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## **Nigerian Rural Youths in a Culture of Undignified Survival Strategies**

**D. O. Torimiro\* and O.D. Kolawole**

*Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Obafemi Awolowo University,  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria*

**KEYWORDS** Poverty; unemployment; rural; youth

**ABSTRACT** This paper critically examines the poverty and unemployment situation confronting the rural youth in southwest Nigeria. A conceptual model was developed to describe the situation. Also, different methodological approaches, such as structured interview schedule, unstructured interview and on-the spot observer's assessment were used to elicit information from the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to discuss the qualitative data. It was, however, observed that the rural youth in the most Islamic communities are illiterates. Also, most of the youths generally depended on their parents for basic needs. Seven surviving strategies such as buying and selling and street hawking; involvement in daily paid casual labour; motor-park garage touting; mounting of roadblocks; armed robbery; prostitution and blood touting; which the youth employed were identified, some of which are incriminating and undignifying. The establishment of a National Youth Development Centre is strongly advocated for the enhancement of meaningful interventionist programmes.