

ABSTRACT

Waste Stabilization Ponds in Sewage Treatment – The Montego Bay Experience

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Sewage treatment by waste stabilization ponds (WSPs) is a recent phenomenon in the treatment of sewage in Jamaica. An assessment of the ponds was carried out by performing an audit of the plant, conducting surveys of communities adjacent to the plant and staff of the plant. A focus group session was conducted as well as key informant interviews.

The sampled population consisted of 34 males (55.7%) and 27 females (44.3%). The mean age of the males was 51.6 ± 18.7 years, while that of the females was 45.4 ± 16.4 years.

The respondents were well informed regarding the knowledge and importance of sewage treatment. Evidence suggests to this investigator that sewage treatment at the ponds needs to be carefully monitored to reach and maintain the effluent quality standards set by the regulatory agencies. Fecal coliform and BOD sampling along selected beaches in the area need to be restarted and constantly monitored, to inform the plant's operation. This would detect above normal levels of organic pollution which can adversely affect the health of residents and tourists, and destroy the coral reef and other near shore marine life.

A sewage treatment service is important to the life and health of any community. There are certain factors which need to be strictly adhered to if the benefits offered by the service are to be enjoyed and appreciated by the said community. Two such factors are, distance between the ponds and the nearest residences/businesses, and the accessing of the service by the entire community.