

Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility for Deal and Preventing HIV/AIDS at Working Place

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ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS had developed into a major threat that had a devastating effect on human resources and economies throughout the world. The corporate sector had woken up to this threat and was engaged in various HIV/AIDS related corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts to help the victims and spread awareness. Workplace policies aim to manage sensitive issues, such as confidentiality of medical information and continuation of employment for HIV- positive staff, and assure that all testing and counseling services are performed on a voluntary rather than mandatory basis. Many prominent companies have already formalized their policies and programmes related to HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Keywords: *HIV, AIDS, Workplace, Management, CSR, (HRM)*

The role of the private sector is critical if efforts to fight AIDS in India are to be effective and sustainable. Business possesses valuable resources that can easily and cost-effectively be utilized, such as financial resources, management and marketing skills, meeting space and fora, and access to workers, consumers and communities. This brochure describes how companies can immediately protect their economic, social and human resource interests by providing healthy occupational settings that acknowledge the potential impact of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Many companies nowadays have health care plans for ill employees, formal policies and educational efforts, particularly in regard to HIV, are often neglected. Developing such policies and practices should be seen as an investment, protecting a core business asset - the talent pool. Overall, the response of business in Asia to HIV/AIDS needs to be further advanced. While infection rates in Asia are rising rapidly, implementation of HIV/AIDS workplace management

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policies and programmes is lagging, creating a serious threat to corporate resources. If business does not respond with strong prevention efforts now, they can expect much greater challenges for care and treatment in the coming years. The hesitancy of many companies to invest in HIV/AIDS prevention may be due to a lack of data on the macro-economic impact of HIV, as well as a perceived lack of support mechanisms and technical assistance for business engaged in HIV prevention activities. It may also reflect a perception that HIV/AIDS is self-inflicted and therefore not a company or corporate responsibility.

OBJECTIVE:

- ✓ To Study of HIV/AIDS & Corporate social responsibility.
- ✓ To know Symptoms of HIV/AIDS infection.
- ✓ To know how can deal with HIV/AIDS at working place.
- ✓ To know how can prevent HIV/AIDS at working place.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The researchers have adopted descriptive methodology for this study Research has been placed on secondary data sources such as books, journals, newspapers and online database.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

There is little consensus on the definition of Corporate Social Responsibility; however, most definitions describe CSR as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. The “Karmayog CSR Study and Ratings of Indian Companies” states that CSR is about two aspects:

- ✓ “The steps taken by the company to neutralize, minimize, or offset the negative effects caused by its processes and product-usage”.
- ✓ “The further positive steps a company takes using its resources, core competence, skills, location, and funds for the benefit of people and environment” (Karmayog, 2009).

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines CSR as “the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large” (Collage Article 13, 2007).

What is HIV?

“HIV” stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. To understand what that means, let’s break it down:

- ✓ H – Human – This particular virus can only infect human beings.
- ✓ I – Immunodeficiency – HIV weakens your immune system by destroying important cells that fight disease and infection. A "deficient" immune system can't protect you.
- ✓ V – Virus – A virus can only reproduce itself by taking over a cell in the body of its host.

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HIV is a lot like other viruses, including those that cause the "flu" or the common cold. But there is an important difference – over time, your immune system can clear most viruses out of your body. That isn't the case with HIV – the human immune system can't seem to get rid of it. That means that once you have HIV, you have it for life.

What is AIDS?

“AIDS” stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. To understand what that means, let's break it down:

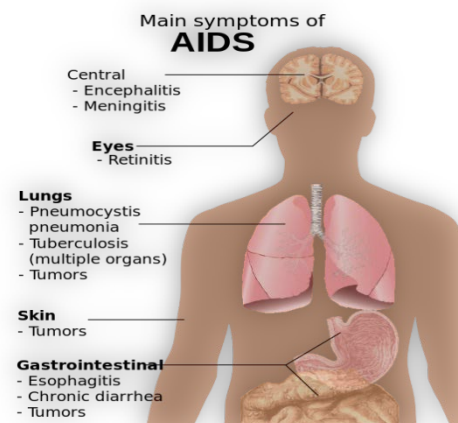
- ✓ A – Acquired – AIDS is not something you inherit from your parents. You acquire AIDS after birth.
- ✓ I – Immuno – Your body's immune system includes all the organs and cells that work to fight off infection or disease.
- ✓ D – Deficiency – You get AIDS when your immune system is "deficient," or isn't working the way it should.
- ✓ S – Syndrome – A syndrome is a collection of symptoms and signs of disease. AIDS is a syndrome, rather than a single disease, because it is a complex illness with a wide range of complications and symptoms.

As noted above, AIDS is the final stage of HIV infection, and not everyone who has HIV advances to this stage. People at this stage of HIV disease have badly damaged immune systems, which put them at risk for opportunistic infections (OIs). You are considered to have progressed to AIDS if you have one or more specific OIs, certain cancers, or a very low number of CD4 cells. If you have AIDS, you will need medical intervention and treatment to prevent death.

Symptoms of HIV/AIDS infection:

Many people with HIV/AIDS have no symptoms for several years. Others may develop symptoms similar to flu, usually two to six weeks after catching the virus. The symptoms can last up to four weeks. Symptoms of early HIV/AIDS infection May include:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Chills
- ✓ Joint pain
- ✓ Muscle ache
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Sweats (particularly at night)
- ✓ Enlarged glands
- ✓ A red rash
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Weakness
- ✓ Weight loss



HIV/AIDS & Corporate Social Responsibility:

Corporate Social Responsibility as “achieving commercial success in ways that honors ethical values and respect people, communities and natural environment”. We also say that CSR means addressing the legal, ethical, commercial and other expectations society has for business and making decisions that fairly balance the claims of the key stakeholders. In its simplest terms it is “What you do, how you do it, and when and what you say”. Underlining the economic cost of the epidemic, the then Chairman of the National Business Alliance on HIV/AIDS (NBA) Hadi S. Topobroto said at the opening ceremony of the Asia-Pacific HIV/AIDS Private Sector Mobilization in Indonesia, a country where 15 percent of the population is living with HIV/AIDS would suffer a one percent decrease in GDP per year. Therefore, employers and company owners have the responsibility to protect their workers from the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic”. Therefore the corporate social responsibility efforts against HIV/AIDS are on the rise.

Dealing with HIV/AIDS in the working place:

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), has led to great concern in the workplace in recent years. The majority of people infected with HIV/AIDS are between the ages of 20 to 45 and are employed, many by small and mid-sized businesses. This raises questions regarding the measures an employer must take to accommodate these employees. Despite the ramifications of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, few companies have an established policy to guide their response to this issue.

- **HIV Testing as a Condition of Employment-** Several states prohibit HIV/AIDS testing as a condition of employment, while others permit HIV/AIDS testing when the employer can show a legitimate reason for doing so. To establish a legitimate reason, there must be some connection between HIV/AIDS and job performance or safety. This connection may exist when the job involves a risk of transmitting the disease. An employer, who tests for HIV/AIDS without a legitimate reason, or who does so merely because of suspicion that the employee is a homosexual or drug user, may be liable for an invasion-of-privacy claim by the job applicant.
- **Rights of Co-Workers-** Certain federal laws allow employees to discontinue working when they have a reasonable belief that their working conditions are unsafe. Given the consensus in the medical field that HIV/AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual contact, it would be difficult for an employee to refuse on these grounds to work with an HIV/AIDS infected co-worker. The reasonableness of the employee's demand may depend on how the employer has educated employees about HIV/AIDS. If the employees have been taught that HIV/AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual contact, their refusal to work may be found to be "unreasonable" and they could be discharged.
- **Accommodations for HIV/AIDS Employees-** Federal legislation not only prohibits discrimination against handicapped persons, but also requires employers to make reasonable efforts to accommodate handicapped applicants and employees where obstacles exist that would impede their employment opportunities. Insofar as an employee with HIV/AIDS is considered handicapped, an employer must make reasonable accommodations for him or her.

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In addition, if your company is covered by the Rehabilitation Act and an employee has HIV/AIDS or develops it, you must make reasonable accommodations that permit the employee to continue working in the position. Such accommodations can include leave policies, flexible work schedules, reassignment to vacant positions and part-time employment. The criteria used to determine whether an employer is making reasonable accommodations for an HIV/AIDS-infected employee include the cost of the accommodation, the size of the business and the nature of the employee's work.

- **Guidelines to Consider-** Through advance education and preparation, an employer can avoid many of the problems associated with employees infected with HIV. When dealing with HIV issues, employers should:
 - ✓ adopt an up-to-date HIV/AIDS education program that discussed how HIV is transmitted and explains the company's policies regarding employees with HIV/AIDS;
 - ✓ treat HIV/AIDS infected employees in the same manner as other employees suffering from disabilities or illnesses are treated under company health plans and policies;
 - ✓ allow HIV/AIDS-infected employees to continue working as long as they are able to perform their jobs satisfactorily and their continued employment does not pose a safety threat to themselves, other employees, or customers;
 - ✓ make reasonable efforts to accommodate HIV/AIDS-infected employees by providing them with flexible work hours and assignments; and
 - ✓ Protect all information regarding an HIV/AIDS-infected employee's condition.

There is a broad range of legal issues that companies must consider when formulating their practices and responses toward HIV/AIDS. By educating your employees, you may be able to reduce the work disruption, legal implications, financial implications and other effects that HIV/AIDS can have on your business. Given the complexity and changing nature of HIV/AIDS, an employer should always examine the laws applicable in its jurisdiction and consult an attorney when handling HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace.

Workplace programmers:

- **HIV/AIDS policy development-** A policy structures all efforts related to workplace prevention of HIV/AIDS and mitigation of its Effects. The policy not only formalizes the company's commitment to manage HIV/AIDS, but also shares the responsibilities for upholding the policy with company employees. Shell Philippines decided to implement an HIV/AIDS policy after an assessment was made of the costs Related to prevention. Management concluded that a formalized HIV/AIDS policy would result in greater budget efficiencies compared to non-intervention.
- **Executive briefing -** The executive briefing targets senior management, such as the CEO, Executive Director and Board of Advisors. This 1-2 hour curriculum aims to brief decision making management on the macro- and microeconomic impact of HIV/AIDS and basic issues of workplace intervention, prevention and care and support, such as education, policy development, legal issues and assistance to HIV-positive employees.

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- **Human resource management (HRM) training-** HRM training provides guidance for human resource managers and supervisors in complying with policy regulations, managing potential workplace conflict and accommodating the needs of HIV-positive employees. This curriculum is usually provided in one day, but its duration can be tailored to the size of the company.
- **Staff training-** Training of employees is the backbone of any workplace prevention programme. This 3-4 hour curriculum aims to build staff knowledge and capacity to analyze personal risk behavior and prevent HIV transmission. An increased understanding of HIV/AIDS will further help staff to feel comfortable working together with HIV-positive co-workers.
- **Workplace care and support measures-** Provision of reasonable care and support services is essential to enable HIV-positive employees to continue working as long as possible and fulfill their expected job responsibilities. Accommodating the needs of both management and HIV-positive staff is a process of problem solving balanced by guidelines as described in the HIV/AIDS policy. Rohm Apollo Electronics in Thailand financially supports HIV-positive employees who become ill and allows them to change to other positions in the company to facilitate their ability to continue working for as long as possible. There exists a wide variety of possible care and support provisions.

CSR for the prevention of HIV/AIDS:

The role of Corporate Social Responsibility and active involvement of the private sector in the response to HIV/AIDS epidemic has been gaining momentum in the region during the last few years as Several Indian companies, including Larsen & Toubro, Tata Tea Limited, Aditya Birla Group, Apollo Tyres, Modicare Foundation, SAIL and Bajaj Auto, have also launched preventive efforts. There are many encouraging examples of CSR, Public-Private partnerships and the private and corporate sectors demonstrating active roles in prevention, care and support activities. Promoting CSR in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support initiatives in the Asia Pacific region is one of the objectives of the advocacy and communication efforts of the UNDP Regional HIV and Development Programme. In partnership with other stakeholders and private and corporate sectors, the idea is to create a regional platform for fostering CSR in HIV/AIDS.

SAIL (The Steel Authority of India Limited) has initiated a prevention and control of HIV/AIDS programme titled “SAIL AIDS Control Programme” (SACP) in association with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO). As part of inter-sectoral collaboration, SAIL has initiated a multi-pronged programme for implementing the policies and guidelines of NACO in its plants/units townships. SAIL’s major initiatives include:

- ✓ School AIDS Education Programme;
- ✓ Family Health Awareness Campaign;
- ✓ Safe Blood and Blood Products;
- ✓ Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (VCTC)
- ✓ World AIDS Day Celebrations;

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- ✓ Exhibition and displays
- ✓ Counseling and guidance with the help of NGOs.
- ✓ Establishing ART Centres.

CONCLUSION:

Many companies play a crucial role in HIV/AIDS prevention and support efforts. Mobilization of corporate resources, such as management and marketing expertise, human resources, and funds is especially effective in developing markets where public resources are limited. The rationale for business to engage in workplace programmes to protect their employees from HIV/AIDS is clear. HIV/AIDS impacts on many social and economic issues, such as occupational health and safety, staff morale, human rights and the availability of a productive and well-educated workforce.

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