

**SANITATION PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLE LIVING ALONG THE WARABEBA
BEACH IN WINNEBA, GHANA**

Isaac Eshun¹, Dinah Ampomah¹, Philip Okai Mensah¹, Yaw Boakye Djan²

¹Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.

²Department of Social Studies Education, St. James Seminary and Senior High School, Abessim-Sunyani, Ghana.

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study was to examine the environmental sanitation situation of people who live along the Warabebe beach in Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. This study applied qualitative approach and case study design in the methodology. A sample size of 15 participants were involved in the study through convenience sampling technique. Data collection instruments employed were interview guide and observation checklist. The data obtained were analyzed and discussed under the emerged themes derived from the outcomes of the data collection. The study found that sanitation along the Warabebe beach in Winneba is not environmentally acceptable. Hence, it was recommended that intensified public sensitization would continually inform the people to adhere to proper sanitation practices along the Warabebe beach.*

KEYWORDS: cleanliness and maintenance, sanitary practices, sanitation situation, Warabebe Beach, Winneba

INTRODUCTION

Sanitation and cleanliness are necessary for good health and socio-economic development. According to Ubuntu (2018, p. 102), “sustaining clean and stable environments has always been a challenge for man.” This assertion indicates that, the issue of cleanliness has been a problem for humankind and finding ways to manage and sustain it should be an all-hands-on deck process. The provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces is defined as environmental hygiene (UNICEF & WHO, 2012). Increased cleanliness has been proved to increase quality of life in both homes and communities, and it is a key cause of environmental instability around the world. The importance of cleanliness in promoting national health and economic success cannot be overstated. As a result, improved cleanliness is now Ghana's top priority, as sanitary benefits are linked to environmental and health benefits (Harvey, 2008). Sanitation refers to the sanitation behaviors of people who reside along the Warabebe beach in the context of this study. In this case, cleanliness promotes a healthy environment and good health.

Ghana's current sanitary and environmental state is far from perfect. Despite the fact that environmental sanitation-related illnesses are preventable, they continue to be the leading cause of visits to hospitals across the country. Regional epidemiological trends have been fairly stable throughout time, with conditions associated with poor environmental cleanliness being the most frequently observed. An extra 2.5 billion people do not have access to appropriate sanitation, and 1.1 billion defecate in the open on a regular basis (UNICEF & WHO, 2012).

Inadequate hygiene undermines the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities, communities, and towns like Winneba (SDGs). According to the SDG 6, there should be the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The goal talks about achieving universal access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene by 2030 as a major challenge in many parts of the world including Ghana. Target 6.2 calls for countries to end open defecation, to ensure that everyone has access to a basic toilet and to put in place systems for safe management of excreta. As a result, the Effutu Municipality continues to struggle with unsanitary conditions. The deteriorating environmental sanitary situation on Warabebe beach necessitates a remedy in order to minimize the effects on the population. From this backdrop, the study sought to explore the sanitation practices among Warabebe beach dwellers in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Several theories and models have been put forward to either explain or predict behavioural change among individuals. Most of these theories tend to use internal and external factors to explain or predict how an individual's behaviour is influenced either by the introduction of an intervention or the absence. Common theories used in waste and sanitation management include: Van Liere and Dunlap (1978) Theory of Norm Activation; Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action; and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Ajzen Theory of Planned Behaviour was employed to demonstrate how people engaged in household waste and sanitation management practices. As an extension of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) includes an additional construct known as the perceived behavioural control (Rimer, & Glanz, 2005). This theory (TPB) suggests a model for investigating elements that influence behavioral change in a systematic manner. The TPB submits that a person's behaviour is shaped by his/her intention and willingness to carry out a specific behaviour, which is determined by attitudes toward that behaviour. As such, an individual may litter or tidy up their environment his/her intention and willingness to do. Accordingly, in this case, if a person values waste and sanitation management as positive to health, he/she will practice proper waste and sanitation management and vice versa. Thus, if majority of community members

are practicing proper waste and sanitation management system, the few who are not practicing proper households waste and sanitation management would be influenced to do so to avoid social pressure from the majority. People's opinions about their capacity to do a specific behaviour are referred to as perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Action planning is a self-control approach that specifies when, where, and how to act in order to make good intentions a reality. Action planning is a post-intentional volitional activity that aids in the implementation of a desired action (Ajzen, 1991). Despite the TPB's effectiveness in predicting intentions and behaviour, it has not been frequently employed in the development of interventions targeted at modifying behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The TPB can be used to gather information on people's beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and intentions in order to identify potential internal barriers to behaviours. Once internal and external hurdles to the encouraged behaviour have been identified (e.g., programme availability; driving distance to a drop-off facility), a Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) strategy can be established to address and remove those barriers.

This theoretical framework is important in this study because the theory deals with the attitude which talks about the opinions of oneself about the behaviour, opinions of others about the behaviour and the perceived behavioural control. Hence, this theory of planned behaviour will be serving as a gateway for the present study in identifying the actual look of attitude of Warabeba beach dwellers when it comes to sanitation, cleanliness and maintenance of beach environment, to know the opinions of inhabitants at the beach when it comes to their regular sanitation practices and able to make a physical or mental effort when it comes to their sanitation practices which can provide useful information as the basis for intervention to help change behaviour.

On this note, the study looked into the concept of sanitation. The concept of sanitation has been defined in so many ways. Nyamwaya (1994) defines sanitation as the proper disposal of human waste, i.e. faeces and urine. It includes keeping the human environment free of harmful substances which can cause diseases. The concept of sanitation has been defined in several ways by many scholars. According to Mensah (2002), sanitation is the state of cleanliness of a place, a community or people and its being related to those aspects of human health including the quality of life determined by physical, biological, social and psychological factors in the environment. Sanitation could also be seen as the principle and practice of effecting healthful and hygienic conditions in the environment to promote public health and welfare improve quality of life and ensure a sustainable environment (Alabi, 2010, cited in Ekong, 2015). Sanitation could also be described as the process where people demand, effect and sustain a hygienic and healthy environment for themselves and others by erecting barriers to prevent the transmission of disease agents in order to lay foundation for sustainable development (Lancet, 2010). Cointreau (2001) posits that, in some cases, up to about 60% of solid waste generated within urban centres in poor

countries remains uncollected and such refuse accumulates on waste lands and streets, sometimes to the points of blocking roads. Sanitation is therefore a concept which ensures a hygienic environment through proper disposal of wastes and the prevention of diseases.

In view of the foregoing, environmental sanitation was factored into the study. Environmental sanitation is a set of actions or a fundamental process of collecting and safely disposing all kinds of waste within the environment with the intention of protecting and promoting the individual health and quality of life of communities. Environmental sanitation generally includes the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of waste, the maintenance of hygienic conditions and the prevention of diseases (Duru et al., 2017). Human health and wellbeing rely on the quality of the surrounding environment (Oluranti & Omosalewa, 2012; Rim-Rakeh, 2012; Sankoh, Yan & Tran 2013). It has been observed that domestic, industrial as well as commercial wastes are poorly managed giving rise to environmental pollution. Open spaces are abused in terms of use, they are used for defecation and indiscriminate citing of disposal points for refuse (Abankwa, Grimard, Somer & Kuria, 2009). Environmental sanitation is therefore related to the current study in terms of ensuring a clean and pleasant environment at all times. It encompasses good sanitary measures through proper wastes management and environmental cleanliness. On a similar note, the study reviewed literature on environmental management. In the words of Mitchell (2002), environmental management is the actual decisions and action concerning policy and practices regarding how resources and the environment are appraised, protected, allocated, developed, used, rehabilitated, remediated and restored, monitored and evaluated. As Barrow (2005) has acknowledged, it can refer to a goal or vision, to attempts to steer a process, to the application of a set of tools, to a philosophical exercise seeking to establish new perspectives towards the environment and human societies, and to much more besides. Lohse (2003) has observed that local governments in developing countries generally lack the required capacity and technical expertise to accomplish effective and sustainable waste management programmes.

Environmental management hence can be seen in the present study as a form of reducing negative environmental impacts. Hence, it is arguably that environmental management is concerned about the protection of the environment by preventing environmental disasters and trying to find appropriate measures or solutions. It also means taking good decisions about the policy and practices of the environment.

In such instance, a current practice to improve sanitation practices (landfill) was reckoned on. A landfill site also known as tip, dump or rubbish dump was historically an initial site for the disposal of waste materials by burial. Landfill is the oldest form of waste treatment. Historically, landfills have been the most common methods of organized waste disposal and it has remained so in many places around the world. Landfills may include internal waste disposal sites where a producer of

waste carries out their own waste disposal at the place of production as well as sites used by many producers. Many landfills are also used for waste management purposes, such as the temporary storage, consolidation and transfer, or processing of waste material sorting, treatment, or recycling (Hickman & Eldredge, 2005 cited in Worlanyo, 2013). According to Nabegu (2013), more than two-third of the residents do not use authorized dumpsites for their waste. More importantly, major environmental health risks often emanate from the co-disposal of municipal, health care and industrial waste in these dumps (Machete & Shale, 2015).

Consequently, causes of environmental sanitation conditions were considered. Individual's activities on the environment have tended to degrade and make the environment untidy and unfit for human habitation because of its poor sanitation nature (Uchegbu, 2000). Generally, municipal solid waste are dumped along some major streets, open space, abandoned house, median strip of the road, and some closer to river, upon the fact that refuse bins/incinerator are provided by the state government (Adewuyi, 2017). Every human should have a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature (Ayres, 2000). It is expected that when the environmental sanitation standards of a city improves, there will be upliftment in the living condition and health security for the inhabitants. Thus, there will be progress in the quality and visual of the environment at large thereby making it habitable (Owoeye, 2013). Open defecation is becoming alarming in our beaches in Ghana and Warabebe beach is of no exception. Some inhabitants of Warabebe beach resort to open defecation with the reason that there is only one public toilet at the entire Warabebe beach community, which are not in good shape. So, the causal factors of environmental sanitation conditions will form the hallmark of the current study in that individual's regular activities on the environment have degraded the environment making it untidy and unhealthy for human habitation.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach was adopted for the study. Leedy and Omrod (2001) indicate that qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view. According to Bryman (2004), qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. The qualitative researcher seeks a better understanding of complex situations. Case study design was employed for the study. Mitchell (1983) defined a case study as a "detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits (or exhibit) the operation of some identified general theoretical principles" (p. 192). According to Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2000), case study refers to research that investigates a few cases in considerable depth. Gomm et al. (2000) argued that a case study implies collection of unstructured data and qualitative analysis of data. Case study research is said to allow for in-depth review of new or unclear phenomena whilst 'retaining the

holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events' (p. 4). The population of the study was the inhabitants of Winneba. The targeted population for the study was residents along the Warabeba beach. Convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 15 participants who live along the Warabeba beach of Winneba for the study.

The participants were selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study at the Winneba beaches. The instruments used in the study to collect data were interview guide and observation checklist. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006). Semi-structured interview was adopted for the study. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses a set of predetermined questions and the respondents answering in their own words. In addition to interviews, direct observations of sanitary practices of people living along the Warabeba beach were recorded. Direct observation was used because it gave insights of what the respondents were actually doing rather than what they said they were doing. The observation enabled the researchers to gain first-hand knowledge of the participants at the beaches and its environs. Interview guide was used to examine the sanitation practices of people living along the Warabeba beach. The researcher observed the people who live along the Warabeba beach and their sanitation practices and took notes. Thus, the study adopted observation checklist to observe activities of beach dwellers on how frequent they litter the beaches, whether they have placed dustbins at vantage points and how frequent they empty the bins, how often they defecate along the beaches etc. This was done early morning to check the activities of the inhabitants at the Warabeba beach. The data was analyzed based on emergent themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to examine sanitation practices of inhabitants living along the Warabeba beach. The key aim of this study was to traverse the sanitation practices of people living along the Warabeba beach of Winneba in the Effutu Municipality. In accordance with the research question, three themes emerged; these were sanitation situation at the beach, cleanliness and maintenance at the beach and regular sanitary practices at the beach.

Sanitation Situation at the Warabeba Beach

Responses from the study participants indicated that the beach and its environs used to be very dirty and there was filth all around, bushes were around too. The study revealed that one of their major challenges insufficiency of toilet facilities along the Warabeba beach. On this subject, participant B opinionated that:

Yes we do have a public toilet which is not in good shape, because we can't defecate at the beach. But in the evenings or nights some people also defecate at the beach or shore thinking the sea will wipe or wash it (Participant J, Field Data, 2019).

In accord, two participants (participant A and participant K indicated that when we talk of sanitation at the beaches it is worse. This is because at first it was improving because the Zoomlion workers used to clean everywhere, thus under the coconut trees, backyard, refuse dump, the beach, etc. but now because the Zoomlion workers don't come again, often the environment is not always clean. He shared that:

When we look at the world today, there is modernization, so we also have to be modernized. One thing is, at first the Zoomlion people used to come around to work and they use to complain that when they work, they don't get paid. So what we have done is we have created areas within the community and every area has a leader. So when it is the time to work, the women know where they are supposed to work and the men also know where they are supposed to clean (Participant N, Field Data, 2019).

The preceding excerpts affirm the study finding that one of the major challenges faced by the participants involved in the study was access to toilet facilities. Though they have one public toilet at Warabeba, it was not constructed well, and if care is not taken it can break at any time and people may die or be injured. Hence, most of the people living in Warabeba community use the beach or the bush as their place of convenience. By relating this study finding to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the inadequacy of toilet facilities in Warabeba influences the subjective norm of residents towards open defecation in bushes and along the beach. The study finding corroborates Obuntu (2018) assertion that maintaining a sound and healthy environment has always been a challenge to man. In the same vein, Vikas and Dwarakish (2015) noted that faecal deposits also often occur in zones where the nearby communities do not have enough toilet amenities and with tidal cycles these deposits are carried away into the sea and worsen the value of the water.

Cleanliness and Maintenance of Beach Environment

Results from the study indicate that the residents in Warabeba community seldom go to the beach and clean up. Also, another incidence is sellers bring dirt to their environs because people come to the beach to sell and buy things like sugar cane. For example, buyers patronize sugar cane, chew it there and leave the rubbish behind. Now, the cleanliness of the beach is still not perfect but they are still on it, to make their surroundings and the beach neat.

The results indicate that some people visit the beaches with their own stuffs and when they finish eating they dump the rubbish indiscriminately. This shows that if there are dustbins at vantage points at the beaches, majority of the people will not litter at the beach. Others also ask for dustbins they can dump their refuse in. At other times too, one restaurant operator gives people money to clean the beaches and its surroundings but if he doesn't ask people to clean the beach and pay them at the end of the month, the rubbish will be there and the sea will wash them by itself or take the rubbish back to the sea. Sometimes it will bring them back and at other times, wipe it again.

Some of the people don't keep their backyards where they dump their refuse clean. Sanitation at the beaches is the responsibility of all since almost all the fish we use emanate from that place. It is therefore urgent that we all come together to clean the environs as often as possible. Others also decide to dump openly at the beach causing the same nuisance above. So, what I see at the Warabeba beach so far as sanitation is concerned is no wo/man's business after leaving the place untidy most of the time (Participant E, Field Data, 2019).

They usually clean their households (environs) but hardly go to the beach to clean. That brings dirt to their environs because visitors come to the beach to sell and buy things (Participant O, Field Data, 2019).

Observation also showed that people litter the beach indiscriminately; there is open defecation, dumped refuse along the Warabeba beach, environmental odour, and etcetera. The responses to the current environmental sanitation situation in Winneba depicts that sanitation at the beach is still not the best and a lot still needs to be done. This finding reiterates the literature by Uchegbu, (2000) that individual's activities on the environment have tended to degrade and make the environment untidy and unfit for human habitation because of its poor sanitation nature. This support the literature that generally, municipal solid waste are dumped along some major streets, open space, abandoned house, median strip of the road, and some closer to river, upon the fact that refuse bins/incinerator are provided by the state government (Adewuyi, 2017). Lohse, (2003) supported this view by stating that local governments in developing countries generally lack the required capacity and technical expertise to accomplish effective and sustainable waste management programmes.

Regular Sanitary Practices at the Beach

The people living along the Warabeba beach use the bushes as their dumping site and others also dump their rubbish indiscriminately along the beaches. Some of the inhabitants at the beach have also dug their own pits used as dumping site behind their homes. Depicting a similar picture of the problem, Cointreau (2001) in the literature review reported that, in some cases, up to about 60%

of solid waste generated within urban centres in poor countries remains uncollected and such refuse accumulates on waste lands and streets, sometimes to the points of blocking roads.

We don't have a specific place as dumping site, the people or inhabitants dump refuse indiscriminately/anywhere (Participant M, Field Data, 2019).

When it comes to dumping site, they gather the refuse they put them at their backyards; the town is long so they keep the rubbish at their backyards and burn it on their own. Also, there is no vehicle to transport it, and they also want the place to be neat, the women dump it at the dumping site and every two weeks, they sweep there and burn it (Participant X, Field Data, 2019).

Supporting this finding, Nathanson (2015) is of the view that improper disposal of solid waste can create insanitary conditions, and these conditions in turn can lead to pollution of the environment and outbreak of diseases. By relating this finding to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, it links one's beliefs and behaviour. Thus, the theory intends to explain behaviours over which people have the ability to exert self-control. This helped the current study to investigate if Warabeba beach dwellers were able to apply self-discipline when it comes to beach sanitation practices. It has been observed that domestic, industrial as well as commercial wastes are poorly managed giving rise to environmental pollution. Open spaces are abused in terms of use, they are used for defecation and indiscriminate citing of disposal points for refuse (Abankwa et al., 2009). Nabegu (2013) backed this panorama and added that more than two-third of the residents do not use authorized dumpsites for their waste. More importantly, major environmental health risks often emanate from the co-disposal of municipal, health care and industrial waste in these dumps (Machete & Shale 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the major findings, the study concludes that sanitary conditions were affected by the toilet facility because it is not in good shape, cleanliness of the beach and its environs was rarely done which has accounted for heap of refuse dumped at the backyards of inhabitants, indiscriminate open defecation whereas the regular sanitary practices at the Warabeba beach is below standard. In general, the study further concludes that sanitation situation at the Warabeba beach is poor. This is based on the current sanitary conditions practiced at the beach, such as littering, indiscriminate dumping of refuse and defecation at the beaches attributing these negative practices to lack of dustbins, spoilt public toilet, etc.

In order to improve current sanitation practices at the Warabeba beach; the Effutu Municipality has to provide refuse bins to the beaches and empty the bins every month and build a new public

toilet facility for the Warabeba community. The Assembly should also develop or implement periodic public education programmes on the need to maintain good sanitation behaviours and practices at the beaches in order to change the attitudes of people living along the beaches.

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