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## **THE NIGERIAN AGRICULTURE AND POVERTY INCIDENCE: THE NEED FOR PRIVATE SECTOR EMPOWERMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Poverty in Nigeria is concentrated in rural areas. Low resource or resource-poor farmers characterized by preponderance of small farm units, fragile soils, rain-dependent, minimum inputs and poor yield dominate the agricultural sector. The incidence of poverty is highest among households in which the head is engaged in agriculture as the main source of income. Agricultural growth is therefore important to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in Nigeria. Conscious policy efforts by government towards poverty alleviation began during the SAP era. Some companies like Shell and certain State Governments have shown real interest in alleviating poverty through their agricultural programmes and policy statements. Nigeria's current vision for agricultural development is expressed in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the New Agricultural Policy (NAP), and the Rural Sector Development Strategy (RSDS). This paper posits that provision of electricity, potable water, health centres and formal schools will facilitate the sustainability of any impact of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. Encouraging community development projects evolved by the communities themselves will minimize poverty incidence. Increasing the access of the poor to land and other productive resources will reduce poverty and generate employment. Development of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas has the two pronged approach of reducing poverty and developing the rural areas. Encouraging processing through adequate incentives to SMEs will also further empower the private sector.. Farm Management, Food Security and Poverty,

### **Keyword**

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