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PAPER

### **The Status of SME Development Programs in Nigeria**

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Small-scale businesses have been playing an important role in the process of industrial and economic development of most nations. In Nigeria, there has been a decisive switch in the industrialization policy from import substitution to small-scale business development. To promote the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the Federal and State Governments in Nigeria have set up programs to provide various services to small-scale businesses. Recent reports indicate that the programs have not satisfactorily performed their roles.

This study is therefore, designed to highlight the roles and constraints of the programs implemented by the Federal and State Governments. The descriptive method of analysis is used and secondary data was used in this study. The study reveals that the programs were assigned with roles which could have assisted immensely the small-scale business development in Nigeria, however, factors such as lack of infrastructure, inadequate resources, undue political interference, an 'un readiness' or lack of preparedness of small and medium scale businesses to partake, and their lack of awareness on how to benefit from the programs have hindered the programs from performing their expected roles.

The programs were assigned roles which could have assisted immensely towards virile development of SMEs in Nigeria. However, adequate financial, physical and human resources should be provided for the existing programs to fulfill their roles.