

An assessment of effectiveness of workplace policy on HIV/AIDS as it affects Human Resources: A case study of manufacturing industries in Thika District

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Abstract:

The main aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of a HIV/AIDS policy in the workplace in manufacturing industries in Thika district. Thika district has the highest aids prevalence rate in central province, which stands at 34 per cent.(Republic of Kenya, 2002).In 1998 Thika district was among those districts ranked as having the second highest incidence of HIV/AIDS with a prevalence rate of 10-20 %.(Kenya Mulindi et.al.,1998). The sudden increase in rate of HIV/AIDS has provoked the researcher's interest on the subject especially as it affects the Human Resources. Thika is a rapidly expanding industrial center and has in recent years attracted many people from allover the country who come in search of employment. According to the Thika District Development plan of 2002-2008, out of the total population of 701,644 in the year 2002, 238,565 people are HIV positive. (Republic of Kenya 2002). The workplace is a vital point for dealing with HIV/AID, primarily because employees can be enlightened on how to protect themselves, if not yet infected or how they can lead positive, and productive lives if they are already infected. This study therefore intends to carryout a survey of various industries in Thika district to establish how effective HIV/AIDS policies in the workplace are and the measures being undertaken to mitigate the effects. This study was carried out through case studies of the selected industries in Thika district. A questionnaire was used for this study and was distributed to the various industries in Thika. With AIDS awareness standing at 95 per cent in the district, and the growth rate still high, there is need for multisectoral approach in curbing the menace and business cannot be left behind. Furthermore, they need to translate awareness into action. This can be effectively addressed within a policy framework. There is need to take action to slow down the spread of HIV/AIDS, to avert the serious personal, social and economic consequences that will result from a continued AIDS epidemic. The world Health Organization once noted that: "Improved health owes less to advances in medical science than to changes in the external environment and to a favorable trend in the standard of living ... We are healthier than our ancestors not because of what Happens when we are ill, but because we do not become ill." (WHO 1957). It is necessary to formulate, implement and revise policies in the workplace as the need arises because in the words of Nelkin, et.al. "More than a passing tragedy, AIDS will have long term, broad-ranging effects on personal relationships social institutions and cultural configurations ... the future will be different from both the past and the present. "(Nelkin, et.al 1991:1-2).