

Waste Management in Basic Schools in the Tema Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

An increase in waste generation without a corresponding rise in waste management infrastructure has significantly resulted in growing environmental and sanitation-related challenges. The absence of appropriate regulatory and the requisite waste management facilities, knowledge and poor attitudes towards waste management have mainly been responsible for environmental and sanitation challenges in Ghana. The study assessed waste management strategies and facilities, the level of knowledge, attitude, perception and awareness towards waste management in three selected basic schools in the Tema Metropolis in Ghana. A descriptive cross-sectional and quantitative data collection approach was adopted using structured questionnaire and personal interview guide. The basic schools were randomly selected using a cluster sampling technique and the opinions and comments of a total number of 300 school children were sought from Class 6 and Junior High School (JHS) 2. The results of the research revealed that the burying of waste in pits as a waste management strategy accounted for 87.1%, 15.7%, 34.6% of the responses in Community 11 Complex School, Community 8 Number 4 (C8/No.4) and Community 8 Number 1 (C8/No.1) basic schools respectively; refuse dumping at the dumpsites on the schools' compound also accounted 45.3%, 66.3% and 65.4% for C11 Complex, C8/No.4 and C8/No.1 basic schools respectively whilst C11 Complex (10.1%), C8/No.4 (56.6%) and C8/No.1 (91.0%) practiced burning as waste management strategy. There were statistically significant differences in waste management strategies amongst the three selected schools ($p < 0.05$). The results further indicated that 36.2% of school children in Class 6 had poor knowledge on environmental sanitation, 34.4%

and 29.5%, however, had enough knowledge and slight knowledge respectively. In JHS 2, 47.5% of v the school children had slight knowledge whilst 27.7% and 24.8% had enough knowledge and poor knowledge respectively. The results revealed also that it was only attitude or behavioral character of the school children that significantly influenced the waste management strategies ($p < 0.05$). C11 Complex basic school showed a more positive attitude towards waste management. This was followed by Community 8/Number 4 and Community 8/Number 1. The total quantity of waste generated followed the order of ranking: paper waste > plastic waste > other waste. The study therefore accentuates the need to intensify education on waste segregation in addition to improving waste management facilities in order to address waste management challenges in the selected schools.

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