European Journal of Business and Management
ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 (Online)
Vol 4, No.9, 2012

Stemming the Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria with Marketing Strategies

EZEKIEL TOM EBITU[1], ERNEST EMEKA IZOGO[2] & MBUM PATRICK AWOK[3]
1. Department of Marketing, University, PMB 1115, of Calabar, Nigeria, E-mail:edidiongebitu@yahoo.com
Cell: +234 803 945 1333
[2.] Department of Marketing, Ebonyi State University, P. M. B. 053, Abakaliki, Nigeria, E-mail: ernestizogo@yahoo.com. Cell: +234 703 629 7276, +234 816 756 4883
*Corresponding Author: Department of Marketing, University of Calabar, PMB 1115, Nigeria. E-mail: mbumpat69@gmail.com. Cell: +234 703 182 6974

ABSTRACT
Most African countries are grossly underdeveloped and as such many have its citizens living below the poverty line. In Nigeria, despite the numerous policies and programmes put in place by different governments at one time or the other to reduce the surge of the plague, very minimal successes have been achieved. This research argues that in steering the ship of any state towards development, marketing has a great role to play and as such sought to expose the marketing strategies that will be of value to the government in attacking poverty. Using secondary data sourced from the reports of national and international bodies through the internet, it was found that the poverty margin in Nigeria still ranks high despite the extant reformative strategies targeted at stemming the scourge. Against this backdrop, the researcher advances some marketing strategies that will serve as a panacea for poverty alleviation in Nigeria and other countries especially those within the African continent.

KEYWORDS: Big push strategy, Government policies and programmes, Marketing Institutions, Marketing strategies, Poverty and Structural Adjustment programmes (SAP).

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

Poverty is a recurrent decimal plaguing most underdeveloped and developing countries of the world. Most African countries especially Nigeria is duped in this racket. This might be why the UN Millennium Project (2005) has re-emphasized the need for a 'big push' strategy to help poor countries break out of their poverty trap and meet the MDG challenge. Reports have shown that the level of poverty in Nigeria has been on the increase despite several government policy reforms to stem the tide. For instance, the poverty assessment study commissioned and sponsored by the World Bank in Nigeria in 2005 not only profiled poverty, but established quantitatively the trend of poverty encroachment to development from 1980 to 1996. The study results show that poverty level in Nigeria has been extremely high, with about two-thirds of the population living below the poverty line in 1996.

In Nigeria, a lot of policies and programmes have been initiated by different governments at one time or the other to tackle poverty but these efforts yielded very minimal successes. In the pre-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) epoch, such programmes as the National Development Plan, the River Basin Development Authorities, the Agricultural Development Programmes, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, the Rural Electrification Scheme, and the Rural Banking Programme were all targeted at doing battle with poverty in Nigeria. Other notable poverty reduction related programmes that were put in place in Nigeria before the dawn of the SAP include Operation Feed the Nation and Free and Compulsory Primary Education set up in 1977, Green Revolution established in 1980 and Low Cost Housing Scheme. Most of these programmes failed woefully due to lack of political will, determination, dedication and continuity in government policies and programmes.

The SAP which was introduced as a result of the severe economic crises that befell Nigerians in the early 1980's despite the pre-SAP poverty alleviation programmes even worsened the situation of poverty in Nigeria. This made the government to design and implement numerous poverty alleviation programmes between 1986 and 1998. "Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (1986), National Directorate of Employment (1986), Better Life Programme (1987), People's Bank of Nigeria (1989), Community Banks (1990), Family Support Programme (1994), Family Economic Advancement Programme (1997)" (Oladeji and Abiola, 1998) are all examples of poverty reduction programmes embarked upon by the government to narrow the poverty margin in Nigeria but all performed below average because of poor implementation. Despite such current poverty mitigation institutions and strategies as Bank of industry, Nigerian Agricultural, Cooperative and Rural Development Bank, Community Banks and subsequently Microfinance banks, National Economic

Empowerment Development Strategy and recently, the banking consolidation, current estimates show that the population of Nigerians still leaving below the poverty line is 70% as at 2007, indicating little or no improvement.

Even a casual observer will have noticed by now that the efforts expended by the government towards reducing poverty in the country have contributed minimally in stemming the scourge regardless of the numerous extant reformative programmes, policies and strategies. The sure ways of eradicating poverty seem to be vague especially when the progress recorded by past programmes has barely approached average. It is believed at this point that progress does not lie on the number of strategies employed, but on the "how" government goes about implementing existing strategies. It is equally believed that most of the poverty eradication programmes were short-lived and performed sub-optimally because government did not consider the realities on ground before instituting them and even after institution, poor implementation further stunted the realization of the intended objectives of these policies and strategies. A salvaging strategy will be that which takes it bearing from the needs and wants of the target beneficiaries. It is at this point that marketing which works towards identifying and satisfying human needs and wants through the exchange process becomes readily indispensable. This paper therefore seeks to expose the marketing strategies which can be of value in slimming the poverty gap in Nigeria and some other African countries engulfed the same quagmire.

1.2 MARKETING AND MARKETING INSTITUTION AND SYSTEM

Marketing is a social as well as an economic function that commands a great deal of positive influence in every development-oriented society. According to Ewah and Ekeng (2009), contemporary societies are now involved in one form of marketing activity or the other because it is an evolving and dynamic discipline that cuts across every spectrum of life. The import of this is that no growth-oriented economy can afford the consequences of neglecting marketing. Marketing as a functional discipline of business may be understood as a dynamic process of society through which business enterprise is integrated productively with society's purposes and human values (Ifezue, 2005). The degree of importance that marketing has gained in the recent time has attracted the attention of authors in the field. Some view it as both business and non-business activity; others prefer to describe the theme from the social and managerial process perspective. Yet some authors see marketing as an economic activity while the contemporary marketing view considers marketing as a multidimensional management tool that can be applied by a party to an exchange relation to achieve the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned.

However, the definition that best meets our need in this paper is that which sees marketing as a social activity. From this angle, marketing can be described as a social activity that anticipates and satisfies the needs and wants of individuals in an economy through the exchange process for the overall well being of the society. For instance, when government embark on the provision of such critical infrastructures as good road networks, electricity, shelter, portable water supply and so on which enhances the well being of the citizens in return for the mandate given them, marketing has taken place. Still, if it creates an investment friendly environment, it has equally performed a marketing function. If government regulates the activities of businesses to ensure that consumer are protected from the sharp practices of unscrupulous businessmen masquerading as business operators, it has equally performed a marketing function. This goes well to mean that even though the government is a political institution, it plays marketing roles in many respects. According to Ifezue (2005), it is in marketing, as we now understand it, that we satisfy individual and social values, needs and wants – be it through production of goods, supplying of services, fostering innovation, or creating satisfaction.

Marketing institution are those individuals or organizations that facilitate the performance of the marketing function. They play intermediary role in the exchange process which is the heart of marketing. Distributors, dealers, agents, wholesalers, retailers etc are typical examples of the participants in the exchange process that facilitate title transfer. Such government agencies as Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), Board of Internal Revenue (BIR), Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), Microfinance banks, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), to mention a few equally play roles that are similar to those of the business institutions mentioned above. Some of these government agencies are empowered to make profit while subsidizing services to the consumers while others are purely set up for the sole aim of providing social services for the benefit of the members of the society at little or no cost. The bottom-line is that these organizations play central role in enhancing the overall well being of the social fabric.

Marketing system can best be described as the set of internal and external factors that either make or mar marketing activities. The internal or micro factors are controllable while the external or macro factors are beyond the control of organizations. As such, what organizations do is to match its internal strengths and weaknesses against the external contexts which pose opportunities and threats. These uncontrollable externalities are competition, technology, political and legal forces, socio-cultural factors, economic factors and so on. Some of the macro economic variables that impact greatly on marketing operations are inflation, unemployment, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), population, exchange rate, ratio of import to export and net national income. When the manifestations of these economic indicators are favourable, the poverty level will be low and vice versa. To enhance the favourability of these variables, the installation of effective and efficient marketing strategies are dearly important. In a developing country like Nigeria, marketing practices are still very much undeveloped and this partly accounts for why poverty level has been relatively high. To attack poverty head-on, enthronement of sound marketing strategies is necessary to help the macroeconomic indicators to operate more favourably.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data collected for this study was sourced basically from secondary sources retrieved through the internet. The various reports of such national and international organizations as Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) - World Factbook, The Heritage Foundations, and Office of Statistics and so on were consulted. Simple percentages were utilized in analyzing some of the economic indicators that have contributed to the persistent rate of poverty in Nigeria. Analysis of the marketing strategies needed in reawakening development centred more on the government because government is the prime mover of policies that can cause development to happen in order to stamp out poverty.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 captures some economic indicators in Nigeria between the period 1980 and 2010 which have strong bearing on this research. Some of these economic indices will be utilized in assessing the extent of poverty in Nigeria. First, the GDP decreased from 17.0% in 1985 to 4.89% in 1990. This was the resultant effect of the extravagant leadership of Ibrahim Babangida that marked Nigeria's first bold step on wide-ranging reforms in almost all the major sectors of the economy which recorded some significant gains for the first two years but suffered a setback when certain aspects of it were reversed and internal and sectoral inconsistencies became rampant. There was a further fall in the growth of GDP from 4.89% to 2.45% in 1990 and 1995 respectively. This may be due to inflation that stormed its peak in 1995 with an extreme increase from 7.90% in 1990 to 72.73% in 1995. The GDP witnessed an upward trend in 2000 and 2005 from 14.76% to 40.67% respectively and subsequently fell to 21.26% in 2010. These indices do not represent real growth because these percentages are not proportional to the GDP per capita growth rate because of increase in population from 68.4 to 78.43 million in 1980 and 1985 respectively and which further grew to 90.56, 103.85, 118.95, 136.25 and 152.22 million in 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 respectively. This represent a growth rate of 13.39%, 12.80%, 12.69%, 12.70% and 10.40% respectively. The growth rate in population resulted in a disproportional growth in GDP per capita to 4.9%, -9.81%, -11.87%, 2.36%, 32.04% and 17.20% in 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 respectively as against the figures stated above. According to Tunde (1999), in recent years economic growth has barely kept pace with population growth, estimated at 2.8 per cent per annum. Again, even with this, over 70% of the population was still leaving below the poverty line in 2007. "Despite the country's immense human and natural resources, little social progress has been made. Two-thirds of population of over 100 million lives below the poverty line, and one-third survive on less than a dollar a day" (Tunde, 1999).

The rate of unemployment, Oni (2006) agreed with Ghose (2003) that it has devastating effects on the health of any nation that is billed to survive and grow. According to the World Bank Development Indicators (2008), the rate of unemployment was 5.3% between 1981 and 1985 as against the 2.2% employment growth rate in the same period. Even though the rate of unemployment fell to 4.9% between 1986 and 1990 and 4.0% between 1991 and 2000, the rate surged up to 4.9% in 2005 and fell to 4.5% in 2010. The employment rate within this period under review has been disproportional with the growth rate of unemployment and inconsistent over the years. For instance, between 1986 and 1990, it fell to 1.3% and rose to 2.4%; between 1991 and 1995 it fell again between 1996 and 2000 to 2.0%. Between 2001 and 2005, it rose to 2.8%" (World Bank Development Indicator, 2008). The rise in employment rate in 2005 may be due to a number of factors including the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), a medium-term strategy that seeks to implement series of reforms that would lay a solid foundation for a diversified Nigerian economy by 2007. The strategy sets specific goals in major growth indices as wealth creation, employment generation, institutional reforms and social charter. The over-dependence on crude oil is more vivid in the external sector earnings (Biodun, n.d). In Kareem's (n.d) view, these trends are indicative of a huge employment problem as the economy's capacity to absorb its rising labour force is low as more than 30% of its active population is unemployed.

To cause economic development to happen, the government must pay plausible attention to every sector of the economy. In the 1960s, agriculture dominated the GDP but since Nigeria discovered oil, agriculture has not recovered from the untold neglect that followed afterwards. Since the advent of the oil regime in the 1970s, there has been constant and inconsistent decrease in the contribution of agriculture to the GDP. For instance, in 1960, agriculture accounted for up to 64.1% of the total GDP (CBN, 2000). But in 2005, this has fallen to 26.8% (online CIA-World Factbook). It further fell to 18.1% in 2008. Even though it grew to 33.1% in 2010, this was not an appreciable increase when the role of agriculture in developing economy is thoroughly considered. At present, oil accounts for about 95% of the country's export earnings as against the 0.3% contribution to the country's GDP as at 1960.The dwindling fortunes in the agricultural sector has heightened Nigerian labour market tension and characterised by high rate of unemployment, low wage and poor working conditions. Prior to the oil boom of the 1970s, the Nigerian economy was largely agrarian and about 70% of the working population was engaged in agricultural activities in the rural areas. Wage rates were also comparable to international standards and the average Nigerian worker could afford decent living. The oil boom started the rural-urban drift of the population, depleting the rural population and adversely affecting agricultural activities and output since the able-body persons abandoned the rural areas seeking for the golden fleece in the urban centres resulting to unemployment growing gradually in the urban areas. Depreciating naira and inflationary pressures made real incomes decline and triggered a vicious cycle of poverty.
According to Jhingan (2003.1056), exchange rate instability is capable of stunting the growth of any economy. Even if the rate of a country's currency is changing, an appreciation will be preferable, depending on the demand of the currency. If the demand for a country's currency is high, it leads to exchange rate appreciation and vice versa (Koutsoyiannis 1975.405, Mamta Chowdhury, 1999; Obi et al., 2010). It follows therefore that for a country to witness exchange rate appreciation, it must encourage export. Both Takaendesa (2006) and Aaron et al. (1997) agree that the degree of openness of an economy have a negative effect on exchange rate instability. Yu Hsing (2006) and Annsofie (2005) all found that interest rate, rate of inflation and broad money supply have negative impact on exchange rate. Odedokun (1997) studied a group of 38 African countries, by examining the impact of macroeconomic policies, devaluation and fundamentals on real exchange rate movement. The author found that public sector fiscal deficits, growth of domestic credit, domestic absorption-GDP ratio, government consumption-GDP ratio, private consumption-GDP ratio, improvement in terms of trade, income per capita and black market (parallel market) exchange rate premium lead to real exchange rate appreciation. On the contrary, devaluation, investment-GDP ratio, consumer-wholesale price ratio in trading-partner countries, and economic growth in industrial countries result in real exchange rate depreciation. It is pertinent to note that Nigerian currency has been depreciating against the U.S Dollar for three decade now. In 1990, the rate at which the naira exchanges for one U.S Dollar rose to N8.04 as against the N0.55 of 1980. However, this grew to N21.89, N102.11, N132.15 and N150.88 in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 respectively (See table 1). This shows that the naira has been depreciating steadily and consistently against the U.S Dollar over the said period. Given that U.S is a major trading partner of Nigeria, this has been impacting negatively on the health of the economy.
Extant evidences asserted a robust relationship between government expenditure and economic growth. Some scholars argue that increase in government expenditure on socio-economic and physical infrastructures encourages economic growth while others did not support the claim that increasing government expenditure promotes economic growth, instead they avow that higher government expenditure may slowdown overall performance of the economy (Nurudeen and Usman, 2010). They further observed that rising government expenditure has not translated to meaningful development as Nigeria still ranks among world's poorest countries. The figures of government expenditure in table 1 support the latter view.
Maximum lending rate is a very important factor that determines to a great extent, the cost of production per unit of output. If the maximum lending rate is high, the cost per unit of output produced will be high and verse versa. Table 1 show that the lending rates have been unstable over the years. For instance the rate grew from 9.50% in 1980 to 27.70% in 1990. The rate fell to 21.55% and 19.49% in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

3.1 MARKETING STRATEGIES TO STEM POVERTY

Marketing Research: The marketing concept holds that consumers' satisfaction is the ultimate justification for firms' or government's existence research is very expedient. Onuoha (2008) asserts that marketing research is an important strategy that has to be adopted, first, by any government that wants her policies and programmes to be accepted by the target audience. Nwizu (2008) advocates that political leaders are expected to keep in touch with people at the grassroots level to constantly interact with them and thus be able to understand, assimilate and reflect their needs and desires to introduce and approve policies that would reflect the change that the people want. Government policies and programmes such as the Due process, the New Pension Act, Poverty Alleviation, Privatization and Commercialization and the like failed to realize the objectives for which it was established because the needs and wants of the target beneficiaries of the anticipated virtues of these policies were not thoroughly considered (Nebo (2008) agrees In another development, such exchange rate stabilization policies as Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market, Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market, Inter-bank Foreign Exchange Market, Dutch Auction System introduced during the 1980s failed to realize its intended objectives because the governments that instituted them did not consider certain economic variables on ground before initiating them (Obi et al., 2010). For instance, there is no way the naira will not have depreciated against the U.S Dollar from N0.55 in 1980 to N2.02 in 1986 when the net export fell from 5,091.10 in 1980 to 2,937.00 in 1986 and the increase in inflation from 9.97% in 1980 to 13.33 in 1986 (see table 1). In the same period, the maximum lending rate increased from 9.50% to 12.00% while GDP growth rate fell from 2.87% to -8.75%. All these background economic misalignments are what government should have concentrated more on tackling to stabilize the rate at which the naira exchanges for the dollar if proper investigated was first conducted.

Product Strategies: Kotler and Armstrong (2001) defined a product as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition and consumption. This definition shows that products are a combination of goods and services. By extension, this implies that apart from crude oil and agro-produce which forms the core of the Nigeria's export, government policies and programmes targeted at steering the ship of the state towards development and poverty reduction are also products. In marketing, when products are not well marketed, such products will fail and probably die and go into extinction. I think that most of the government policies directed towards slimming poverty in Nigeria failed because they were poorly marketed or because they do not employ the services of marketers. For a product to fair well in any market, there are certain conditions that must be put in place. First, the country must embrace new technologies that will enable it produce quality and sophisticated goods and services that will meet the tastes and preferences of the consumers. Ewah and Ekeng (2009) aver that because of the development process of most African countries and their inability to produce quality goods (especially technologically sophisticated products); they tend to prefer buying from the more industrialized countries. This orientation of buying foreign made goods syndrome can be checked if government restrict import of foreign products. This is because before such emerging economies as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and recently Turkey and Malaysia, (BRICS) began to witness dramatic economic growth, history has it that they started by developing their capital base from indigenous sources rather than encouraging importation. Opening the national borders will expose the country to the risk of capital flight, fall in the GDP, unemployment, dumping, and the likes. Export is a necessary input for provoking economic growth because between 2006 and 2007 when the net export increased from N1,456,031.30 million to N2,836,176.10 million, there was an increase in GDP growth rate from 6.21% to 6.97% while inflation rate fell from 8.23% to 5.39% (see table 1). David and Konstantin (2008) argued that if a country is a net exporter of commodity, an improvement in the terms of trades will increase its wealth. They further believe that this in turn will increase domestic demand in the tradable and the non-tradable sectors of the economy. For quality product to be produced, all the units/sectors/divisions in an organization or the Nigerian spectrum must work cooperatively to satisfy the citizenry through attainable policies and programmes for good corporate governance of Nigeria *Pricing Strategies*: The monetary values which customers offer in exchange for products and services are referred to as price while the process of determining the amount for which a product will sell is referred to as pricing. Adopting Nwosu's (2003) explication, price represents such things as the time, energy, habit change, efforts and the few sacrifices to be spent or made by the members of the target population in order to get the benefits of responding positively to the message of government's programmes. Given the price sensitivity of most Nigerian consumers, a workable strategy will be that which keeps production costs as low as possible. The cost of borrowing and the exchange rate determines to a great extent, the retail prices of domestic commodities. According to Anyanwu (2000), prices have generally been on the increase since the introduction of the SAP because of the grossly depreciated naira against other currencies. For instance, by 2010, the naira has depreciated to N150.88 as against the N0.55 in which it was exchanging for the US dollar in 1980 (table 1). To cause exchange rate appreciation to happen, the government must embark on measures that will encourage the exportation of domestically fabricated commodities. To realize this, it must offer tax incentives and subsidies to local producers. To reduce the cost of producing local products, it is equally necessary that government through the CBN regulate the rate at which local producers borrow from the commercial banks operating in the country. Again, as citizens enjoy the various goods and services provided by the government such as petroleum products, portable water, electricity, postal services, security and so on, they are entitled to pay a price. In this area, the government is expected to be moderate in its charges for the services rendered to the people while the citizens are expected to be law abiding in the payment of these fees if meaningful development is to be achieved. Another pricing strategy that will work in ensuring that the poverty gap in the Nigerian is narrowed is reducing income disparity and power stabilization.

Place strategies: There is no doubt that goods and services are not efficiently distributed in Nigeria. Ifezue (2005) argued that distribution tends to be ignored or regarded, somehow, as an inferior kind of economic activity, and thus, it is difficult to get development economists and policy makers to accord problems of efficiency in distribution the same attention they give automatically to problems of production, investment and finance. Similarly, Ewah and Ekeng (2009), aligned with Ifezue and maintained that the trends and patterns of distributive trade in Nigeria reveal that, some indigenous firms embark on sales promotion, but had not been able to control the channels of distribution because of the chaos in the distributive structure. Despite this neglect, Bowersox and Closs (1999) argued that distribution is a significant component in the engine driving economic development just as it plans, performs and monitors the movement of products from suppliers through the value-chain ultimately to consumers. Effective and efficient distribution system is a catalyst for improving the standard of living of Nigerian citizens because poor distribution system has some attendant economic disadvantages. Poor distribution can lead to hoarding which in turn will translate into high retail prices that may degenerate into inflation and if inflation is left unchecked it will reduce the standard of living of the people because their purchasing power will fall To facilitate the enthronement of effective and efficient distribution system in Nigeria, the government must revitalize the transport sector by building, reconstructing motorable roads, bridges and restructuring effective rail system, adhered strictly to air safety regulations and dredge and redredge all the navigable rivers across the land including most importantly: River Niger, Benue, Cross River, Imo River, Anambra River and others. Many rural areas in the country have no motorable roads and this accounts for why agricultural products are not well distributed in the country. The exorbitant prices of most agro produce and petroleum products in the urban areas are equally attributable to the poor state of our transportation and distribution system. Choosing the right channel of distribution is crucial in getting products to the target market's place. Borrowing the ideas of Nwosu (2003) as cited in Onuoha (2008), it requires the marketers of government's ideas to develop as many appropriate channels or methods for making contacts with the target population members to make the ideas, innovation or material available and accessible to members of the target population, so that with little or no effort they will get whatever the marketing team is trying to "sell" to them, using the social marketing strategy.

Promotion Strategies: Promotion strategies remain priceless tools through which government can get the citizens to learn about its programmes and policies. According to Onuoha (2008), the government's marketing team has to set up communication and promotion programmes consisting of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct and online marketing. It is obvious that many Nigerian citizens are not even aware of the different government policies and programmes that are meant for them. For instance, the micro finance banks in the country is the cheapest and most accessible source of finance for firms in the country but most entrepreneurs are not aware of this because it is not well promoted. To get the citizens become aware of its programmes, government can utilized such advertising media as television, radio, newspapers and magazines depending on the location and literacy level of the target audience. The almost extinct re-branding campaign should have been greeted warmly if not for the top-bottom approach the government employed in executing the campaign. The best strategy would have been the bottom-top approach wherein government will try to reorient the citizens on the need to change their attitudes to enable meaningful development to take place rather than showcasing in the international scene that Nigerians are good people and great nation while the attitude of the people is far from this. As mentioned earlier, to boost development from indigenous sources, government can strengthen manufacturing through tax incentives, infrastructure and non-tariff barriers to support domestic manufacturing. Selling government policies and programmes through interactive sections by different government agencies is equally important. The "Police Diary" programme anchored on radio Nigeria every Tuesday and Friday of the week is a welcome development. Through the use of news commentaries, government also project good images of itself and build lasting relationships between it and members of the public. The Niger Delta crisis would have been a thing of the past if good publicity and public relations were given a pride of place in government programmes and policies.

People Strategies: For most services, people are a vital element of the marketing mix. The interaction between staff and customers can be the essential turning point between any decision making process. It is pertinent at this point to mention that the quality of personnel responsible for evolving and implementing government policies determines the quality and performance of such policies. Nwizu (2008), aver that with the significant increase in the complexity and magnitude of government functions after the Second World War, the need for administrative capability has been felt much greater to solve complex operational problems and to aid in the implementation of development plans, programmes and projects. Unlike physical goods, services are mere experiences which require the efforts of specialists to make it meet the demands of the targeted audience since the quality of services offered by firms partly depends on staff expertise. With this at the back of their minds, citizens will rather vote the right man than selling their mandate. Another people marketing strategy is to ensure that round pegs are put not in square but round holes. A situation where a professor of pharmacy is made a minister of information is a gross mismatching. Periodic assessment of the performance of political office holders can equally help to fish out un-performing government officials and enable a better replacement to be made that can help remove the shackles of poverty in the of plenty in Nigeria.

Process Strategies: "Creating and delivering product elements to customers requires the design and implementation of effective processes. Badly designed processes are likely to annoy customers because of slow, bureaucratic, and ineffective service delivery. Similarly, poor processes make it difficult for front-line staff to do their jobs well, results in low productivity, and increase the likelihood of service failures" (lovelock and Wright, 2001). Therefore, government in power must not allow its good intents to be strangulated by bureaucratic bottlenecks and ineffective processes. For instance, the number of people a contractor must come in contact with before contract approval must be limited as this will facilitate quick implementation of government policies and programmes and reduce the costs involved. If government officials can be linked with internet facility, it will equally help to facilitate the communication process among them and thus make the service delivery process more effective and efficient.

Physical Evidence Strategies: Because of the intangible nature of a service this subsequently means that potential customers are unable to judge that service before it is consumed. An important element of marketing planning is therefore to reduce this level of risk by offering tangible evidence of the nature of the service. The appearance of buildings, landscaping, vehicles, interior furnishing, equipment, staff members, signs, printed materials, and other visible cues all provide tangible evidence of a firm's or government's service style and quality. Service firms need to manage physical evidence carefully because it can have a profound impact on customers' impressions. In services with few tangible elements, such as insurance, advertising is often employed to create meaningful symbols. For instance, an umbrella may symbolize protection, and a fortress, security. For government to convince the people that it is poverty alleviation conscious, it must embark on the provision of basic amenities such as good roads, electricity and portable water supply and creation of investment friendly environment. The blue print of their policies must be designed in a way that it will appear credible in the face of the people.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite the existing reformative policies, programmes and strategies adopted by different governments to reduce poverty in Nigeria, the rate of the scourge has remained indefatigable. It is perceived that most of these policies performed poorly because they lack the consideration of certain background economic problems bedevilling the country before they were instituted. To make a reversal, it will make great economic sense for government to conduct marketing research before initiating policies that will be of great positive value to the society. Government is equally urged to empower local producers to produce products that will compete with foreign made ones through tax incentives and subsidies, export promotion and import curtailment. Effective and efficient distribution system through the overhaul of the whole transport sector is equally seen as a wise decision. Interest rate regulation and power stabilization are positive measures that can also help to reduce poverty rate in Nigeria. Finally, it will also make great sense if credible stakeholders are appointed to man political offices just as free and fair election, corporate governance, periodic assessment of political office holders and good promotion programmes have a role to play in alleviating poverty and possibly make poverty history (Nelson Mandela).

REFERENCES

Anyanwu,A.(2000).Dimensions of marketing. 2nd Ed.Owerri: Alvan Global Pub.

Bowersox,D.J.& Closs,D.J.(1999).Logistics and value creation,In Baker,M.J. (ed),

Encyclopaedia of marketing. London: International Thompson Business Press. 420

Jhingan, M. L. (2003).Advanced Economic Theory: Micro-and Macro-Economics.12thEditions.New Delhi: Vrinda Publications (P) Ltd.

Kinsey, J. (1988). Marketing in Developing Countries. London: Macmillan Publishers.

Kotler,P.(1980) Principles of Marketing. Englewood Cliffs, New York: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (2001). Principles of Marketing. Ninth Edition. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India, Private Limited.
Koutsoyiannis,A. (1975) Modern Microeconomics.1st Ed. London: The Macmillan Press.
Lovelock, C. and Wright, L. (2001). Principles of Service Marketing and management. 2nd Edition. New York, USA: Prentice-Hall Inc.
Nebo,G.O. (2004)Marketing: Contemporary and comprehensive approach.Owerri:Riok Pub.
Annsofie, P. (2005) Identifying the determinants of exchange rate movements: evaluating the real interest differential model. Retrieved May 4, 2011.
Aron, J., Elbadawi, I. and Khan, B. (1997). Determinants of real exchange rate in South Africa, CSAE Working Paper 97-16.
Biodun, A. (n.d). The impact of oil on Nigeria's economic policy Formulation.
David, F. and Konstantin, M. (2008). Determinants of the equilibrium exchange rate for South Africa's manufacturing sector and implications for competitiveness, Being a Draft of a Working Paper of the National Treasury of South Africa. Cited at
Ewah, O. E. and Ekeng, A. B. (2009). Problems and prospects of marketing in developing economies: The Nigerian experience. International Journal of Business and Management, Vol. 4 No. 9, pp. 197-196.
Ghose, A. (2003). Jobs and Incomes in a Globalizing World, Geneva, ILO.
Ifezue, A. N. (2005). The role of marketing in economic development of developing countries. Innovative Marketing, Vol. 1 Issue 1. pp. 15-20
Kareem F.O. (n.d). Trade flows and employment outcomes in Nigeria. Department of economics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
Mamta B. C. (1999). The Determinants of real exchange rate: Theory and evidence from Papua Guinea. Asia Pacific School of Economics and Management Working Paper 99-2.
Nebo, O. G. (2008). Marketing as a tool for achieving efficient public service delivery in Nigeria, In Chinedu, N.O. (Ed), Marketing in contemporary Nigeria: A practical approach Owerri, Stra-Mark Communication Consult, pp. 30-54
Nurudeen,A & Usman, A. (2010) Government expenditure and economic growth in Nigeria, 1970-2008:A disaggregated analysis. Business and Economic Res. Journal, Vol BEJ-4
Nwizu, G. (2008). Marketing and democratic governance in Nigeria, In Chinedu, N.O. (ed), Marketing in contemporary Nigeria:A practical approach. Owerri: Stra-Mark Comm.Pres
Nwosu, I. E. (2003). Environmental public relations management: Implementation, models, strategies and techniques. The Nigerian Journal of Communications Vol. 2 No 1&2 July
Obi, B., Wafure, G.O. and Abu, N. (2010). Determinants of exchange rate in Nigeria, 1970 2007: An empirical analysis. Indian Journal of Economics and Business Audience Volume: 9 Source Issue: 1 retrieved May 14, 2011 from
Odedokun, M. O. (1997). An empirical analysis on the determinants of the real exchange rate in African countries. The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development, Vol. 6, Issues 1. pp. 63-82. Retrieved May 4, 2011.
Oni, B. (2006). Employment generation: Theoretical and empirical issues. Paper presented at the 2006 Annual Conf. of the Nigerian Economic Society. Calabar. August.
Onuoha, A.O. (2008). Strategies for marketing government policies and programmes, In Chinedu, N.O. (Ed), Marketing in contemporary Nigeria: A practical approach Owerri: Stra-Mark Communication Consult, pp. 72-88
Takaendesa, P. (2006). The behaviour and fundamental determinants of real exchange rate in South Africa. A Master's Thesis submitted to Rhodes University, South Africa.
Tunde, O. (1999). Nigeria's economy at the crossroad, Africa Recovery (June).
UN Millennium Project (2005). Investing in development: A practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. London: Earthscan.
World Development Indicators (2008) http://web.resourceshelf.com/go/resourceblog/50602
Yu Hsing, (2006). Determinants of exchange rate fluctuations for Venezuela: Application of an extended Mundell-Fleming model. Journal of Applied Econometrics and International Development, Vol. 6, No. 1. Retrieved May 4, 2011 from

Table 1: Macro-economic Indicators

Year	GDP (In B N)	GDP GR (%)	GDP/CAPITA (N)	INF RATE (%)	UM RATE (%)	MAX. LENDING RATE (%)	GOVE (In B N)	OFF EX RATE (N)	EX (Nm) (13)	IM (Nm) (14)	NET EXPORT
1980	3,096.21	2.87	45,234.96	9.97	NA	9.50	NA	0.55	14,186.70	9,095.60	5,091.10
1981	3,741.41	20.84	53,154.22	20.56	NA	10.00	NA	0.61	11,023.30	12,839.60	-1,816.30
1982	3,702.01	-1.05	51,190.58	5.88	NA	11.75	NA	0.67	8,206.40	10,770.50	-2,564.10
1983	3,515.04	-5.05	47,326.60	22.22	NA	11.50	NA	0.72	7,502.50	8,903..70	-1,401.20
1984	3,443.98	-2.02	45,137.91	40.91	NA	13.00	NA	0.76	9,088	7,178.30	1,909.70
1985	3,730.62	8.32	47,563.22	3.23	4.30	11.75	NA	0.89	11,720.80	7,062.60	4,658.20
1986	3,404.03	-8.75	42,187.77	13.33	5.30	12.00	NA	2.02	8,920.60	5,983.60	2,937.00
1987	3,038.04	-10.75	36,583.81	11.77	7.00	19.20	NA	4.02	30,360.60	17,861.70	12,498.90
1988	3,267.19	7.54	38,218.17	34.21	5.10	17.60	NA	4.54	31,192.80	21,445.70	9,747.10
1989	3,478.48	6.47	39,528.87	49.02	4.50	24.60	NA	7.39	57,971.20	30,860.20	27,111.00
1990	3,922.54	12.77	43,315.58	7.90	3.20	27.70	NA	8.04	109,886.10	45,717.90	64,168.20
1991	3,898.31	-0.62	41,844.96	12.20	3.10	20.80	NA	9.90	121,535.40	89,488.20	32,047.20
1992	3,915.22	0.43	40,900.54	44.57	3.40	31.20	NA	17.20	205,611.70	143,161.20	62,450.50
1993	3,997.06	2.09	40,636.85	57.14	2.70	36.09	NA	22.10	218,770.10	165,629.40	53,140.70
1994	4,033.42	0.91	39,907.96	57.42	2.00	21.00	NA	22.00	206,059.20	162,788.80	43,270.40
1995	4,021.02	-0.31	38,719.38	72.73	2.10	20.79	NA	79.20	950,661.40	755,127.70	195,533.70
1996	4,221.82	4.99	39,563.79	29.29	2.10	20.86	NA	82.40	1,309,543.40	562,626.60	746,916.80
1997	4,340.12	2.80	39,582.83	10.67	3.40	23.32	NA	83.50	1,241,662.70	845,716.60	395,946.10
1998	4,457.99	2.72	39,568.51	7.86	3.20	21.34	NA	85.00	751,856.40	837,418.70	-85,562.30
1999	4,479.13	0.47	38,691.06	6.62	3.10	27.19	NA	NA	1,188,969.80	862,515.70	326,454.10
2000	4,717.33	5.32	39,657.00	6.94	4.70	21.55	1,706.56	109.55	1,945,723.30	985,022.40	960,700.90
2001	5,102.47	8.16	41,745.54	18.90	3.80	21.34	2,509.97	111.23	2,001,230.80	1,358,180.30	643,050.50
2002	6,183.03	21.18	49,230.81	12.88	4.50	30.19	2,196.31	120.58	1,882,668.20	1,512,695.30	369,972.90
2003	6,822.07	10.34	52,863.81	14.03	4.50	22.88	3,086.76	129.22	2,889,846.70	2,080,235.30	809,611.40
2004	7,544.19	10.59	56,893.28	15.00	4.50	20.82	3,176.67	132.89	4,620,085.20	1,987,045.30	2,633,039.90
2005	7,951.01	5.39	58,354.86	17.86	4.50	19.49	4,226.43	132.59	6,310,247.90	3,792,821.20	2,517,426.70
2006	8,444.85	6.21	60,318.82	8.23	4.50	18.41	5,034.39	127.38	5,752,747.70	4,296,716.4o	1,456,031.30
2007	9,033.60	6.97	62,797.15	5.39	4.50	18.36	6,203.25	127.46	8,126,000.50	5,289,824.40	2,836,176.10
2008	9,574.14	5.98	64,773.45	11.58	4.50	NA	7,198.63	117.80	NA	NA	NA
2009	10,240.48	6.96	67,427.29	12.36	4.50	NA	7,593.88	148.90	NA	NA	NA
2010	10,098.03	7.40	70,477.20	11.91	4.50	NA	10.458.19	150.88	NA	NA	NA

Sources: IMF, World Bank, UN, OECD, CIA World Factbook, Internet World Statistics, The Heritage Foundation, Office of Statistics, Illinois Basin posted crude oil prices, CBN's statistical bulletin (various issues)