

PREFACE

Small-scale enterprises are increasingly being identified as having a crucial place in strategies for economic and social development. They are seen as valuable not only for their employment and commercial value but also for the contribution they can make to community development, and to improving the situation of members of disadvantaged groups in developing countries, particularly youth, women and refugees.

The development of entrepreneurs is a feature of many national development plans, and the Lagos Plan of Action (OAU, 1982) recommends the creation of "a network of small and medium-scale industries," as well as active promotion and encouragement of the informal sector. Another facet of this is that technical and financial assistance provided by national and multi-lateral agencies, as well as private voluntary bodies and Chambers of Commerce, is more and more being focussed on small enterprise development, after many large-scale projects and investments have not had the desired developmental results. Their view often is that in this context, small enterprises can be more efficient in the use of capital, labour and materials than large-scale businesses, being less capital-intensive and less dependent on elaborate physical infrastructure.

A healthy and expanding small enterprise sector can play an important role in many of the development objectives of governments and aid agencies, including mobilisation of domestic savings and investment, use of local labour and other resources, and more production geared to basic consumer needs.

The extent to which the basic assumptions are justified and these highly desirable goals are achieved through building up the small enterprise sector is a function of many variables including appropriate policy, effective support institutions (financial and advisory), effective selection and training of entrepreneurs, and effective choice of materials and technology. A large body of experience is available on these key issues, and a lot of it is on record in the literature. This annotated Bibliography which aims to distil some of this learning, is offered as a contribution to the further development of the field. If newcomers to this area feel that as a result of reading it they are more quickly brought closer to the basic issues, and if those currently working in the field feel that a checklist of much of the current learning is useful, then the Bibliography will have served its purpose.

The Management Development Programme is anxious to know that its publications meet practical needs, and accordingly comments from users and ideas for improving the layout and content are always welcome.

Mohan Kaul
Director
Management Development Programme
Commonwealth Secretariat

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