Assessment of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural and Urban Nigeria: Evidence from Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)

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ABSTRACT Poverty reduction is a major economic development indicator with international acceptability. This paper analyzed the spatial distribution of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria. The study made use of survey-based secondary data of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) for 1999, 2003 and 2008. Fuzzy set was used to construct composite welfare indices (CWI) which were subjected to descriptive analyses. The results show that access to safe drinking water sources declined between 1999 and 2008 across the different wealth quartiles and poor households had suffered more severely. National access to electricity increased from 45.82 percent in 1999 to 51.41 percent in 2003, and declined to 45.58 percent in 2008. The poorest (first) quartile was also most deprived. Access to telephone in both urban and rural sectors increased across the years. However, poorest quartiles (first and second) in urban and rural sectors had very low access to telephone. The urban sector's CWI of 0.321, 0.438 and 0.466 in 1999, 2003 and 2008, respectively were higher than those for rural area. Southern geopolitical zones had higher average CWI than their counterparts from the north. Among the state, Lagos records the highest average CWI of 0.059 for the poorest quartile. It was recommended that policy makers should give more priority to provision of basic social services and ensure adequate and proper maintenance especially in the rural areas.