The Ugandan Response to HIV/AIDS: What are the lessons for India?

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Abstract

In the 1980s and 1990s, Uganda faced a severe crisis with almost 30% of the adult population infected with HIV/AIDS. Uganda responded through a mix of rationalist and creative policy approaches. By the mid-1990s, after a decade of intervention through these approaches, Uganda became the first African nation to report a decline in HIV prevalence. This trend continues even today. Uganda thus demonstrated to the entire world that success is possible in the war against HIV/AIDS. This paper analyzes the Ugandan response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in detail and attempts to garner lessons from it for other developing nations like India. The paper suggests that it is in the creative and strategic policy initiatives, often called the unwritten policy response, that major lessons are to be learned from Uganda. The paper also points out certain weaknesses in the Ugandan approach from which lessons may also be learned by other nations.