

The impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic on management of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) at Gikomba market in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

Kenya is among the world's nations affected by HIV/AIDS with the virus claiming 600 people per day. With the people of the age bracket of 15-49 years being the most endangered, the negative impact of HIV/AIDS on macro and small Enterprises (MSEs) in terms of successful management is enormous in Kenya. This is because most MSEs' owners/managers and their employees are in this age bracket. Since AIDS was recognized in 1984, it has killed many people including owners/managers and their employees. By 1995, 73,179 cases had been reported in Kenya. Presently, it is estimated that about 2.3 million Kenyans are infected with HIV/AIDS, while over 1.5 million have already died from the virus. The sectoral impact of HIV/AIDS studies done so far have tended to lean on health, education, military, communications, information and agriculture. There is little that has been done in Kenya on the impact of HIV/AIDS on MSEs management despite its importance in the economic development and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Kenya. MSEs contribute 18% to the GDP in Kenya. Therefore this study was carried out to establish the impact of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. The research was conducted using descriptive survey design to establish the relationship between the variables in the study of large group of individuals by studying a small group. The study used interview guide and questionnaires for data collection to achieve the desired objectives. The findings have showed that the deaths caused by either HIV/AIDS or its related immunodeficiency illness were common among the owners/managers of MSEs at Gikomba market. This was attested by (48) 80 percent on the entrepreneurs interviewed. The effects of HIV/AIDS on MSEs is enormous. 93.3 percent (56) of the about entrepreneurs interviewed attested to this fact. This impact was seen through loss of profits to meet expenses on HIV/AIDS ailments, contribution to medical bills, drug expenses, food supplements, absenteeism from work, psychological trauma, stigmatization and deaths. The study also showed that (60) 100% of owners/managers of MSEs are very much aware of HIV/AIDS and its effects but failed to manage it through behaviour change. It was concluded that the impact of HIV/AIDS on MSEs in terms of increased costs of running their businesses was due to cost of medical bills, burial expenses, drugs and food supplements, reduced productivity and absenteeism from work. The knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS, influence decisions and measures taken by MSEs owners/managers to control, manage and plan for the future of their businesses. The study has recommended measures that can be taken to control and manage the HIV/AIDS among the MSEs to reduce or control this impact. These measures include:- continued effort on awareness campaign among MSEs, change of policy and approach towards combating HIV/AIDS and direct involvement of MSEs owners/managers and their employees in the campaign against HIV/AIDS.