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## RURAL POVERTY IN NIGERIA: CHARACTERISTICS, DIMENSIONS, AND TRENDS

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### *Abstract*

*Despite Nigeria's rich endowment with abundant natural, physical and human resources, the incidence of poverty is high. The poverty situation in Nigeria is deplorable and pathetic. The current world development report (2000/2001) put Nigeria as the 28<sup>th</sup> poorest country in the world. The world poverty reports 1996 and Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) consumer surveys covering households income and expenditure conducted in 1985 and 1992 highlighted the uneven spread of the burden of poverty in Nigeria. There is growing incidence of poverty in rural areas. According to FOS (1999), in 1992, the rural areas accounted for 66 percent of the incidence of poverty, 72 percent of the depth of poverty and 69 percent of the extreme poor. Female-headed households are especially vulnerable to poverty. Successive Nigerian governments have initiated various rural development programmes to attack the scourging nature of poverty among rural dwellers. However, many of the initiative are not well articulated and are not targeted directly on the rural poor. As a result, a large proportion of the population is still below the poverty line, with poor nutrition, ill-health and short life expectancy.*

*For proper designing and implementation of rural poverty reduction techniques, it is crucial to understand the concepts, characteristics, dimensions and causes of rural poverty. This paper attempts to shed some light on the various conceptual issues of rural poverty. It provides an overview of the poverty situation in rural areas, in terms of characteristics, dimensions, trends and causes. Secondary data and a descriptive approach are employed to conduct the study. The paper conclude by calling for a re-orientation of the development policies in favour of rural development, with a view to reducing rural poverty.*