Like its parent, Coke India's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives were both community- and environment-focused. Priorities included education, where primary education projects had been set up to benefit children in slums and villages; water conservation, where the company supported community-based rainwater harvesting projects to restore water levels and promote conservation education; and health, where Coke India partnered with NGOs and governments to provide medical access to poor people through regular health camps. In addition to outreach efforts, the company committed itself to environmental responsibility through its own business operations in India, including[39]

- Environmental due diligence before acquiring land or starting projects.
- Environmental impact assessment before commencing operations.
- Ground water and environmental surveys before selecting sites.
- Compliance with all regulatory environmental requirements.
- Ban on purchasing CFC-containing refrigeration equipment.
- Wastewater treatment facilities with trained personnel at all company-owned bottling operations.
- Energy conservation programs.
- 50 percent water savings in the last seven years of operations.

PREVIOUS COKE CRISES

Despite Coke's reputation as a socially responsible corporate citizen, the company has faced its share of controversy worldwide, surrounding both its products and its policies in the years preceding the Indian pesticide crisis.

[39] Ibid.

INGRAM ET AL. V. THE COCA-COLA COMPANY—1999[40]

In the spring of 1999, four current and former Coca-Cola employees, led by information analyst Linda Ingram, filed bias charges against Coca-Cola in Atlanta federal court. The lawsuit charged the company with racial discrimination and stated: "This discrimination represents a company-wide pattern and practice, rather than a series of isolated incidents. Although Coca-Cola has carefully crafted African-American consumers of its product by public announcements, strategic alliances and specific marketing strategies, it has failed to place the same importance on its African-American employees."[41]

In the decades leading up to the suit, both internal and external warnings surrounding Coke's diversity practices were issued. In 1981, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, director of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, instigated a boycott against Coca-Cola, challenging the company to improve its business relationship significantly with the African-American community.[42]

The Ware report, written by Senior Vice President Carl Ware, an African-American executive at the company, cited a lack of diversity at the decision-making level, a basic lack of workplace diversity, a "ghettoization" among blacks who worked for Cola-Cola, and an overt lack of respect for cultural differences, as well as an implicit assumption that African-American employees lacked the intelligence to meet the challenges of the highest executive levels.[43]

Cyrus Mehri, one of the most visible and successful plaintiff advocates in the United

[40] Nicola K. Graves and Randall L. Waller, "The Corporate Web Site as an Image Restoration Tool: The Case of Coca-Cola," *Proceedings of the 2004 Association for Business Communication 69th Annual Convention*, Cambridge, MA, October 25–29, 2004.

[41] H. Unger, "Coca-Cola Accused of a 'Companywide Pattern,'" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 24, 1999, p. H1

[42] C. L. Hays, *The Real Thing: Truth and Power at the Coca-Cola Company* (New York: Random House, 2004).

[43] Ibid.