

ABSTRACT

Public Health has become a major area of national focus within the twentieth century, primarily due to widespread population growth, diverse population settlement patterns and the subsequent prevalence of communicable diseases.

As societies evolved, so too did the need to refine methods of community waste disposal. For example, nomadic man's waste was allowed to decompose in the open air while agrarian man's waste was buried in pits. The change in method of disposal was occasioned by man's increased appreciation and understanding of the communicable nature of disease, various transmission media, e.g. flies, insects and the correlation between personal hygiene, environmental sanitation and public health.

Today, urbanized and sub-urbanized communities produce inordinate volumes of sewage which have required more sophisticated management systems, namely treatment plants that would essentially render waste water inert.

The present proliferation of sewage treatment plants in Trinidad and Tobago should serve to spur the nations' health administrators into ensuring that prescribed quality standards are

observed at all times given the delicate nature of community health and environmental preservation.

In Trinidad and Tobago there is an almost deafening silence on the issue of a legislated and active enforcement of a code of practice governing treatment plant operations. Additionally, there has been a dearth of research and recorded data on these systems, thus up to date positions on the modus operandi of the plants are almost non-existent.

Whilst W.A.S.A. is empowered as the water and sewerage authority in the twin-island state, the mobilization of the necessary resources to ensure observance of operating standards has been painfully slow. The present economic downturn has served to impose additional constraints (financial) which will certainly immobilize progressive movement even further.

This report seeks in the main to explore by way of case study method the present state of affairs with respect to the operational and legislative framework in which treatment plants operate and to make recommendations on revitalized strategies and the kind of dialogue that has to be initiated between agencies that are responsible either directly or indirectly for the preservation of community and environmental health.