Tonello's Framework for CSR Communication in a Voluntary Organization: A Case Study on Arulagam in Coimbatore, India

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ABSTRACT Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practice has unfolded over the years and it has got the attention of all the organizations, may it be a small medium sized enterprise or multinational organization, throughout the globe. A non-governmental organization (NGO) is committed to furthering a significant social cause and upholding a specific perspective in a community. Tonello (2011) theoretical framework for corporate social responsibility communication consists of CSR communication, contingency factors and communication outcomes. The purpose of this work is to apply the Tonello's Framework for corporate social responsibility communication on Arulagam in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Arulagam concentrates on the conservation of the ecosystem by protesting against practices that affect the land, water, and air. It also addresses other key issues such as nature conservation, including wildlife and coastal environment. The study concludes that Tonello's Framework for corporate social responsibility communication is applicable for Arulagam.

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept which has become presiding in business reporting. Every organization has a policy with regard to CSR and they publish the annual report detailing their initiatives or activities. According to Carroll and Shabana (2011) corporate citizenship, stakeholder management, business ethics, sustainability, corporate responsibility and corporate social performance are associated concepts to the phrase "Corporate Social Responsibility" and this term is broadly used.

CSR "analyses economic, legal, moral, social and physical aspects of the environment," according to Barnard (1939). However, there is no actual definition of CSR but according to European (EU) Commission (2002) 347 final: 5), "CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environment concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis."

According to Balasubramanian, Kimber and Siemensma (2005), Mehta, John, Kumar, Maitra, Puranik and Shrivastava (2006) and Kumar, Murphy, and Balsari (2011) , the delineation of four models of social responsibility operating within Indian firms are the ethical (Gandhian) model; (focus on community welfare and ethical awareness) the statist (Nehruvian) (driven by legal requirement) model, the liberal (Friedman) (focus on shareholder objectives) model and the stakeholder (Freeman) model (stakeholder centric-focus). They categorized these motivators as caring versus profit driven or moral versus strategized. Also Pio (2005) distinguished nine core fundamentals that could have driven the CSR practices such as the ancients' texts of Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Shastras, Bhagavad-Gita, and the Pali Tipitaka.

However, Arora and Puranik (2004) and Gautam and Singh (2010) state that CSR in India is based on humanitarian aspects and it is found to be vital based on Pricewaterhouse (Coopers, 2013). Notwithstanding these studies, (Pio, 2005;

A. K. Sharma and Talwar, 2005) a rising stream of exploration has concentrated on ideas from social and social structures particular to India from the perspective key and moral points of view.

According to the article published in "The Guardian" (11 August 2014) by Prasad, it is stated that India is the first country to commission Corporate Social Responsibility. Since the India's new Companies Act 2013 (Companies Act) was introduced, in particular the non-governmental organization according to Hornton (2013) there might be hesitance in agreement, especially when is reference to the non-profit sectors which are not commercial. In fact, it is categorized under the assigned category because of triggering turnover criteria or total assets.

Notwithstanding this, Asian Development Banks reports that, up to date, there are about 1.5 million non-profitable organizations (NGO) works in India (on the international level, national, non-profit, voluntary citizens' groups arranged on a local perspective). Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) reports states that 73.4% of the NGOs have unpaid staff and beyond the country more than 19 million volunteers as well are employed staff in the non-profit sectors.

2. Tonello's (2011) Framework of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication

According to the Tonello (Tonello, 2011), aspects of message content and message channels and both internal and external outcomes from the corresponding endevours are part of the conceptualized CSR communication framework. Besides, he investigates the part of corresponding variables, together with organizational contingency factors and stakeholder contingency factors (Refer to Figure 1). For message content, organizations are encouraged to impart about corporate social responsibility for instance community outreach, social issue, social conflict, or social work, the communal effect of the commitment (s), and the fit, or

"distinguished consistency between a social problem and the organization's business" (Tonello, 2011). A message channel include, for example, advertising, organizational CSR reporting, corporate communications, corporate web page, marketing materials for public relations and advertising campaign, publicity, alongside the more casual and informal approach, for example the word-of-mouth. The possible external outcome includes consumers [purchase, loyalty, and advocacy], employees [productivity, loyalty, and citizenship behaviour], investors [invested capital, loyalty] and the prospective internal outcomes comprise awareness, attributions and trust commitment.

Figure 1: Tonello's (2011) Framework of Corporate Social Responsibility Communication
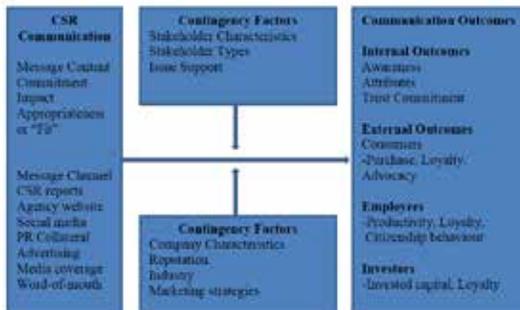
Source: Public Relations Journal; Vol 8, No. 3 (2014)

According to (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008) organizations and associations are inspired to strategize alongside their endeavours and think of a framework for disseminating informations may it be informal or formal and their communication approaches may differ.

To analyse the focus and intensity of CSR communication in organizations, annual reports are used as a medium of channel and an excellent way to inform the public about the organization. Besides, the organization publishes their audited financial performance and other activities in the annual report, CSR reporting is also incorporated and this is the way to communicate their values and commitments to the shareholders as well as the stakeholders. The annual report is an important communication tool, not just the financial report over the past year but the publication informs the public about the performance as well as the critical reflections. According to KPMG (2015) the qualities of CR reporting from the world's 250 largest companies by revenue (G250) have particular focus on annual financial and/or CR reports. The study presents global CR reports, trends based on reports issued by the top 100 companies in each of the 45 countries." Organizations now need to concentrate on what they will report and how best to incorporate their financial and non-financial informant. According to KPMG and The Consumer Goods Forum (22 June, 2015), "two thirds of respondents commented that they saw investing in CSR or sustainability as a key part of building trust in their brand. Food and product safety and consumer health were rated as particularly important areas of CSR".

The whole advertising scenario has revolved. In today's arena there are so many choices and so many clutters. Do the advertisements get the required attention? But the chances are you will recall what your friends or neighbour discussed or informed you. There is no more power-

ful means communication approach than the simple act of one person talking to another. With the development of technology out there, the commercial world has rediscovered the power of word-of-mouth. It is all about expressing and conveying our message across. Word-of-mouth is the powerful tool of communication and that organization should be inspired to adopt this method. According to (Dawkins, 2004) the organizations should never misjudge the power of word-of-mouth and the employees are CSR communicators.

Nevertheless, the external communicators which cannot be managed by the organizations are the new media [Facebook twitters and like the same], traditional media, blogs, social media, customers, opinion groups and many others. According to Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, the two factors of communication effectiveness are "corporate reputation" and "CSR positioning". The definition of corporate reputation is: "a collective representation of a firm's past action and results, which describes the firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders" direct access to corporate social responsibility, personnel management, investment value and product quality (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002).

3. Research Objective
Using the Tonello's model as a framework, the following research objectives were examined:

- To explore how well and through what channels do Arulagam communicate their CSR efforts?
- To understand whether Tonello's Framework (Refer to Figure 1) of CSR communication is applicable for Arulagam.

4. Methodology
Based on the research objectives a qualitative methodology was selected. This study specifically uses the in-depth interview method to permit prudent communicators from a non-profit organization identified in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu namely Arulagam. The identified respondents are Secretary of Arulagam, a representative from the middle management, an opinion leader (a focal point communicator) and three volunteers who have served the organization for a couple of years.

The semi-structured interview had the most conversations lasting about an hour. The interview guide is based on the research objectives. The main objective is focuses on CSR in voluntary organizations. To ensure a more careful interview session, permission for each participant, the interview session has been audio-recorded ranged from forty-five minutes to an hour in duration. A questionnaire has been prepared as standby to guide the interviewer throughout the interviewing session.

5. Findings
The research survey study represented by Mr. S. Bharathidasan, Secretary, Activist and Conservationist of Arulagam followed by Mr. Arunagiri, Coordinator of Arulagam and three volunteers of Arulagam. The demographics of the participants were three males and two females.

Corporate social responsibility in a voluntary organization
CSR communication typically focuses on a company's involvement in various social causes. A company can emphasize several factors in its CSR communication, such as

its commitment to a cause, the impact it has made on the cause, and appropriateness (fit) and whether the programs or activities carried out in favour of the donors/funders as well as the stakeholders.

Message content

This study's first research objective is to explore how well and through what channels Arulagam communicate their CSR efforts and how committed, impactful and appropriate or 'fit' the activities carried out in their organization. A, **44 year old Secretary of Arulagam, Mr. S. Bharathidasan** (first respondent) plays a vital role in this nature-focused non-voluntary organization in protecting the environment since 2002. According to him the successful 14 years of the journey pushed further his love for nature, flora and fauna. He has formed a team from varied profession towards the conversation of nature. Arulagam is a committed and devoted organization and known among nature conservation scholars and activists in the state.

He narrates that the organization envisions "an environmentally conscious society for protecting and conserving the nature to ensure sustainable development". He went to explain that Arulagam endeavours to conserve flora and fauna, especially endangered and lesser known animals and plants species in Tamil Nadu, South India. Nature conservation with people's active participation, field based action, research, education, campaign and advocacy constitute the mission of Arulagam.

He explained that most of the programs are uniquely organized and they are very committed and so far they have fulfilled whatever project based within the stipulated time frame and is parallel with the donors/funders requirements. Most of their programs are carried out on a yearly basis, but there are programs especially the species conservation, afforestation, which requires a long-term commitment which is about minimum three years (Please refer to Appendix 1).

Arulagam runs a plant nursery for sustainable activity and at the ensuring importance to native, endemic and rare flora based on bio-diversity importance and aesthetic sense. He says that his contribution to Mother Nature is utmost important and living the dreams of his late beloved friend Mr. Arulmodi in fact Arulagam is named after him.

He explains that the organization is very committed to carry out selected programs or social activities for example the Greening Project, is an on-going program where they supply 3.5 Lakhs of saplings to tree growers association in various parts of Tamil Nadu. This tree planting program is supported by Jungle scapes, Suguna Foundation, General Electrics Motors Limited, Sakthi Masala and Tamil Nadu Forest department.

The most impactful and a leading project for Arulagam is the Vulture Conservation in Southern India with the cooperation of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), and the Tamil Nadu Forest Department. The Vulture Conservation Project is also supported by the Oriental Bird Club, Mohamadbin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and Ashirvadam Foundation. According to Mr. Bharthidasan this project is a mega plan which involves thirty-five village Panchayats in Nilgiris who adopted a resolution to protect vultures with the support of the state government. The vulture population was widely spread all over Tamil Nadu, but they are now confined to the Moyar Valley in Nilgiri Biosphere. These scavenger birds are an essential component of the ecosystem performing the role of consuming dead or decaying animal carcasses and they keep the environment clean and healthy. There are about four species of these birds of prey (redheaded, long-billed, White-rumped and Egyptian) found in Tamil Nadu and facing great threat of extinction. After a short span of three years they observe positive results and this will continue for more success.

Arulagam strongly feels that conservation is not only the responsibility of the forest department, research organization or NGOs' but also of the local residents who are the custodians of the landscape. Since the vultures have become very rare, they have become a flagship species into the bird community of the world.

Mr. Arunagiri, 47-year old Field Coordinator of Arulagam, the second rrespondent in this study defines corporate social responsibility as giving back to society. He was asked to describe his involvement in these CSR efforts of the non-profit organization. According Mr. Arunagiri, Arulagam basically focuses on the social, birds and environment activities and most of the information is documented through the IEC material to offer awareness to the society at large. When asked whether he gets involved in the sponsorship and funding aspects, he said his main focus is to assist in the administration of the office, production and distribution of educational materials and implementation of projects carried out under the umbrella of Arulagam. He has served Arulagam for two years on a full time basis and he stressed that the quality of programs and activities are considered as corporate social responsibility. According to him, they normally create awareness of their activities via the website, Facebook and upload all previous and current programs of Arulagam.

According to the **third respondent Ms. Matina Anandam** from Coimbatore, who is a Research Scholar with the Oxford University, United Kingdom, volunteering has been part of life, and she is happy to share her time with Arulagam, even though they may be a small non-profit organization and she is very passionate about her involvement in their activities organized under Arulagam platform. She is associatee with this NGO from the year 2002 to date. They addressed a lot of local issues, very focused and are interested in the environment in Tamil Nadu. She was very actively involved in Arulagam offshore jobs and drafting letters to establish donors for long term conservation plans. Her area of interest is Human Wildlife Conflict Resolution with local people and tribal community, human activities, animal conservation, and co-existence. Arulagam programs have been very close to her heart and have shared her experiences with friends and family.

Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, IFS, wildlife biologist, in Chennai is the **fourth respondent** who has been a volunteer since 2009 and his area of focus is towards wildlife activities and to design a feasible study on wild life research conservation. The area interests are Birds of Nilgris, landscape, involvement in field survey, and village wildlife. Area of research is spread over Western Ghats (Kanyakumari and Goa) and Eastern Ghats (Sathyamangalam, Vellore, Thiruvanamalai). According to him, he normally shares his experience with a small group of friends of the same interest.

The **fifth respondent** is **Ms. Laura from United States.** She is a new recruitment as a volunteer with Arulagam. Her area of interest is working with the marginal farmers

in Sathyamangalam, Mysore and Karnataka. She mainly assists to manage official website, training and women gender. Actually, gender is the main subject of interest, but works on women rights and youth. She shares her experiences in India with her friends and family and is very excited to be a part of Arulagam outfit.

Message channels
Arulagam's CSR programs are recorded and disseminated through several channels of communication. Arulagam communicates its CSR activities through the official annual corporate responsibility report besides the financial audited report. Ultimately, it is an important tool of communication for the stakeholders and a good channel to inform about the environmental sustainability and CSR programs.

Arulagam manages a website and a dedicated section about all CSR programs which has been carried out over the past fourteen years. According to Mr. Bharathidasan the website is an important platform to offer information, especially about areas of particular interest to a non-governmental organization. With the current trend the new media or social media platform we execute networking very effective compared to the traditional media. The informal communication approach he mentioned are posting messages about the programs through several social media such as blogs, Facebook, twitters, SMS (short message service) and whatsapp to all their members, non-members, friends group (master list), individuals and as well as their partners.

According to Mr. Bharathidasan several awareness programmes on conservation of vultures are organized to communicate with the tribal community, especially the youth through activities such as the popular sport volleyball tournament, drama, traditional art form, staged street plays and puppetry show with the objective of sending a strong message to the audience towards the importance of vulture conservation. Further the volunteers organized a one-off the interstate (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala) Bikers Rally with the cooperation of the Thiruppur Information Technology Association covering approximately 500 kilometers with the mission of disseminating the vulture conservation message. They are also engaged in Mariyamman temple festival in the Segur jungles which drew thousands of devotees where Arulagam capitalized on this occasion to exercise their vulture conservation efforts to disseminate about the awareness of the vulture conservation.

As for the printed materials, they have so far managed to do the door-to-door pamphlet distribution drive from time-to-time and during programs. The photo exhibition explains about the activities of human beings that affect vultures. According to Mr. Bharathidasan the media have been a great support for all his programs. The programs organized have received extensive coverage and publicity both in the English and Tamil dailies.

Lastly, the most powerful form of communication is the word-of-mouth. According to him the word-of-mouth has always been the best form of communication. Based on all his experiences he said never to underestimate the power of informal interaction with their stakeholders by conveying a message pertaining to all their programs.

Non-profitable organizations play a vital role in the development and welfare of society and environment. Meanwhile Arulagam so far have received good feedback and comments from their donors and funders for their good

sustainable activities which is very essential. For his tireless efforts towards the CSR in a non-governmental organization in India, Mr. Bharthidasan was chosen as one of the 15 conservation biodiversity "Hotpots Heroes" for the achievements, dedication and professionalism both for him and his organization in the context of the CEPF-funded projects. This award presentation is in conjunction with Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's (CEPF) 15th anniversary for the IUCN World Conservation Congress, which will be held in September 2016 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Arulagam has been also awarded an Edelgive Social Innovation Honour with a sum of INR 3.75 lakh for working towards Palm based livelihood option.

CSR positioning of Arulagam activities and programs for its stakeholders are given individual attention. Brochures, flyers and handouts are translated in three different languages in Kanada (Karnataka), Tamil (Tamil Nadu) and Malayalam (Kerala). Likewise for the tribal people they are translated in their individual ethnic languages.

Arulagam is well acquainted and has good interaction with its stakeholders. Its accountability is not only limited to the external stakeholders but also to the internal stakeholders where all nonprofit staff and volunteers felt respected, appreciated, and valued. Secretary, Bharathidasan has stated that he goes beyond to ensure that he does not lose the current staff and volunteers that he has found doing his social cause.

Arulagam's stakeholders are much diversified from the corporate sectors, foundations and state government. Some of the stakeholders are Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN), WWF-India, Wide life Trust of India, Wide life Conservation Society (WCS), Milk Cooperative Society, and veterinary doctors, animal dispensary department, tree planting association, pharmaceuticals (buyers, sellers, distributors and elected representatives), cattle herders, youth, students, media, community at large and investors Tamilnadu Forest Department (Please refer to Appendix 1).

Over the years Arulagam has maintained good rapport with the donors and funders and have satisfied their expectations. For instance in the Green Temple Project - the devotees, Hindu Endowment Board and Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Sathiamangalaman Tiger Reserve which is on the outskirt of Erode District - local authorities, health department and the sweepers, Tree Planting activities involves Sugana Foundation (Poultry and Cooperative), General Electric Motor Limited (GEM), Tree Growers Association, corporate organizations, youths, fan club members, and jungle scape are involved. The afforestation project involves the memorial food donors, and individual contributors.

This study's second research question is to understand whether Tonello's Framework (Refer to Figure 1) of CSR communication clearly indicates that this theoretical framework is applicable for Arulagam. The CSR programs are committed, and consistent with its involvement of its donors, volunteers and stakeholders. An organization can choose to give attention to one or several aspects of its involvement to a social activity.

6. Discussion
The findings of this study show that Arulagam is actively engaged in social responsibility programs and activities. In the Indian context, social cause simply started based on the concepts of seva (selfless service) "daana" (giving) and

voluntary organizations have the voluntary enthusiasm and work without expectations. Another important finding of this study is that Arulagam very committed to the environment sustainability development and quality of service and it provides value in promoting sustainable development through innovation, accountability, responsiveness and sustainability Asian Development Bank (June 2009).

Through these corporate social responsibility programs it is found that the voluntary organizations have increased the reputation. Reputation is the overall estimation in which an organization is held by its internal and external stakeholders based on its past actions and probability of its future behaviour. Any voluntary organization basically depends on the support of its donors and volunteers. A good voluntary organization can achieve its objectives depending on the reputation among its stakeholders, most importantly the key stakeholders such as state government, potential corporate donors, volunteers, suppliers, community and even potential employees.

Tonello (2011) Framework for Corporate social responsibility communication states that it has a positive outlook on the stakeholders with the correct combination of message content, message channels, together with the organization's reputation which is incorporated into the framework Based on Tonello's (2011) framework where it clearly indicated "positive outcomes" from corporate social responsibility communication, and there are indications of "negative outcomes" for example quality of the programs and activities or loss of support from its stakeholders. The awareness of the organization CSR programs and activities is a key prerequisite to a better and challenging reaction to those programs. Taken together, these findings suggest that the Secretary of Arulagam may conceptualize CSR in a different perspective and is motivation driven.

7. Conclusion
Over the years non-governmental organizations have re-

sponded to the government's socioeconomic development agenda. There are many factors that drive the voluntary organization and its failure and success depend on the internal drivers and the other driver is government policy. In fact the government has allocated funds to execute funding of voluntary bodies "for example Khadi and Village Industries Cooperatives, Central Social Welfare Board, National Wasteland Development Board and so on.

CSR communications among corporate organization or businesses have been researched by many researchers, although there is an increasing interest among voluntary organizations to adopt corporate social responsibility in their practices. The Tonello's framework has different factors how a voluntary organization can communicate and share with its stakeholders corresponding through the CSR communication, for example organization's commitment, impact and fit for a particular cause (Tonello, 2011).

This framework allows to do a qualitative study to examine voluntary organization behaviours to examine relative interests and exercising toward CSR efforts. Notwithstanding this, eventually the voluntary organization will be able almost at par or share the same platform with the corporate organizations to discuss on environmental and sustainability efforts.

Through this research, researcher has found that this organization has shown clear evidences that Arulagam's corporate social responsibility programs and activities have been carried out effectively applying the various message channels such as annual report, website, social media, PR collaterals, advertising, media coverage and the word-of-mouth. Additionally, this organization is very committed and all their programs are executed impactful and appropriate 'fit'. Therefore, the researcher found that this framework is applicable for this organization.

Appendix 1

No.	Project title	Time Frame	Endorsement and Donors	Focus area & Key Result
1.	Green Project	June 2006 till todate	-Suguna Foundation Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu -Sakthi Masala -Tree planting organization	Supplying saplings to tree growers to various part of Tamil Nadu - ongoing program
2.	Afforestation project in Bandipur	June 2011 till todate	-General Electric Motor Limited -Junglescapes	Supporting afforestation project in Bandipir, Karnataka by supplying native tree saplings – ongoing program
3.	Reducing the impact pilgrimage tourism in Moyar Valley in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu	July 2015 till June 2016	-Wildlife Trust of India	Protect wildlife from plastic and garbage menace in forest area - ongoing
4.	Environment Awareness Programme	2002 till 2016	-Government of India -Ministry of Environment and Forest -State Forest Department -Hill Area Development Programme -Pollution Control Board of Tamil Nadu	Various stakeholders sensitized through street theatre and audio visual programme - ongoing

No.	Project title	Time Frame	Endorsement and Donors	Focus area & Key Result
5.	Establishing permanent vulture safe zone in the Moyar valley in Tamil Nadu – Phase I & II	August 2015 till July 2016	-Ashirvadam Foundation -Mohamadbin Zayed Species Conservation Fund	Continuous monitoring of vulture species - ongoing
6.	To motivate and create a sustainable forum at the Tamil Nadu, India for supporting and monitoring coordinated action among key stakeholders based on the blue-print of the SAVE	July 2014 till June 2015	-Oriental Bird Club (OBC)	Key stakeholders targeted and roped in for vulture conservation
No.	Project title	Time Frame	Endorsement and Donors	Focus area & Key Result
7.	In-situ Conservation of endangered vulure species in Moyar Valley, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu and establishing provisional Vulture Safe Zone	December 2011 till May 2015	-Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)	Safeguarding vulture species from harmful drugs and other threats and monitoring vulture populations
8.	Status and distribution of the endangered resident Gyps vulture species in Nilgiri Biosphere reserve, Western Ghats, India	August 2012 till July 2014	-WWF - India	Studied about vulture species distribution for the first time in this landscape
9.	Tiger Conservation Programme	June 2013 till May 2014	-Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	Sensitized media person towards tiger conservation
10.	Birds in ancient Sangam literature	May 2011 till April 2013	-Government of India -Ministry of Human Affairs	Documentary about bird inscription from 2000 years old Sangam literature
11.	Improving the livelihood of palm artisan by increasing the shelf life of Neera	April 2012 till March 2013	-National Research and Development Corporation -Department of Science and Technology	Government of Tamil Nadu accepted our technology and bottled drink introduced
12.	Developing Strategies to Establish Mercury Free Hospitals in Coimbatore	June 2010 till May 2011	-Environmental Equity and Justice Partnership	Addressed the impacts of mercury in health sector and removed from multi-specialty hospitals
13.	Establishing Green Barrier in Coastal hamlet, Triunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India	August 2007 till May 2011	-Wetlands International -South Asia and Both Ends The Netherlands	Green barrier developed for 7 kilometers stretch
14.	Bio fuel project & Biogas Programme in villages	2005 till 2007	-District Rural Development Agency (DRDA)	Bio saplings supplied to 120 hectares in Coimbatore District and night soil based biogas chamber installed in rural areas of Coimbatore District
15.	Solid waste management programme	2003 till 2006	-District Rural Development Agency (DRDA)	House hold hygiene outlet constructed in rural areas

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