddens (2006:487) corroborated that ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from another group. Ethnicity builds solidarity recognition and direct social intercourse among people of the ethnic group; this is constructed on some shared value and norms developed by them from time immemorial embedded in their culture and traditions which govern their own society. Ethnicity therefore enhances the positioning of ethnic identity in the socio-political and economic circle of the state at any level. Jenkins noted of Wallman (1979:3) in Rex & Masson (1986:175) thus: Ethnicity is the process by which "their" difference is used to enhance the sense of "us" for purpose of organization or identification because it takes two ethnicities can only happen at the boundary of "us" in content or confrontation or by contrast with "them".

The boundary created by ethnicity of "us" and them are at the core societal differentiation on the ground of community of language spoken and host of other ascription of identities which may be assigned different status to promote common affiliation and nationality or in contrast, to condition the

determinants of political and economic allotted values in a multi-ethnic society (Lenshie, 2012: 3 & 4). Gidden (2006:487) identified some salient factors that characterized ethnicity when he noted that: Different characteristics may serve to distinguish ethnic group from one another but the most usual are language, history or ancestry (real or imagined), religion and style of dress or adornment.

Doders (2012) succinctly examine ethnicity from a two stand point. The first is from a narrow perspective as a community of people who believe they have common claims to origin, descent, culture and traditions in form of language spoken, dressing style, history and common destiny pursuit by each other. The second is from a broad perspective which sees ethnicity, is that factor which is built on ascription of solidarity among people of people tied to race, nationality and victory won or even religion. It is therefore deducible that ethnicity provide a common sense of compatibility among people under the same ethnic group, political and economic system. Nnoli (1987) stated that the premise of ethnicity is hang on the consciousness it creates in the social process of maximizing surplus values which determined largely by the decision-making process and the allocation of real values and resources inthe society derived from positive relations. He went further to succinctly examine ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of the largest possible competing communal groups (ethnic groups) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. According to him, the relevant (communal factor may be language, culture, race, religion and/or common history. Ethnicity is only one of the phenomena associated with interactions among communal groups (ethnic groups). Ethnicity therefore involves a demand by one group on other competing groups, which have the following characteristics prejudice and discrimination, in-group sentiments and sense of solidarity periscope members of ethnic groups to look more favorable on their own group members than on neighboring out-group members.

However ethnicity embodies tendency to-exclude out-group members from social and economic opportunities and welfare services. Members of an ethnic group are ethnocentric when they are proud of it and consequently are inward looking, furthermore Nnoli (1987: 6) examine ethnicity as a common consciousness of members of the communal groups in relation to other such groups, more than any other. Ethnicity is associated with a collective sense of belonging, mission, self-realization and self-affirmation within the collective and the feeling of seizing the individuals and groups destiny akin to the dynamics of mob action (Nnoli, 1987:8). Why is this so, it is because of the potential power of ethnicity to totalize and transcend other loyalties and obligations when an people's multiple identities are narrowed down to a single focus social division became deeper and more rigid. Ethnicity is a deeply emotional basis of modernization that not merely distinguishes one group from another but can also dehumanize and demonize the other group. Ethnicity has the symbolic capacity to define the totality of the individual's existence, including embodying his/her hope and fears for the future.

However, an individual's self-esteem is determined in part, by the status worth and legitimacy of the group to which he or she belongs. In fact, the ethnic group is perceived as a pseudo-family Goor (1994: 25). Any action that undermines the group strikes at the very existence of its members even though the action may not be directed at them personally. Actions that undermine the ethnic group include those that diminish it status, worth and legitimacy in the eyes of its members (Horowitz, 1985). As Gurr (1993) observes that ethnicity makes it possible to draw am easy and individious distinction between

"us" and "them". It impels ethnic groups to compare themselves with one another, and have a constant fear, latent or manifest, of being subjugated or relegated to inferior status or positions. Such fears act to mobilize the whole ethnic group, causing self-esteem, fear and prejudice to go hand in hand, and making militant or extreme actions against other groups possible.

Additionally, ethnicity encourages ethnic groups to incur and impose costs. They make sacrifices to pursue interests which may be inimical to the interests of other groups (Nnoli, 2008). Ethnicity has a mobilization aspect, which can greatly assist goal attainment in a society, ethnicity has become legitimate. People can openly claim some ethnic identity without losing esteem; they can even show that they are proud of their ethnic identity. In many cases, they may actively seek redress of perceived inequality and injustice in terms of such identities without being officially sanctioned or banned. The legitimacy of ethnicity results from the idea of national self-determination which has enjoyed growing acceptance and popularity ever since nationalism emerged some two hundred years ago. It also confers legitimacy on recent claims for ethnic equality and pluralism in modern states (Bjorklund, 1987). Fox and his colleagues argue that ethnicity can be explained as a new organizational and ideological forum for political protests that occur in welfare states as an alternative to and replacement for class-based form of political activities. In this regard, the salient feature of ethnicity is its ability to bind and mobilize local population differentiated by wealth, age, sex, education, class, residence and sometimes even language and religion into a new political constituency seeking redress from bureaucratic government (Fox, 1981). Ethnicity is generally not explosive in the market, even though it is articulated there but in the political arena. By the very extent of its responsibility, its level of taxation and its self-appointed role as primary solver of problem, the welfare state has not only become the national focus of demands but also as some of these cannot be met, the central target of grievance (Esman, 1977).

However, ethnicity exists only within a political society consisting of diverse ethnic groups. This is because of the political nature of its demands. It is not associated with relations across state lines with ethnic groups in different states. Relations between an ethnic group in one multi-ethnic state and that in another multi ethnic state are governed by other phenomena than ethnicity, for example, in the case of Somalia, the ethnic group is itself a nation-state, and ethnicity is replaced by nationalism in relations between it and other ethnic groups and societies. Ethnicity does not involve the use of state power on behalf of an ethnic group to the exclusion of other ethnic groups in the same state, or in the incorporation of an ethnic group into a nation state. Nnoli posited that ethnicity does not exist in a pure form that it is always closely associated with political, juridical, religious and other social views which constitute its important ingredients as well. Ethnicity also tends to change its specific historical content and to assume many different forms (Nnoli, 1987). Nnoli (1987) opined that where ethnicity has made its appearance, it has tended to persevere and grow in intensity and spread, essentially because it performs some valuable functions for the relevant ethnic groups.

Furthermore, ethnicity promotes the appreciation of an individual's social roots in the community, and the creation of a social network which provides material and emotional support for members of society ethnicity operating at the intermediate level of society; it fosters in the relevant population sense of belonging and also mediates between the individual and the larger society. Nnoli (2008; 14) posited that ethnicity holds individuals together,

gives them internal cohesion, encourages them to provide mutual security for each other and promotes their sense of identity and direction. In other words, ethnicity offers a personal solution to the generic problems of exploitation, oppression, deprivation and alienation.

Additionally, Ethnicity promotes the desire to eliminate all domination, oppression, exploitation and privileges. For example, in Niger Delta, these struggles are reflected in the demand against marginalization of ethnic groups and against injustice in inter-ethnic resource distribution (Nnoli, 2008). Egwu (2001) opined that ethnicity is all about mobilization and politicization of ethnic group identity drawing on those elements that mark out the group such as language, culture, territory, mode of dressing and sharing jokes. The term takes on a greater meaning in competitive situations, and where available resources are scarce in relation to the interests that grow around them (Nnoli, 1989). Abagen (2002) noted that identity is a strong feature of ethnicity and thus usually start with stereotyping and labeling to give various groups a friend status based on race, nationality, religion, caste for the ultimate goal of self-actualization, hegemony and survival. However, extensive research into ethnicity in the Nigerian polity by Cohen (1969), Nnoli (1989), Otite (1990), Osagbe (1992), Elaigwu (1994) and Egwu (2001) have summarily pointed to five main issues that ethnicity is bound to be in a plural state, it is characterized by exclusiveness, the common consciousness of the feeling of one's cultural superiority to the others. It is a tool of competition for individuals and groups for scarce public resources such as contracts, employment, political appointments, and scholarships, access to land as well as opportunities for lucrative trade and commerce. It is widely used as a political tool by all and sundry including the state to canvass for support or sympathy. Finally, it is a situational consciousness which alters in its form, role, incumbents and place as the social process demands it. That is situation changes as the event unfolds.

Moreover, ethnicity is often associated with multi ethnic political existence, but that would not mean that once you have ethnic pluralism, the outcome is automatically ethnicity. As Mafeje (1997) has suggested, ethnicity is not merely an abstract noun but an ideologically loaded concept which is not a natural outcome of ethnic existence in any objective sense. Mafeje's point is that despite its etymological derivation, ethnicity is not an abstraction from any "ethnic group", precisely because it has no independent existence of its own, being always driven either by class interests or the quest for power. Nevertheless, ethnic pluralism provides a framework, or to use another phrase, the necessary but not sufficient condition for ethnicity.

Additionally, ethnicity is a product of interactions between and among people of different ethnic group. According to chazzan (1998: 152), it is "the subjective perceptions of common origins, historical ties and memories". It is not important that claims of a common origin or any other basis for individual and collective self-identification are real. What is important is the imagined community that supplies a sense of group solidarity and framework for delineating the relevant others. Nnoli (1978) and Otite (1990) have also added contextual discrimination by members of one ethnic group against others on the basis of some exclusive criteria as a critical dimension of ethnicity. It is important to mention that the outset three important facts related to the discourse on ethnicity. First, as Osaghae (1994) reminds us it is necessary to make a distinction between ethnicity at the level of the individual (micro) and at the level of the group (macro) but while the latter is the aggregated form of the former it is the shared identity at the group level that is more important. Nevertheless, what we confront most of

the time is the continuity between the micro and macro levels of ethnicity, especially in the African context where the individual acquires meaning as a member of the larger community. Second, the criteria used to decipher the phenomenon referred to as ethnicity can be objective as well as subjective. Third, ethnicity is constituted by both static and dynamic elements. The static elements are those purely objective factors that are essentially innocuous and not harmful to the social process. On their own they do not impair social interaction. What this suggests is that ethnicity is an integral part of the social process and that multi ethnic existence is after all, a necessary but not a sufficient condition for ethnicity.

Methodology

The study adopts a survey design using well-structured questionnaires. The data were generated through field survey in Anambra, Imo and Enugu States. The source of data was collected directly from the sample under study. The population of three 3 local government each from Anambra, Imo and Enugu States constitute the study population. The method used for selecting respondents was a combination of simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents for the administration of the questionnaire. (Bernard, 1995; Marshall, 1996). The choice of the purposive sampling technique in this research is predicated upon the fact that the primary data required can only be provided by political actors that are well informed and possess adequate knowledge of the subject matter of this study. This necessitates a conscious identification of the individuals with such unique characteristics.

The data collection method for this study employed a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires as the primary instrument. Quantitative data involved numerical information collected through various instruments that were statistically analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. This approach was well-suited for quantifying attitudes, behaviors, and other measurable variables, allowing for the examination of relationships between different variables and providing statistical evidence to support conclusions. The quantitative method was appropriate for this study because it allowed for the systematic collection of numerical data that could be analyzed to uncover patterns and correlations. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from participants, providing a standardized way to gather information that could be easily quantified and compared. Primary data was collected directly from participants through these questionnaires, which were designed to capture relevant information related to the study's

objectives. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data collected through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics provided a summary and detailed overview of the data using measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the distribution of categorical variables, while the mean and standard deviation offered insights into the central tendency and dispersion of continuous variables.

Data Analysis and Result

The study examined the impact of separatist agitation on the socio-economic development of the South-Eastern states in Nigeria. A total of 298 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the study area, out of which 292 were retrieved, yielding a response rate of 97.98%. The analysis was conducted based on the 292 questionnaires collected, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the data.

Table 1.0: Effects of Separatist Agitation on Economic Activities.

Variables	Frequency, n = 292	Percentage (%)
Has separatist agitation affected economic activities in your area?		
Yes	245	83.9
No	47	16.1
Has the separatist movement disrupted business operations in your community?		
Yes	255	87.3
No	37	12.7
Has there been a decline in investment due to separatist agitations in the South-East?		
Yes	191	65.4
No	101	34.6
Have you noticed any impact of separatist agitation on your personal income?		
Yes	207	70.9
No	85	29.1
Have local businesses closed or relocated due to the insecurity associated with separatist activities?		
Yes	189	64.7
No	103	35.3

The effects of separatist agitation on economic activities, as reported by the respondents, are significant. A large majority of 83.9% indicated that separatist agitation has affected economic activities in their area, while only 16.1% reported no impact. Similarly, 87.3% of respondents stated that business operations in their communities have been disrupted by the separatist movement, with just 12.7% noting no such disruption. In terms of investment, 65.4% of respondents observed a decline in investment in the South-East region as a result of separatist agitation, whereas 34.6% did not perceive this decline. Personal income has also been affected, with 70.9% of respondents reporting a negative impact on their earnings, while 29.1% reported no changes to their income.

The insecurity associated with separatist activities has led to the closure or relocation of local businesses, according to 64.7% of respondents, while 35.3% reported that no such closures or relocations have occurred. These responses collectively highlight the widespread and adverse economic effects of separatist agitation in the region, impacting business operations, investments, and personal income.

Table 1.2: Overall level of the Effects of Separatist Agitation on Economic Activities.

Variables	Frequency, n = 292	Percentage (%)
High	191	65.4
Low	101	34.6
Total	292	100.0

Key: High = ≥ 50%; Low = < 50%

The table summarizes the overall level of the effects of separatist agitation on economic activities among respondents. According to the data, 65.4% (n=191) of respondents perceive the effects of separatist agitation on economic activities as high, indicating that these effects are substantial and affect more than 50% of the economic activities in their areas. In contrast, 34.6% (n=101) of respondents view the effects as low, suggesting that the impact is less significant and affects less than 50% of the economic activities.

Table 1.3: Logistic Regression for Predictors of the Effects of Separatist Agitation on Economic Activities.

Predictors	β	S.E.	Wald	P-value	aOR	95% C.I.	
						Lower	Upper
Gender	1.639	0.340	23.187	0.001*	5.149	2.643	10.032
Age	-0.015	0.169	0.008	0.929	0.985	0.707	1.372
Education Level	1.110	0.247	20.139	0.001*	3.036	1.869	4.930
Type of Residence	-2.535	0.354	51.176	0.001*	0.079	0.040	0.159
Constant	-3.185	1.150	7.665	0.006*	0.041		

*Statistically significant (p<005), aOR = Adjusted Odds ratio, Cl = Confidence Interval, β = regression coefficient, SE = standard error

Table 1.3 provides the results from a logistic regression analysis aimed at identifying predictors of the effects of separatist agitation on economic activities. The analysis reveals that gender is a significant predictor, with a coefficient (β) of 1.639. The Wald statistic for gender is 23.187, and the p-value is 0.001, indicating a statistically significant effect. The adjusted odds ratio (aOR) is 5.149, with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from 2.643 to 10.032. This suggests that male respondents are significantly more likely to experience high impacts from separatist agitation on economic activities

compared to female respondents. Age does not appear to be a significant predictor, with a coefficient of -0.015 and a p-value of 0.929. The Wald statistic is 0.008, and the adjusted odds ratio is 0.985, with a 95% CI between 0.707 and 1.372.

This indicates that age does not have a significant effect on the impact of separatist agitation on economic activities. Education level is a significant predictor, with a coefficient of 1.110. The Wald statistic for education level is 20.139, and the p-value is 0.001, showing a statistically significant effect. The adjusted odds ratio is 3.036, with a 95% CI from 1.869 to 4.930. This suggests that higher education levels are associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing significant impacts from separatist agitation on economic activities. Type of residence also significantly predicts the effects of separatist agitation. The coefficient is -2.535, with a Wald statistic of 51.176 and a p-value of 0.001. The adjusted odds ratio is 0.079, with a 95% CI between 0.040 and 0.159. This indicates that residing in a rural area is associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing high impacts from separatist agitation compared to residing in an urban area. The constant term has a coefficient of -3.185, a Wald statistic of 7.665, and a p-value of 0.006, with an odds ratio of 0.041. This suggests that, holding all other variables constant, there is a low baseline probability of high impact from separatist agitation.

Discussion of Findings

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution, with 49.7% male and 50.3% female participants. This near-equal representation allows for a gender-comparative analysis of the impacts of separatist agitation. The predominant age group is 26-35 years (32.9%), followed by 18-25 years (27.4%), and with a mean age of 33.34 years, the sample encompasses a broad range of life stages. This distribution is consistent with studies suggesting that economically active age groups are often more affected by socio-political unrest due to their involvement in the workforce (Adeyemi & Alabi, 2020; Fajana, 2018). Regarding education, the majority have tertiary education (45.5%), which aligns with findings from other regions where higher education levels correlate with heightened awareness and sensitivity to socio-economic disruptions (Osei et al., 2022).

The occupational status shows a significant proportion of self-employed individuals (65.1%), reflecting the entrepreneurial nature prevalent in many conflict-affected areas (Smith & McLean, 2019). Additionally, the data indicates a substantial urban population (56.2%), aligning with trends of urban areas experiencing higher levels of direct conflict impacts compared to rural areas (Khan, 2021). The majority of respondents (83.9%) report significant adverse effects of separatist agitation on economic activities. This aligns with studies showing that separatist and militant movements often severely disrupt local economies by displacing businesses, diminishing investment, and impeding economic growth (Piazza, 2017; Sederberg, 2020). The reported business disruptions (87.3%) and decline in investment (65.4%) echo findings from similar contexts, where separatist unrest has led to economic instability and investor withdrawal (Miller, 2021). Personal income was negatively impacted for 70.9% of respondents, which supports literature indicating that conflict typically leads to reduced economic opportunities and increased economic

hardship for individuals (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

The closure or relocation of businesses reported by 64.7% of respondents further highlights the severe economic disruptions caused by insecurity, corroborating previous research on how conflict-induced instability can lead to significant operational challenges for businesses (Burke, 2016). Table 4.4 reveals that separatist movements have notably deteriorated social cohesion and intergroup relations. The high percentages of respondents who perceive increased tension (78.1%), deteriorated social relations (73.6%), and heightened mistrust (74.7%) align with theories on the social impacts of conflict, which suggest that such movements often exacerbate divisions within communities (Miller & Martin, 2019). These findings are consistent with studies on the social ramifications of separatist and ethnic conflicts, which frequently disrupt social fabric and amplify ethnic or group tensions (Kalyvas, 2006; Cederman et al., 2019). The impact of separatist agitation on infrastructure development is significant, with 59.9% of respondents observing delays and 52.7% reporting hindered government projects. This is consistent with research indicating that conflicts often lead to delayed or abandoned infrastructure projects due to security concerns and resource diversion (Galtung, 1969; Hegre, 2004). The destruction of infrastructure reported by 56.5% of respondents reflects findings that armed conflicts typically result in physical damage to infrastructure, further impeding recovery and development efforts (Boas, 2015).

The reported increase in unemployment (73.6%), business layoffs (76.4%), and reduced job opportunities (76.4%) highlight the severe economic impact of separatist activities on employment. This is consistent with literature on the economic consequences of separatist movements, which often lead to job losses, reduced business viability, and overall economic instability (Berman et al., 2011; Miguel et al., 2004). The perceived decrease in investment attractiveness (72.3%) further supports findings that conflict zones typically experience diminished investor confidence due to heightened risk and instability (Sorli et al., 2005). The findings from this study are consistent with existing literature on the effects of separatist movements and conflict on economic activities, social cohesion, infrastructure development, and employment. Previous research has documented how separatist agitation and conflict can disrupt economic activities, deteriorate social relations, and hinder infrastructure development (Piazza, 2017; Kalyvas, 2006).

The observed high impact on personal income, business operations, and investment is supported by studies showing that conflict zones often experience severe economic repercussions due to instability and insecurity (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Miguel et al., 2004). The significant deterioration in social cohesion and intergroup relations aligns with theories on the social impacts of conflict, which emphasize the exacerbation of group divisions and mistrust in conflict-affected areas (Miller & Martin, 2019). The impact on infrastructure development, including delays and destruction, corroborates research indicating that conflicts often lead to

significant setbacks in development projects and infrastructure maintenance (Galtung, 1969; Boas, 2015). Variations in the impact of separatist agitation across different regions or demographic groups may be attributed to several factors. The degree of impact can vary based on the intensity and duration of the conflict, the level of economic development, and the resilience of local communities. For instance, urban areas may experience more direct and severe impacts due to higher population density and economic activity, while rural areas might face less immediate disruption but longer-term economic consequences (Khan, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study on the impact of separatist agitation on the socio-economic development of the South-Eastern states in Nigeria has illuminated several key findings regarding how such agitation affects economic activities, social cohesion, and infrastructure development. These findings provide a comprehensive view of the repercussions of separatist movements and offer insights into how they influence the socio-economic fabric of the region.

Economic Development: The analysis reveals that separatist agitation significantly disrupts economic activities in the South-Eastern states. A pronounced disparity exists in how different demographic groups perceive this impact. Men, older individuals, and those with lower educational attainment report a higher degree of economic disruption. Urban areas are particularly affected, reflecting the greater economic activity and dependency in these regions. This underscores the need for targeted economic recovery strategies to mitigate the adverse effects on businesses and livelihoods in urban centers. The findings suggest that separatist activities have led to a contraction in economic opportunities and a general decline in economic stability, which necessitates robust economic intervention and support to aid in the recovery and rebuilding process.

Social Cohesion: The impact of separatist agitation on social cohesion is substantial, with variations observed across gender, age, and education. Men and older individuals, along with those with lower levels of formal education, perceive the impact on social cohesion as more severe. This highlights the importance of addressing the social fragmentation and mistrust exacerbated by separatist activities. Efforts to strengthen social cohesion should focus on rebuilding trust and fostering reconciliation among communities. Programs that promote intergroup dialogue and community engagement are essential in mitigating the social divides intensified by separatist conflicts.

Infrastructure Development: The study finds that separatist agitation has a significant negative effect on infrastructure development in the South-Eastern states. Urban residents, in particular, experience more severe impacts on infrastructure compared to their rural counterparts. The damage to infrastructure not only hampers daily life but also impedes long-term socio-economic development. Prioritizing infrastructure rehabilitation in conflict-affected urban areas is critical to restoring normalcy and supporting economic growth. The findings suggest a need for

comprehensive infrastructure development plans that incorporate conflict resilience and recovery strategies.

Socio-Demographic Variations: Socio-demographic factors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of the impact of separatist agitation. Gender, age, education, and type of residence influence how individuals experience and perceive the consequences of separatist movements. Men, older individuals, and those with lower education levels are more likely to report severe impacts. These variations highlight the necessity for tailored interventions that address the specific needs of different demographic groups. Policymakers should consider these factors when designing and implementing recovery programs to ensure they effectively meet the diverse needs of affected populations.

Integrated Impact: The study underscores the interconnected nature of economic, social, and infrastructural impacts. The strong association between perceived impacts on economic activities, social cohesion, and infrastructure development indicates that addressing these issues in isolation may be insufficient. A holistic approach that integrates economic recovery, social reconciliation, and infrastructure development is essential for comprehensive conflict resolution and sustainable development.

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Based on the findings from the study, several evidence-based recommendations emerge to address the impacts of separatist agitation on economic activities in the South-Eastern states of Nigeria.

- **Targeted Economic Support for Men**: The data reveals that male respondents are significantly more likely to experience high impacts from separatist agitation on economic activities. With a high adjusted odds ratio (aOR) of 5.149, it is evident that men face a greater economic burden due to these disruptions. To address this disparity, it is crucial to implement targeted economic recovery programs specifically designed for men. These programs could include financial aid, business grants, and job creation initiatives tailored to support men who are disproportionately affected. Such targeted interventions will help alleviate the economic challenges faced by this group and promote more balanced recovery efforts across genders.

- **Educational Support and Skill Development**: The analysis also shows that individuals with higher education levels are more likely to experience significant economic impacts from separatist agitation, as indicated by an adjusted odds ratio of 3.036. This suggests that those with higher education are not necessarily immune to economic disruptions but rather are more vulnerable to their severe effects. To support these individuals, it is essential to develop and expand educational and vocational training programs. These programs should focus on enhancing employability and economic resilience, helping educated individuals adapt to the changing economic landscape and recover from the disruptions caused by separatist activities.

- **Addressing Urban-Rural Disparities**: A significant finding is that residents of urban areas are more likely to experience high economic impacts from separatist agitation,

with an adjusted odds ratio of 0.079. This underscores the need for focused economic recovery efforts in urban areas, which are more severely affected. Urban areas should receive prioritized support, including infrastructure rehabilitation, business support, and financial assistance. At the same time, strategies should be developed to support rural areas in addressing indirect effects of the agitation. Balancing efforts between urban and rural areas will ensure a comprehensive approach to economic recovery that considers the unique challenges faced by both settings.

- **Infrastructure and Livelihood Support in Urban Areas**: The high impact of separatist agitation on urban economic activities highlights the urgent need for investment in infrastructure and livelihood support programs specifically targeting urban areas. This investment should include rebuilding critical infrastructure, supporting small businesses, and providing financial assistance to households affected by the agitation. By focusing on these areas, policymakers can address the immediate needs of urban populations and stimulate economic recovery in regions most affected by the disruptions.

- **Integrated Community Support Programs**: Given the complex interplay between various factors affecting economic activities, it is essential to establish integrated community support programs. These programs should address the economic, social, and infrastructural needs of both urban and rural areas. Effective integration requires collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Such programs can ensure that recovery efforts are comprehensive, addressing multiple dimensions of the impact and providing holistic support to affected populations.

- **Robust Monitoring and Evaluation**: Finally, implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is crucial to assess the effectiveness of recovery programs and make necessary adjustments. This framework should include regular assessments of economic impacts, demographic variations, and the success of targeted interventions. Continuous monitoring will help ensure that the programs remain effective in addressing the specific needs identified in the study and provide valuable insights for ongoing improvements.

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