

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY IN ASANKRANGWA IN THE WESTERN
REGION OF GHANA**



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**CIVIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN ASANKRANGWA
IN THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA**

DRAMANI MOHAMMED SAAKA
(220014446)



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DECLARATIONS

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Dramani Mohammed Saaka, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **MR. CLETUS NGAASO**

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

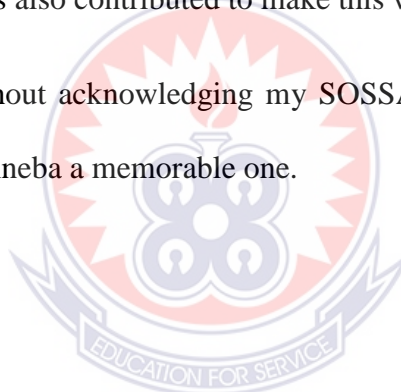
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and friends for their continuous love and support
always.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study	7
1.4 Research Objectives	7
1.5 Research Questions	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	8
1.7 Scope of Study	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Sustainability	9
2.2 Concept of Civic	12
2.3 Definitions of Civic Engagement	13
2.4 Construct of Civic Engagement	16
2.5 Civic Engagement as Voluntarism and Activism	17
2.6 Motivations of Civic Engagement	26
2.7 Barriers to Civic Engagement	34

2.8 Effect of Civic Engagement	37
2.9 Civic Practices in Ghana	38
2.10 Concept of Environmental Sustainability	43
2.11 Physical Environment	44
2.12 Inter Relatedness of Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability	46
2.13 Environmental Sustainability in Ghana	48
2.14 Youth Participation in Civic Engagement and Environmental Practices in Ghana	57
2.15 Stakeholders and Change Agents of Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability	60
2.16 Self-Constructed Conceptual Framework on Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability	61
2.17 Social Ecology Theory	63
2.18 Relevance of the Theory to the Study	64
2.19 Empirical Review	66
2.20 Chapter Summary	71
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	72
3.0 Introduction	72
3.1 Research Paradigm	72
3.2 Research Approach	73
3.3 Research Design	73
3.4 Sources of Data	75
3.5 Area of Study	75
3.6 Population	76
3.7 Sample and Sampling Technique	76

3.8 Data Collection Methods	78
3.8.1 Interviews	78
3.8.2 Focus Group Discussion	80
3.8.3 Document Analysis	82
3.9 Data Analysis	83
3.9.1 Transferability	85
3.9.2 Dependability	85
3.9.3 Conformability	86
3.10 Ethical Consideration	86
3.11 The Credibility of the Study	87
3.12 Chapter Summary	87
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	89
4.0 Introduction	89
4.1 Current State of Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in Asankrangwa	90
4.1.1 Community Participation and Involvement	91
4.1.1.1 Education and Awareness Programmes	91
4.1.1.2 Cultural Influence	94
4.1.1.3 Collaborative Decision Making	96
4.1.1.4 Sustainability of local Initiatives and Practices	98
4.1.2 Government Policies and Support	102
4.1.2.1 Policy Implementation Gaps	102
4.1.2.2 Motivation and Value	107
4.1.2.3 Inadequate Innovation and Technology	109

4.2 Barriers to Initiatives of the Youth and the Assembly in Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in Asankrangwa.	111
4.2.1 Internal or Psychological Barriers/Factors	112
4.2.1.1 Social Norms and Peer Pressure	112
4.2.1.2 Fear of Consequences	114
4.2.1.3 Low Self-Esteem	115
4.2.2 External or Physical Barriers/Factors	117
4.2.2.1 Inadequate Time	117
4.2.2.2 Socioeconomic Barriers/Factors	119
4.2.2.3 Inappropriate Accountability	121
4.2.2.4 Inadequate Information	123
4.3 Civic Engagement and Sustainability of the Physical Environment in Asankrangwa.	125
4.3.1 Awareness and Education	126
4.3.2 Appropriate Waste Management and Sanitation	128
4.3.3 Promoting Food Safety and Hygiene	130
4.3.4 Vector Control and Disease Prevention	130
4.3.5 Advocacy for Environmental Policies and Justice	132
4.3.6 Community Engagement and Participation	134
4.3.7 Accountability, Monitoring and Data Collection	137
4.3.8 Technology and Social Media	137
4.4 Chapter Summary	139

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	141
5.0 Introduction	141
5.1 Summary of Findings	142
5.2 Conclusion	143
5.3 Recommendations	145
5.4 Limitations	146
5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies	147
REFERENCES	148
APPENDIX	178



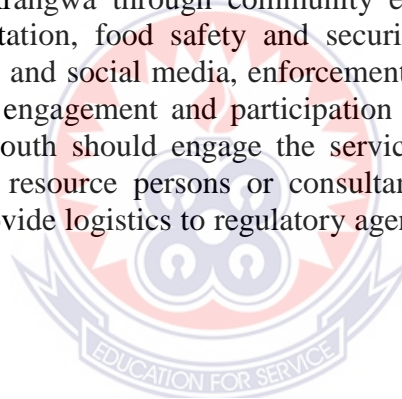
LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Self-constructed conceptual Framework on civic engagement and environmental sustainability	61
2. Compacting of waste at the final disposal site in Asankrangwa	129
3. Fumigation exercise	131
4. Asankrangwa Youth Recreational programme	136
5. Global Communities citation to Amenfi West municipal environmental health department	136



ABSTRACT

This study examined civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa in the Western Region of Ghana: The study particularly examined the current state of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability, the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability and how civic engagement affect sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa. The study was underpinned by the social ecology theory. Data was gathered through focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis. The study showed that the current state of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability was a philanthropic gesture used to solve physical environmental needs of the community. It was found that social norms and peer pressure, fear of consequences and low self-esteem were the psychological barriers that inhibit the individual from participating, adopting and implementing environmental initiatives; externally, the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability were inadequate time, socioeconomic factors, inadequate information and inappropriate accountability. Furthermore, the study indicated that the assembly and the youth are making steady progress with regards to attaining sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa through community environmental education, waste management and sanitation, food safety and security, vector control and disease prevention, technology and social media, enforcement and compliance, sustainability programs, community engagement and participation and data collection. The study recommend that the youth should engage the services of civic and environmental practitioners either as resource persons or consultants. It is also recommend that government should provide logistics to regulatory agencies to aid staff discharge their duties.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Encouraging citizens to participate in civic engagement processes to curb environmental issues has been viewed as crucial to the advancement of democratic governance systems worldwide (Media & Governance Series, 2019). Youth participation in civic engagement processes and practices has clearly declined in recent decades (Nikitina, Vasiliva & Zerchanninova, 2021). This has been reflected in the low youth turnout for civic engagement initiatives and events, as well as the decrease in the number of youth civic and environmental club members in most countries (Nikitina, Vasiliva & Zerchanninova, 2021). However, different cultural, social, and legal contexts define youth differently and have varying age ranges (Krishnan & Sethuramalingam, 2017). Almost fifty percent of the population in developing countries and 42% of all people globally are under 25 years old, according to (Global Hunger Index, 2023). Furthermore, those between the ages of 15 and 24 were described as youth and eighty percent of young people worldwide are thought to reside in South America, Asia, and Africa (Youth Civic Engagement, 2016). International policies, and initiatives pertaining to youth development, education, health, employment, and involvement in decision-making processes frequently use this definition. Regarding community involvement in local governance and policy formation, the term "civic engagement" has been defined in a number of ways (Barrett & Brunton-Smith, 2014). Civic engagement is becoming more and more necessary for the use of nonviolent means to raise awareness of governance, policy making, and community-related issues (Hendricks, 2019). Civic engagement is essential to national dialogues about issues of governance, security, development, environment, health, and education, among other

areas of national development. Longley (2020) claims that civic engagement encompasses a wide range of political and non-political activities that occur in a variety of settings and multitude of ways. The study concentrated on civic engagement as participation in nonpolitical activities. Examples of civic engagement include individuals actively supporting local initiatives, community and national service and environmentalism (Adzahlie-Mensah & Gyamfuaa-Abrefa, 2021). These activities could involve tackling a problem head-on through one's own initiative, working in the community, or utilising representative democratic institutions. It has proven challenging to evaluate the contribution of civic participation on better democratic results, despite the normative beliefs that civic engagement can lead to better governance and development outcomes (Policy Circle, 2021). According to Jones (2016), civic engagement helps people become critical thinkers, social change advocates and participants in a diverse society. Also, Lawrence (2020) explained environmental sustainability as the use of resources in a way that conserves biodiversity, ecological processes, and natural resources for future generations. The study focused on the physical environment, which Spacely (2021) defined as the fundamental element of life quality that affects other elements like the social and economic environment. Again, Rossi and Dodman (2016) indicated that embracing the interdependence and effect of civic engagement on environmental sustainability would help individuals, communities, and institutions work towards a more integrated and comprehensive approach to sustainability.

In Africa, the concept of civic engagement originated in early African communities, which had a strong moral and normative foundation. Civic engagement was innately valued and manifested itself in efforts and mutual aid. However, during the colonial era, when these customs, values, and belief systems were undermined and threatened,

there has been a decline after formalising civic engagement as social services, philanthropy, and missionary activities that were modelled after colonial modalities gradually replaced the content and form of civic engagement (Majok, 2020). According to Logan, Sanny, and Han (2021), socio-demographic, sociopolitical, individual sense of efficacy, and general trust in government are the elements that determine civic engagement in Africa. The fact that many Africans are unaware of their national constitution and do not comprehend how its provisions govern how they interact with both their governments and fellow citizens presents a significant obstacle to the continent's efforts to establish a democratic tradition and launch nationwide civic programmes to address environmental issues in languages in which their citizens can participate (Mbaku, 2021).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, civic engagement dates back to precolonial periods when individuals were grouped according to age groups and mobilised for community defence and infrastructure building, including building roads and bridges (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2020). Political and social engagement were the main focuses of civic engagement given the sociopolitical developments in Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, many customs and conventions that embodied the core principles of civic engagement were later compromised by colonialism, and few countries established indigenous civic engagement activities into programmes of the colonial or independent governments (Majok, 2020). However, accusations of gender bias, mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism later harmed civic engagement (Akondeng, 2022). Social provision systems in the Sub-Saharan region are under tremendous pressure to meet the demands of the current global era and to address historical disparities, indigenous communities were compelled to modernise as their traditional societies changed.

In order to promote civic engagement in environmental initiatives, a number of activities are now carried out in West Africa such as utilising technological tools and social media (Tin & Bakari, 2022). The best instrument for democratic change is civic technology, despite its limitations in Africa due to the continent's poor internet connectivity. Civic engagement, however, has given citizens more influence over political affairs and improved the accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of governments. Better yet, because non-governmental organisations have been heavily involved, it has promoted inclusive and participatory community governance.

The problem of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Ghana is similar to that of Africa and its sub regions. Ghana is a republic with a constitution that has two levels of government: local and national. Kpentey (2019) states that the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), which established the Local Government Service, is a public service organisation. The purpose of the service is to ensure efficient management and administration of the nation's decentralised local government system.

According to Kendie (2019), the president appoints a regional minister to lead each of the sixteen administrative regions. At the upper levels of local government, there are three different kinds of assemblies: district, municipal, and metropolitan (Kpentey, 2019). Addressing environmental issues at the Municipal and District levels is the goal of the Municipal Environmental Health and analysis department, a subunit under the local government authority. To improve Ghana's environmental situation, this organisation collaborates with governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Ghana's national youth authority act 939 (2016) defines the youth as those who are between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five (Kwarteng, 2021). Ghana's population is

shifting from being dominated by children (0–14 years old) between 2010 and 2020, to being dominated by young people (15–35 years old), there were 11.7 million youths in Ghana representing (38.2%) according to the population and housing general report 2021 (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2021).

However, in order to attain environmental sustainability, Ghana seeks to coordinate its development priorities with those of the private sector and civil society organisations (Bhargava, 2015). Young Ghanaians are becoming fewer members of national and local civic and environmental clubs, and their participation in civic activities and practices has been declining (Sasu, 2022). All these indicate the need to conduct civic engagement if not its negative effects will be more devastating to the environment, societies and the nation.

Given this, the researcher is curious to find out how Asankrangwa's environmental sustainability is impacted by civic engagement.

1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana's over reliance on natural resources causes environmental degradation of which Asankrangwa is not an exception (Owusu & Twum, 2023). Afrobarometer report (2021) indicate that 25% of Ghanaians are active members of community groups, 50% of these community groups members attend community meetings (Logan, Sanny, Han, 2021). Inadequacy of civic engagement in promoting environmental sustainability poses a significant challenge to various Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in achieving long-term environmental goals and addressing pressing global issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion (Relyea & Ricklefs, 2021).

In earlier research, a considerable number of studies have focused on different perspectives of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Studies conducted by Nhokodi, Nqowana and Tandlich (2016); Ardoin Bowers and Gaillard (2023); Levy and Zint (2013) focused on professional teaching and learning activities and their connection to civic engagement in the achievement of environmental sustainability, environmental education program outcomes related to civic engagement and environmental management and practices.

Other studies focused on practices supporting civic engagement in an environmental context, such as how environmental action impacts positive youth development (Barnason, Christine, Hall, Stanis & Schulz, 2022), environmental management and practices (Macheka and Hardman, 2021), and how environmental citizen science programs affect environmental citizenship (Adamou et al. 2021). The findings from these studies can inform the development of interventions and policies aimed at promoting environmental stewardship and civic engagement among individuals and communities.

Within the context of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Ghana, recent studies conducted by Odoom, Mensah and Obeng-Baah (2023), Essica (2019), Adom (2019) and Asumang (2021) focused on the effects of civic engagement on the environment and also offered various recommendations. All these studies looked at the benefit and effects of civic engagement on environmental sustainability.

However, few studies were done to ascertain how local government authority would help the youth protect the environment for future generations (Decent Jobs for Youth, 2020). This study therefore, focused on civic engagement initiatives which serve as

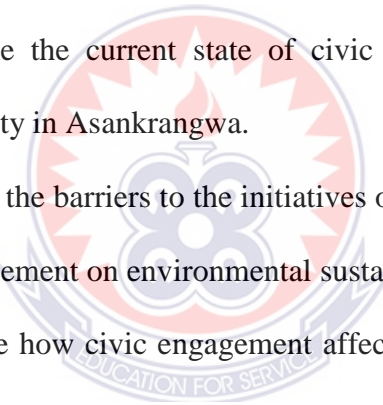
platforms for young people to become environmental stewards and contribute to protecting the environment for future generations.

Unlike earlier studies, my study sought to explore how the Municipal Assembly in Asankrangwa in the Western Region uses civic engagement to promote environmental sustainability among the youth.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study sought to explore how Municipal Assembly and youth participation in civic engagement initiatives contribute to environmental sustainability.

1.4 Research Objectives

- 
- a) To examine the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa.
 - b) To identify the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa.
 - c) To examine how civic engagement affects sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

1.5 Research Questions

- a) What is the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa?
- b) What are the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa?
- c) How does civic engagement affect sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of the study add to the body of existing literature by shedding light on the effects of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. In order to build a resilient and sustainable society, the study also emphasised the importance of citizen, community, and policymaker collaboration. It also highlighted the transformative potential of citizen participation in addressing environmental challenges. Additionally, the study offers guidance on how youth and institutions can participate in civic activities in Asankrangwa to ensure effective environmental sustainability. Once more, the Amenfi West Municipal Assembly and other regions dealing with comparable problems of insufficient environmental sustainability and solutions could use this study as a guide.

1.7 Scope of Study

The study focused on civic engagement and its effects on sustainability of the physical environment. Also, the study particularly looked at the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa. Again, the study focused on the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa and the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the topic under study. The chapter specifically reviews literature that emphasized on civic engagement as well as its effects on attaining environmental sustainability in Ghana. The areas to be reviewed will include the following sub-themes: Sustainability, Concept of Civic, Definitions of Civic Engagement, Civic Engagement as a Volunteerism and Activism, Motivators of Civic Engagement, Barriers to Civic Engagement, Effects of Civic Engagement, Civic Practices in Ghana, Youth Participation in Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability in Ghana, Concept of Environmental Sustainability, Physical Environment, Environmental Practices in Ghana, Interrelatedness of Civic and Environmental Sustainability, Stakeholders and Change Agents of Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability. The chapter also discusses the theory that underpin the study (Social Ecology Theory), Empirical Review and the relevance of the theory to the study.

2.1 Sustainability

With the release of "Our Common Future" (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987), and "World Conservation Strategy" (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1980), the concepts of sustainability started to gather much more attention over time.

The idea of sustainability first emerged in environmental studies in the late 1960s as a result of political agendas including environmental issues (Akerman 2003, 431-432).

The author pointed out that there has been an increase in the adoption of new strategies in various societies to address environmental issues related to environmental sustainability. The concept of environmental sustainability was being used more and more by environmental critics who were aware of the detrimental effects of an unsustainable environment on host environments and societies (Morelli, 2011).

More precisely, Shen (2015) noted that there has been a growing interest in sustainability, which reflects growing concern about challenges and problems facing economies, societies, and the environment in his study on environmental sustainability and economic development. The authors list these concerns as the loss of natural habitats, rising pollution levels, urbanisation and population growth that are still occurring, as well as the growing scarcity of water resources in some parts of the world. The need to direct and restrict environmental issues in numerous locations was brought to light by the perceived detrimental effects of environmental unsustainability in different regions (Venkatesan, Remy & Sukeforth, 2017). Consequently, the idea of sustainability developed into a crucial framework for policy that environmental developers used to direct their planning and developmental thinking. Shen (2015).

Within the academic community, the notion of sustainability has been perceived as a possible remedy for the adverse effects of environmental degradation. The United Nations sustainable development goal summit UN SDG summit, 2023, defined sustainability as addressing the needs of the environment and host communities, taking full account of current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts. This definition applies to environmental sustainability as well. But the definition of sustainability that is most frequently used can be found in the 1987 Brundtland Commission report "Our Common Future." "Development that meets the needs of the

present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" is how the report defined sustainability (p. 16).

Following the conclusions of the Brundtland Commission in 1987, a number of declarations were made in recognition of the detrimental effects of environmental issues. These included the Environmental Sustainability Report (2021), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (1992), the Berlin Declaration (1997), the Commission on Sustainable Development (1999), the Cape Town Declaration (2002), the Climate Change Summit (2014), and the Global Sustainable Development Report (2019).

In order to mitigate the negative effects of inadequate environmental sustainability, these declarations urged individuals, civic and environmental agency players, to incorporate sustainability as the core of their operations and address environmental issues throughout the life cycle of civic activities and operations, including the planning and design phase (World Economic & Social Survey, 2015). Environmental sustainability, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022), is the capacity to prevent, mitigate, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, fight desertification, stop and reverse land degradation, and stop the loss of biodiversity.

Following a number of announcements, environmental stakeholders have begun integrating community-based efforts to achieve environmental sustainability (Evans, 2020). Once more, Gillaspay (2021) defines civic engagement and its impact on environmental sustainability as appropriate environmental contact that fosters long-term environmental quality and averts resource depletion or degradation. Protecting global ecosystems and conserving natural resources are essential for sustaining health

and welfare both now and in the future (Sphera, 2020). Maintaining unity through ensuring more pleasurable experiences for individuals or groups via deep connections with locals and an enhanced comprehension of cultural, social, and environmental issues is another goal of civic engagement (Logan C. et al, 2021). Environmental sustainability can be greatly enhanced by civic engagement (Linkhart, 2018). Up until now, the main way to engage with the community has been through civic involvement (Linkhart, 2018). The greatest way for each of us to combat climate change is through environmental sustainability and civic engagement; we can all do our part to be environmentally friendly (Dana, Lovelady, and Shivant, 2019). To contribute to environmental sustainability, each of us as citizens needs to reduce, reuse, and recycle (United State Environmental Protection Agency, 2019).

2.2 Concept of Civic

Balaji (2023) explained that Benjamin Franklin is commonly recognised as the founding father of civics, Franklin understood the intricacy of diverse, cross-cultural, and anticipatory interactions. The term "Civic" as used in this study refers to issues concerning citizenship, civil society, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals within a community or society (kidcentral, 2018); civic also refers to the rights and obligations of citizens within a society (Ahrari, Othman, Hassan & Samah, 2014). Civic values are shared principles that members of a community utilise to guide their behaviour; they also include people's active participation and engagement in their community or society (Garcia, Lamb & chapel, 2022). The term civic encompass civic engagement, civic duty and civic education, emphasizing active participation in community affairs, adherences to laws and contributing to the betterment of society. It takes a comprehensive approach to developing a sense of accountability, morality, and a common commitment to the community's well-being. The term "civic engagement"

refers to a broad range of formal and informal activities that can be carried out by an individual or a group. According to the authors, the term is closely associated with citizenship and the rights, obligations, and duties that come with it. The authors also said that people can improve their understanding of morality, ethics, values, norms, honesty, and truthfulness in addition to realising state ideals like equity, equality, freedom, and justice. In order to effectively teach civics, educators must implement effective teaching-learning strategies, techniques, and instructional materials (Radhika Kapur, 2019).

In this study, the term "civic" is inline with kidcentral (2018) definition which focuses on acquiring the information, abilities, values, attitudes, rights, and responsibilities required to positively impact one's self and community or neighbourhood.

According to Sunarso (2018), social and political movements, power and governance, diversity and inclusion, community and media, cultural and economic factors, and social and political movements are some examples of the civic dynamics that influence people's engagement and participation in their communities. According to Sunarso (2018), there are various categories of civic engagement, including political, legal, social, global, digital, and educational. The following academics have supported the idea of civic engagement: Herbert Hyman, Benjamin Franklin, and Robert Putnam.

This section of literature review emphasized on the concept of civic and the types of civic.

2.3 Definitions of Civic Engagement

Depending on how different stakeholders interpret the term civic engagement (CE), different definitions may apply (Adler & Goggin, 2005). The concept of civic engagement is universal despite the fact that its nature and significance differ from society to society, some terms that are synonymous with "civic engagement" include

public participation, community consultation, and community engagement (World Bank, 2023). The meanings of these terms may vary slightly depending on your perspective, or you may choose to interchange them (Hendricks, 2019). To keep things straightforward, this study uses the term "civic engagement" to refer to non-political involvement in democratic practices and voluntary actions (Longley, 2020).

Furthermore, according to Longley (2020), the term can also refer to participation in civic or non-political engagement activities. The main basis for these terms' emergence is the function civic engagement serves in different organisations or how it is viewed (Hendricks, 2019). Addai et al. (2012) define civic engagement as the most widely used term, which is defined as interacting more frequently and meaningfully with others regarding civic issues with the potential to contribute to the development of a stronger and more cohesive civic nation. According to Addai et al. (2012), this definition includes two responsibilities that help to define or describe the nature of civic engagement. Agyeman (2013) asserts that the reasoning behind civic engagement in a nation such as Ghana was concisely stated: the elements of participation that the populace embraces, all of which extend beyond simple voting. This stems from the idea that Ghanaians are not just citizens by birth. They must receive civic rights education and training, as well as regular participation, encouragement and individual volunteerism in civic endeavours. This aims to improve democracy by uniting social and political engagement with tolerance, respect, and trust.

According to the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership (2007), Ghanaians perceive the idea as acting out of a greater sense of obligation to their communities. This suggests that being involved in the development of civil society, fostering civic sensitivity, and advancing the common good are just a few examples of the diverse range of activities that make up civic engagement. It entails looking for places where

people are empowered to act as positive social change agents for a more democratic world as citizens of their communities, their countries, and the entire world.

The aforementioned definitions highlight the variety of interpretations offered to the idea of civic engagement, ranging from addressing environmental, social, and economic issues to empowering local communities and utilising it as a defensive tactic to achieve group objectives.

This reinforced the effort to reach a consensus on a definition and led to requests for a more precise definition of the term (Hendricks, 2019). The notion has been defined by people, groups, and nations to represent their unique national customs, circumstances, and difficulties (Hendricks, 2019). Consequently, since the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership's (2005) definition of civic engagement encompasses the characteristics of civic engagement in Ghanaian society, it would make sense to use it as the working definition for this study. Again, the definition was used since a reputable organisation provided it.

People's low involvement in civic engagement activities has drawn criticism because it is thought to be a factor in the decline of society's moral and social structure (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). People therefore try to use non-governmental, private, voluntarily formed associations or institutions to secure their wants, desires, and goals. People's ability to participate in civic activities can be greatly impacted by the political and socioeconomic context in which they live. According to the United Nations World Youth Report (2016), these variables include socioeconomic status, political and community involvement and economic independence. A society's political stability and democracy may be in jeopardy as a result of dwindling civic engagement over time in developing nations like Ghana (World Bank, 2007). The effectiveness of civic

engagement programmes influences people's propensity to perceive themselves as integral members of society and, consequently, to attribute at least some of the causes of societal problems to themselves (Longley, 2020). According to Print and Lange (2012), there are various indicators that are used to measure civic engagement. These indicators include voting and political party activity, as well as civic indicators like active group membership, volunteering, and community participation. Additionally, political engagement indicators like media use, boycotting, and internet use are included.

2.4 Construct of Civic Engagement

Adzahlie-Mensah and Gyamfuaa-Abrefa (2021) state that four interconnected constructs are necessary for civic engagement. The following are among the four constructs of civic engagement: civic action, civic commitment or duty, civic skills and civic unity. Civic action refers to engaging in community-building activities like volunteer work or service learning. Also, civic commitment, is the readiness to contribute favourably to society. Again, civic skills, is the capacity to participate in democracy, politics, and civil society. According to Kamau (2016), civic skills are a collection of abilities needed to engage in civic life and are essential for encouraging civic behaviour. Furthermore, social unity, is the feeling of closeness, trust, and reciprocity.

Longley (2020) stated that there are three main ways to get involved in civic life: voting, personal volunteer work, and advocacy by way of action. Voting involves the freedom of citizens to take part in elections and the establishment and operation of their government. Also, volunteerism involves individual's readiness to support the community and one another. Again, advocacy and activism involves working to

increase public knowledge and support for particular causes or policies in order to effect political or social change. According to Logan et al. (2021), our capacity to promote and strengthen support for volunteerism is largely reliant on our comprehension of the ways in which individuals already engage in these essential but unpaid contributions on a daily basis in the interest of the common good. The absence of inadequate data on who performs voluntary work, how much they contribute, in what formats, and what the results are has alarmed proponents of voluntarism. Effectively encouraging civic engagement and volunteerism starts with having a solid understanding of who participates, why they do so, and under what circumstances.

Given this, the researcher is curious to find out how Asankrangwa's environmental sustainability is impacted by civic engagement.

2.5 Civic Engagement as Voluntarism and Activism

Numerous scholarly works contend that the meaning and application of civic engagement (CE) have been evolving due to the concept's continuous reexamination and redefining to accommodate evolving demands and circumstances concerning the intent and character of civic engagement (United Nations Volunteers, 2015). The definition of civic engagement varies based on the field of study and the perspectives of the stakeholders involved (Ostrander, Kindler & Bryan, 2020). Therefore, it is challenging to come up with a single, widely accepted definition of civic engagement in the light of the claim made by Adler and Goggin (2005).

According to Barrett and Brunton-Smith (2014), institutional, psychological, and demographic factors are the foundation of civic engagement. Embracing the gifts of diversity, understanding the roles of race, power, and justice, radical hospitality, trust-building and commitment, honouring dissent, and embracing protest and adaptability

to communicate change are the six principles Holley (2016) identifies for an equitable and inclusive civic engagement framework. Also, (Millora, 2020) indicated that, the environment for civic engagement consists of both a set of conditions and a set of practices unequal access to opportunities for meaningful civic engagement can result in unequal participation and, consequently, inequitable investments, conditions, and outcomes.

The reviewed literature indicates that there are four basic constructs upon which the various definitions of civic engagement rest. First, civic engagement entails taking part in community-enhancing activities like volunteering or service-learning; second, it necessitates developing civic skills so that one can participate in politics, civil society, and democracy; third, civic engagement entails civic commitment, which is the willingness to make constructive contributions to society; and, last, social cohesion, which is a feeling of reciprocity, trust, and kinship with others (Adzahlie-Mensah & Gyamfuaa-Abrefa, 2021). According to Youth Civic Engagement (2016), the term "civic engagement" (CE) is not neutral; rather, it refers to a range of viewpoints and forms pertaining to the interactions between the individual, the community, and society at large. The definition views civic engagement as a concept that encompasses broader social, economic, and environmental dimensions rather than viewing it as a one-dimensional idea. "Voluntary activity focused on helping others, achieving a public good or solving a community problem, including work undertaken either alone or in cooperation with others in order to effect change" is how Zani and Barrett (2012, p. 274) defined civic engagement.

The term "voluntary civic engagement" describes people's active and willing participation in projects and activities that advance their communities, society, or

political process. It also refers to people's decision to engage in various civic pursuits free from outside pressure, financial incentives, or other forms of coercion (Samuels, 2023).

As it enables people to actively shape their communities and participate in the decision-making processes that impact their lives, voluntary civic engagement is essential to the operation of democratic societies. Also, it usually reflects people's commitment to social responsibility, shared values, and desire to further the common good (Samuels, 2023).

Community volunteering, as defined by United Nations Volunteers (2015), is a voluntary civic engagement in which individuals donate their time and efforts to support local organisations, nonprofits, or community projects that aim to improve their communities. Community volunteering is essential to civil society because it fosters a sense of belonging, fortifies social bonds, and empowers individuals to actively influence the well-being of their neighbourhoods (United Nations Volunteers, 2015). Furthermore, advocacy and activism are forms of unpaid civic engagement in which individuals or groups work to promote social or political change through raising awareness, influencing public opinion, and pushing for specific legislative changes (Richard Houessou & Carolyn Logan, 2021). Advocates and activists not only help society change on important issues, but they also play a critical role in holding governments, businesses, and other institutions responsible. Also, they frequently exhibit a dedication to equality, social justice, and human rights (Richard Houessou & Carolyn Logan, 2021). Additionally, community organising is a voluntary approach to civic engagement in which individuals' band together to launch or participate in grassroots projects with the goal of uniting the community, resolving local problems, and bringing about positive change (Logan, Sanny, & Han, 2020). Logan, Sanny, and

Han (2020) assert that community organising plays a critical role in fostering social cohesion, addressing neighbourhood issues, and guaranteeing that locals' voices are heard. Furthermore, digital activism, also known as online activism, is a voluntary form of civic engagement in which individuals and groups use digital platforms and tools to advocate for political, social, and environmental causes as well as to raise awareness and garner support (Hladiuc, 2017). Online activism has expanded dramatically in the digital age, giving people the opportunity to interact with like-minded activists around the globe and take on important issues from the comfort of their homes. It may also encourage constructive change and ensure that establishments are held responsible (Hladiuc, 2017).

Volunteers engage in a variety of activities, either alone or in conjunction with others, to identify and address issues of public concern (Arvanitidis, 2017). Attempts to directly address public issues through one's own work, group efforts, or participation in democratic institutions are referred to as civic engagement (Arvanitidis, 2017). There are specific traits that civic engagement demonstrates. First, voluntarism: this refers to actions that are either freely chosen or not mandatory. Secondly, there is no financial gain or direct profit, so it is unpaid. Thirdly, it entails doing good deeds for others out of compassion or concern for the welfare of the group as a whole. Fourth, it goes beyond just attitudes or thought; it also involves behaviour and action. Lastly, because it primarily takes place in public, it is typically done in collaboration with others. It is therefore frequently collaborative and collective (Arvanitidis, 2017). Internships, philanthropy, civic education, fund raising, activism and advocacy, service learning, community service and voluntarism, social entrepreneurship and social innovation and community engagement are some examples of voluntary civic engagement (Samuels, 2023). Furthermore, voluntary civic engagement was categorised by Ekman

and Amna (2012), who placed a focus on the social components of political and civic behaviour. These involve activities that show participation in society and public affairs but are not specifically intended to affect political outcomes. The classification proposed four categories of action: extra-parliamentary activism (individual, such as signing petitions and engaging in political consumption; or collective, such as taking part in riots, demonstrations, or building squats); social involvement (focusing on raising awareness of or interest in political and societal issues); and civic action (volunteering or charitable work). Formal political participation refers to campaign and contact activities. According to Acus (2018), our society's perception of volunteering is inadequate, and the creation of a legal framework has a beneficial effect on how volunteering is expressed in relation to social policy. For volunteering to become widely accepted in NGOs and the government, young people's involvement in it is a must (Acus, 2018). Volunteering by the general public is closely associated with social work as a profession, and it is also considered a necessary condition for intergenerational solidarity (Acus, 2018). As a result of the complementarity and interdependence of new and old modes of communication in civic life, Acus (2018) argued that there should be no distinction made between technology-related and traditional civic engagement. Instead, ICT reduces information and communications costs and offers multiple opportunities for learning, deliberation, discussion, networking, and mobilization all of which are crucial for civic action, this shows that the desire for a specific collective good is frequently what drives volunteers to volunteer. Programmes that combine learning with community service are known as community service-learning initiatives. They give students hands-on learning opportunities while simultaneously meeting needs in the community (Dena, Ong, and Orem, 2018). According to Dena, Ong, and Orem (2018), a lot of students place a higher

value on nonpolitical civic engagement activities than political ones. There are many different ways for citizens to get involved in government. Some are non-political, such as helping to deliver services, offering suggestions and opinions when asked by officials, or helping to keep an eye on how well government agencies are performing. volunteering to help others or one's community; these activities could or might not entail reflection and structured training (Dena, Ong, and Orem, 2018). Additionally, Ballard, Pachucki, and Hoyt (2018) pointed out that an increase in risky behaviours was predicted to be associated with activism. Activism encompasses a more oppositional range of activities that frequently take place outside of formal structures, such as introducing people into social networks, and frequently entails publicly expressing controversial opinions (Ballard & Ozer, 2016).

According to Warren, Sulaiman, and Jaafar (2014), institutions have obligations to a wider range of stakeholders in addition to their shareholders. Hendricks (2019), for example, defines civic engagement as a type of stakeholder engagement that emphasises involvement in community or political activities, or both. According to this definition, the ultimate goal of attaining sustainable development in all of its aspects economic, social, and environmental is to hold institutions accountable to all of their stakeholders in all of their operations and activities, this includes civic engagement. According to Hollstein and Smith (2020), there is an abundance of information available to us regarding environmental issues and their growing influence on our surroundings. We are at a turning point, and the way we decide to react will affect present and future generations in the long run. The authors went on to say that we have responded with the belief that environmental issues are scientific in nature rather than social, and that scientific advancements have addressed them, but this strategy hasn't worked well. This is specifically because environmental education and environmental

responsibility are presented as totally distinct from civic engagement and responsibility. The authors also suggested that we should reconsider how we think about these issues and see them as interconnected, with civic duty encompassing environmental responsibility. They contend that environmental sustainability and civic engagement are mutually dependent, and that in order to uphold the shared value principle and advance environmental sustainability, individuals and civic activists alike must learn how to incorporate social strategies into their daily activities. Therefore, for environmental sustainability to be attained, civic engagement needs to be successful and civic projects need to benefit both institutions and individuals.

Hollstein and Smith (2020) pointed out that in order to do this, societies should match their interests with those that support civic engagement and its implications for the environmental sustainability of their host society. According to Hollstein and Smith (2020), as societies are unable to resolve all of their problems; environmental sustainability is crucial for society's survival, just like civic engagement; and it is advantageous when society looks out for the environment. They pointed out that if society stops taking care of the environment, the environment will eventually stop allowing society to exist. Logan et al. (2020) asserts that in order to attain optimal results, collaboration between civil practitioners and the government will be necessary. Anjum (2021) contends that for societies to be more environmentally sustainable, civic engagement must be increased. Although there may not be results right away, this will pay off in the long run. Communities need to encourage resource efficiency and exercise caution when using limited resources.

Accordingly, several empirical studies have demonstrated the impact of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Hollstein and Smith (2020) studied Civic

Environmentalism: Integrating Social Studies and Environmental Education through Curricular Models. The study's findings showed that more work has to be done to influence curriculum modifications at the local, state, and federal levels of education in order to guarantee the much wider implementation of educational models that emphasise environmental concerns and start to see them as civic duties and environmental necessities. However, meaningful political and social practices like participating in school union activities, community cleanup programmes, advocacy work for disability rights organisations, and government organisation work for public safety and emergency service providers are now considered meaningful forms of civic engagement (Hendricks, 2019).

Under similar circumstances, Ardoin, Bowers & Gaillard (2023) critically reviewed research studies on a systematic mixed studies review of civic engagement outcomes in environmental education, and discovered that, with the exception of Hendricks' (2019) claim, most civic engagement involves concentrating on the local community, actively involving learners through participatory and experiential approaches, including action-taking as a fundamental component of the educational programme, highlighting the development of lifelong cognitive skills, offering continuous opportunities for participants to engage in meaningful social interaction, and reducing environmental impacts and charitable contributions.

The foundation of Modeer and Noella's (2022) study was putting meaningful youth engagement at the centre of environmental action. The authors noted that people are susceptible to the long-term effects of the environment and There are several obstacles to meaningful civic engagement, including age, gender, human rights violations, unequal access to healthcare and education, and a shrinking civic space. According to

Modeer and Noella (2022), in order to address and eliminate inequalities and address structural barriers to meaningful civic engagement in our collective effort to advance an inclusive green recovery and accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, a massive systemic change is urgently needed. Young activists, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, political leaders, journalists, citizens, and all development partners must be on board, according to the authors. According to Valley (2021), civic engagement on environmental sustainability is a method that aids in learning by having students apply the knowledge and skills they have learned as well as make connections between the lessons and their own experiences and communities. According to the author, students should research their community, choose issues that are important to them, make plans to make the community better, and implement those plans. The environmental rule of law was examined in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development (2020) study, which took a broad view of civic actors and interests that are different from those of the government and private sector. According to their study, the core functions of civic engagement in environmental decision-making are as follows: effective access to judicial and administrative processes to provide remedy to uphold both the rights of citizens to access information and other legally established environmental protections; broad knowledge of the data held by public authorities concerning the environment; and, as procedural rights, the elements of civic engagement do not guarantee a specific environmental or social outcome, but rather help to ensure that decisions and actions affecting the environment effectively and fairly represent all of the interests of citizens and stakeholders.

The concept of civic engagement is still developing in our part of the world. However, studies reviewed (Youth Civic Engagement, 2016; Adler and Goggin, 2005; Adzahlie-Mensah and Gyamfuaa-Abrefa, 2021; Zani and Barrett, 2012; Hendricks, 2019) in this

section gives a clear view of what civic engagement entails and the beneficial effects of incorporating strategic civic engagement into environmental sustainability (Logan et al, 2020; Anjum, 2021; Ardoin, Bowers & Gaillard, 2023; Modeer and Noella, 2022; Valley, 2021; United Nations Environment Programme, 2019).

2.6 Motivations of Civic Engagement

Studies on the factors that influence civic engagement abound. What drives people or organisations to take up and carry out civic projects differs depending on the nation (Logan et al., 2021).

Lenzi Rossi in 2016, Sharkey Vieno and Santinello conducted research on the variables linked to teenage civic engagement. Their study looked at the relative effects of neighbourhood features, civic education in schools, friends' and parents' civic involvement on young people's civic attitudes and behaviours. The results made clear how crucial it is to take into account a variety of contexts in order to identify the variables that are linked to young people's civic engagement. Results show that teenagers are more likely to be involved in public civic life if they report having close relationships with adults in their neighbourhood, attend schools where civic issues are frequently discussed, and believe that their friends and family are civically engaged. Additionally, civic attitudes and behaviours were linked to the civic engagement of parents and friends. Once more, participation in decision-making processes can be facilitated by feelings of mastery and self-worth (Lawford & Ramey, 2017).

A study on self-actualization and compassion as early community involvement predictors was carried out by Lawford and Ramey (2017). The study looked at the relationship between creativity and engagement in the community and individual differences in traits related to self and others, specifically self-esteem, initiative, and empathy. They suggested giving young people more chances to think about their special

abilities, their responsibility to take care of future generations, and constructive, immediate opportunities to help their own community. Individual or intrinsic motivation factors, according to Santos-Longhurst (2019), are what drive people when they prioritise their own fulfilment over rewards or penalties from outside sources. Curiosity, challenge, control, recognition, cooperation, competition, and fantasy are some of the elements that support intrinsic motivation.

Additionally, personal and community factors were investigated by Zanbar, Lea, Ellison, and Branhall (2019) as potential predictors of various forms of community engagement. The study concentrated on how community and personal factors explained the variation in two types of community engagement: activism and advocacy and development and planning. The findings showed that both forms of engagement are predicted by personal characteristics and community variables, with the exception of years of activity. Impact of Service Learning on Community Members' Academic, Social, and Personal Development was investigated by Gupta, Grove, and Mann (2021). Effects of Service Learning on Community Academic, Social, and Personal Development. The study revealed that service-learning links theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts. Additionally, service learning fosters a sense of civic engagement in addition to benefiting students' academic, social, and personal development.

Herman's (2018) research centred on comprehending the factors that trigger civic engagement in order to cultivate incentives to initiate and maintain civic engagement in the future. Through collaborations, institutions that promote civic engagement can help non-civically engaged community members take action and encourage civic behaviours (Herman, 2018). The study came to the conclusion that civic elements were complementary. An individual may decide to stay involved in civic life if they or their organisations strongly value it, the community is friendly, has organisations that

promote a norm of reciprocity and social responsibility, and social trust was established through fruitful, mutually beneficial university partnerships with the community (Herman, 2018). Additionally, students are more likely to start civic engagement if they feel that participating in such an environment will benefit them or if they have the free time to do so.

A study on civic engagement, autonomy, and reflection: elements influencing youth's self-perceived civic responsibility was carried out by Bird, Bowling, and Ball in 2020. Determining the impact of involvement level, autonomy, and reflection during civic engagement activities was the aim of the study. The study's conclusions showed that youths' perceived levels of civic responsibility and the autonomy and reflection variables had positive, statistically significant relationships. People can process experiences in a meaningful way and ultimately develop a greater sense of understanding and belief in their civic attitudes through structured reflection (Caspersz & Oлару, 2017). According to Bird et al. (2020), civic engagement initiatives that are internally essential and give as many people as possible the opportunity to assume control or decision-making responsibilities have a greater impact. Furthermore, professional development centred on integrating experiential learning, reflection, and practice autonomy is encouraged for civic educators. In Ghana, Abudu and Fuseini (2014) investigated the curriculum implications of civic engagement and awareness. The topics of discussion in their study included civic engagement, awareness of civic issues, and whether there was a difference between respondents' general awareness and their level of civic engagement. A sample size of 120 respondents and the control group design were used in the study. The results demonstrated that there is a substantial difference in the general level of civic awareness and the desire to perform community service between individuals who received citizenship education and those who did not.

The primary findings of this study indicate that citizenship education accounts for the variation in civic awareness levels and that civic awareness raises the probability of civic activity participation. The study suggests incorporating civic engagement and civic awareness-promoting activities into the school curriculum.

Alcantar (2017) investigated institutional elements that support civic engagement in order to cultivate an engaged citizenry in our country. It was concluded that universities have an indisputable duty and capacity to help students grow into civically engaged adults. A study on testing multidimensional models of youth civic engagement, including model comparisons, measurement in-variance, and age differences, was carried out by Wray-Lake, Metzger, and Syvertsen (2017). Eight aspects of civic engagement were assessed, including volunteering, voting intentions, political beliefs, civic skills, environmental behaviour, social responsibility values, informal assistance, and news consumption. The results show that a set of measures of civic engagement that are valid, consistent, and age-invariant can improve understanding of various approaches in unique ways and yield various types of evidence that is valuable for policy and practice, especially when modelled multidimensionally. A wide range of actions that are concerned with the common good are included in civic action (Wray-Lake, Metzger, Syvertsen, 2017).

Whitley and Yoder (2015) examined how university civic engagement affects related attitudes and behaviours in the aggregate as well as the development of social responsibility and political engagement. The goal of the study is to ascertain how three different educational experiences participation in a living-learning community, extracurricular civic engagement, and curriculum civic engagement affect attitudes and behaviours related to political engagement and social responsibility. The results show

that extracurricular civic engagement has the greatest influence, even though all three types of experiences are positively correlated with civic engagement attitudes and behaviours. Additionally, since political engagement behaviours have the most room for improvement, educators should concentrate on behaviour.

Nonprofits and the Promotion of Civic Engagement: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the "Civic Footprint" of Nonprofits within Local Communities was the subject of a 2014 study by Handy, Shier, and McDougale. The study's findings show that encouraging civic engagement through events and initiatives that involve volunteers and funders working with local and external organisations contributed to the creation of a working model that clarifies the civic footprint of nonprofit organisations and has implications for further studies. According to Handy, Shier, and McDougale (2014), organisations that promote civic engagement in communities can be divided into four categories and further classified into direct and indirect activities: interacting with donors and volunteers, uniting the community, engaging in collaborative engagement, educating the public and raising awareness. According to Handy, Shier, and McDougale's (2014) research, there are several approaches to encouraging civic engagement. Htet (2022) studied the variables affecting young people's involvement in the community. The study found that social, political, and legal factors have a positive impact on young leaders' community involvement.

The two forms of civic engagement, according to Zanbar et al. (2019), are involvement in advocacy and activism as well as development and planning-related activities. Also, Zanbar et al. (2019) indicated that there are four models of community practice; stability change, community decisions, elite decisions and individual empowerment. Being politically involved can be chosen by an individual, as well as by family, friends,

and neighbours through social influences that model behaviours, transmit standards and values, and encourage or prohibit particular activities (Pancer, 2014). Community resources, social norms, and a sense of social responsibility are all factors that encourage civic engagement (Caspersz & Olaru, 2017). Personal values, social influence from peers and family, and instrumental motives are examples of initiating factors at the individual level (Pancer, 2014).

Moreover, political involvement, social activism, community service, and organisation membership are all included in the category of civic engagement. The availability of community programmes and non-governmental organisations that promote social responsibility and reciprocity is a systemic factor in the initiation of civic engagement (Pancer, 2014). Once more, individual endeavours can result in the growth of neighbourhood associations that support social movements and group efforts (Zanbar et al., 2019). The final phase of civic engagement is concerned with the particular results of civic engagement. These include better physical health, skill development, and increased self-esteem on an individual basis. An efficient democracy, improvements in population health, and a rise in social change are all associated with the systemic effects of civic engagement. According to Barrett and Pachi (2019), there are four main types of civic and political engagement patterns among young people. These are psychological, social, demographic, and macro. The factors associated with youth civic engagement are typically interrelated. Additionally, civic engagement always occurs within specific contexts. Afterwards, an individual is predicted to continue engaging in their community if certain sustaining factors are present, including a positive experience that develops a sense of self confidence in a supportive environment (Alcantar, 2017).

Logan et al. (2021) state that the Afro Barometer recorded the following modes of participation: attending a community meeting; collaborating with others to bring up a problem; reaching out to leaders in the government or civil society; and participating in a community group or voluntary association. Once more, the authors outlined the characteristics of civic participation indicators, which include campaigning and advocacy, formal or informal participation, volunteer or non-volunteer purpose, mutual aid and self-help, philanthropy and service to others, and volunteering as a leisure activity.

Logan et al. (2021) also found attending community meetings, being an official leader or active member of volunteer associations or community groups, gathering with others to discuss issues, and contacting local government councilors as the various types of civic engagement. The author went on to say that there are differences in voluntary civic engagement between people who have experienced high levels of poverty and those who have not, as well as differences in voluntary civic engagement between people who are married, have children, are older, are more or less educated, have migrated, are of a particular background or ethnicity, are employed, or have never been in poverty. According to Logan et al. (2021), every sociodemographic factor matters and needs to function as predicted in order to guarantee increased civic engagement. According to Spears (2011), deliberately inviting a wide range of stakeholders to participate is said to foster community consensus, guarantee a more equitable distribution of development costs and benefits, and enable representative decision making that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders. Regular involvement would probably lead to a growing sense of empowerment, especially in the case of interpersonal empowerment models that provide a "knowledge or comprehension of community functioning" in addition to the abilities needed to engage in community

activities successfully, which are developed progressively over several years (Speer, Peterson, Armistead, & Allen, 2012). Higher earners are less inclined to engage in activism (Zanbar et al., 2019). Professionals and community leaders must evaluate their actions and modify intervention strategies and policies to better address the complexity of civic engagement (Zanbar et al., 2019). Compared to their urban counterparts, residents of rural areas and areas with high expectations for participation in communal life benefit from being closer to and having easier access to local power sources (Boehm, Darawshy, & Boehm-Tabib, 2018).

Bennett (2022) claims that civic engagement provides a means for all members of the community to participate in decisions that have an impact on their daily lives. But no matter how eager we are to be more inclusive; it can be very challenging to take these barriers into account when designing our engagement strategies unless we actively work to identify and uncover them. People's opinions may not always have an equal impact on outcomes, even in cases where a broad and representative sample of the public is involved, as power and privilege disparities manifest themselves in the process of making decisions. According to Bennett (2022), there are situations when an engagement's logistics such as its location and timing coincide with obligations like childcare or employment. Due to their identity and lived experiences, many groups of people including those based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and citizenship have also historically and continuously been marginalised. These groups may unintentionally be underrepresented in decision-making or engagement processes because of systemic physical, social, and financial barriers, or they may be underrepresented consciously because of overt exclusion.

According to Bennett (2022), in order to ensure that the participants accurately reflect the diversity of demographics, attitudes, and experiences within a community, the

following are some of the most common barriers to participation that communities may encounter: insufficient time; disability or impairment; mistrust; low digital capability; privacy concerns or discrimination; language barrier; internet access; financial strain; location; and education level. Ngesu, Gakuru, Gunga, and Kahigi (2013) found that low morale, a high unemployment rate, and a high cost of living all had a negative impact on community participation. According to Peng (2020), a variety of factors can occasionally limit public participation. In order to achieve effective participation and better outcomes, it is crucial to investigate the causes of the obstacles preventing the public participation process from being implemented. The author outlined the internal and external factors that hinder public engagement, including a inadequate skilled facilitators, inadequate funding and human resources, people's inadequate interest in public matters, a diversity of nationalities, and language or cultural barriers. Since single people are more likely to have more free time to engage in community activities, being married or in a committed relationship has a negative impact on participation in community development and planning (Zanbar et al., 2019).

The various catalysts for civic engagement embedded in literature are revealed by a literature analysis. The review gives prominence to why it is significant to examine the motivational factors in civic engagement among individuals and organizations on the need to adopt and implement civic initiatives.

2.7 Barriers to Civic Engagement

Participation in civic life is necessary for democratic societies to function. It entails people getting involved in their communities, supporting social causes, and volunteering for government initiatives. But despite its significance, civic engagement is hampered by a number of important obstacles. Lack of time is one of the most frequently mentioned obstacles to civic engagement (Bennett, 2022). People frequently

find it challenging to balance work, family, and personal obligations while also taking part in community activities in today's fast-paced world. People may find it difficult to set aside time for civic engagement due to their busy schedules, parental duties, and long work hours (Bennett, 2022).

People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may have financial obstacles, such as limited access to technology or transportation, which makes it difficult for them to participate in activities that require resources or take time away from work (Shandler, Gross, & Canetti, 2019). Diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can also result in different needs and interests, which can complicate civic engagement strategies (Ilona, 2021). Furthermore, people from underprivileged or marginalised communities might not have access to the education and opportunities necessary to know about opportunities for civic engagement (Thomas, 2018).

Many people do not have adequate knowledge about opportunities for civic engagement or know how to get involved; many are afraid to participate because they fear looking unwise or ignorant; and even among those who do know, not everyone knows why participation is important, which causes reluctance (Cooper, 2023). A major obstacle to involvement may be due to inadequate knowledge; good communication is essential to community engagement and can be severely hampered by its absence. Confusion, annoyance, and mistrust can result from using communication channels that are inaccessible or irrelevant to the intended audience. Similarly, using messages that are ambiguous or inconsistent can cause missed connections (Cooper, 2023). People are discouraged from engaging in civic activities due to inadequate of appropriate accountability and mistrust of leaders. They feel their opinions won't be heard and are unwilling to involve the community because planning decisions are made behind closed doors to prevent negative publicity (Thomas, 2018). The foundation of community

engagement is trust; inadequate trust can result from unfavourable past experiences, a sense of dishonesty, or a lack of openness. Young people are less likely to participate if they believe their opinions are not truly valued, which can be caused by a history of unfulfilled promises or unfulfilled expectations (Michelle, Victoria Davis Smith & Brooke Blevins, 2022).

Budgetary, human, or physical constraints can make it difficult to organise events or create platforms for civic engagement. Similarly, limited funding can make it difficult to engage the community. Insufficient personnel or volunteers could restrict outreach initiatives, which would lower public participation (Hoang, 2013). People are less likely to participate in civic activities when they think the system is corrupt or that their actions will not have an impact (Ilona, 2021). There are risks associated with civic engagement, especially in areas with authoritarian governments or divisive political environments (Ilona, 2021). People's fear of negative outcomes, like losing their job or facing harassment, can prevent them from participating in certain civic activities, which is a major deterrent (Web Team, 2019). One important psychological factor influencing civic engagement is self-efficacy, or the belief in one's own ability to make a difference. People with low self-efficacy may believe that their actions are insignificant, which makes them reluctant to engage in civic activities (Web Team, 2019). Peer pressure and social norms have a big impact on whether or not someone chooses to participate in civic activities. In certain social circles or communities, civic engagement is frowned upon, which makes people reluctant to do so (Michelle, Victoria Davis Smith & Brooke Blevins, 2022). Participating in online civic activities may be difficult for people without internet access or computer literacy (Shandler, Gross, & Canetti, 2019). Segments of the community may become alienated if cultural norms are not acknowledged and respected; in addition, people may find it difficult to engage if they

cannot access information in a language they can understand (National Civic League, 2022).

The obstacles to civic engagement established in literature are revealed by an analysis of the literature. The review highlights the importance of looking into the obstacles that prevent people and organisations from participating in civic life.

2.8 Effects of Civic Engagement

Participating in civic life is crucial because it fosters a more just and equal society and gives people a say in how their communities and nations are shaped in the future (College of Continuing & Professional Studies, 2023). Numerous advantages come from civic engagement, including improved relationships within the community, social cohesiveness, growth, personal accountability, and improved governance (Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022). In addition to strengthening democracy and advancing social justice, civic engagement builds a sense of community by uniting people with similar values and beliefs to work towards a common goal and bring about positive change. It also opens up career opportunities that enable people to contribute to improving the world. Participation by citizens is essential to democracy (College of Continuing & Professional Studies, 2023). Ballard, Pachucki, and Hoyt (2018) pointed out that civic engagement could have a social or instrumental purpose by assisting young people in building stronger social networks, professional skills that enhance their performance in school and the workplace, and an understanding of what kind of jobs they want to pursue. Furthermore, according to Ballard, Pachucki, and Hoyt (2018), civic engagement can help young people make connections with significant "real life" issues, particularly through active school-based civic programmes. This could inspire them to work harder on their academic and professional development or give them a renewed sense of their own potential. According to Hope and Spencer (2017), civic engagement

encourages positive attitudes and active participation while also facilitating positive development, particularly for marginalised youth. Engaging in civic activities that frequently require a strong sense of commitment to a cause can provide a particularly potent civic experience that can impact one's educational, professional, and behavioural trajectories (Rogers & Terriquez, 2016). Once more, Kim and Morgul (2017) discovered in their research that volunteerism predicted higher levels of educational attainment and personal earnings, assisting young people in developing social skills and relationships. According to Wray-Lake et al. (2017), volunteering may increase a person's ability to speak up, take charge, and fulfil a role that can result in positive feelings like self-worth, a belief in civic engagement, and improved mental health. According to research by Shao, Goli, Sewagegn, and Sahu (2022), social media use, trust, civic engagement, and social responsibility are global significant factors that influence an individual's civic engagement in resolving social problems. The review gave an insight on the effect of civic engagement in environmental initiatives. The literature reviewed in this section presented the effect of civic engagement as essential to achieving environmental sustainability.

2.9 Civic Practices in Ghana

According to some authors (Hendricks, 2019; Adler & Goggin, 2005), civic engagement and political and non-political participation are not mutually exclusive but rather a concept that is interwoven; as such, the two are interdependent. Others have countered that civic engagement is about how individuals, groups, and governments interact with one another on a daily basis to better society. According to a 2007 study by the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership, Ghanaians interpret the idea as acting out of a greater sense of civic duty. Some scholars have criticised civic engagement when seen from this angle, contending that it is an insufficient response to

democracy. Being civically engaged raises serious concerns about a reliance on the government, particularly in situations where communities become dependent on it (Media & Governance Series, 2019).

According to the author, Ghanaian democracy does not seem to have advanced much beyond official avenues for civic engagement. While withdrawing from daily civic activities, Ghanaians exhibit a strong sense of national identification and devotion to national political life, as well as a detachment from the state in their day-to-day activities (Asante, 2020). Additionally, it appears that people are reluctant to speak with state representatives about issues that the public is concerned about, even though they are happy to converse about them informally. There is a contrast between this non-communicative attitude towards state institutions and state employees and higher involvement in customary and religious institutions as well as higher levels of interaction with leaders in these domains. This demonstrates a non-formal method of civic participation (Asante, 2020).

The inconsistent nature of civic engagement stems from the fact that enforcing fundamental citizenship can have unintended consequences and occasionally even undermine the spirit of electoral democracy that gives rise to it (Asante, 2020). It is clear that Nana Akufo-Addo had a particular kind of civic engagement in mind when he urged Ghanaians to be citizens rather than bystanders. In fact, he tasked Ghanaians with fostering their communities and supporting him in fulfilling the pledges he made during his election campaign (Asante, 2020). Detached and attached conditions point to a flexible relationship with the state and a willingness to step back, even momentarily, when circumstances demand it. This implies that the ways in which civic

acts are grounded would need to be reflected in an appropriate theorization of citizenship and civic activism (Asante, 2020).

In order to combat indifference and encourage patriotism among citizens, the government should also fund the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to expand public education on matters of citizenship rights and responsibilities (Ghana News Agency, 2021). In the same essence, Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies ought to have the resources necessary to carry out a range of reforms that will raise accountability and participation levels in Ghanaian local governance (Action Plan Ghana, 2015). Likewise, funding should be allocated to the National Media Commission so that it can efficiently oversee the operations of the various media outlets dispersed throughout the nation. Regular in-service training and workshops aimed at enhancing capacity should also be held to encourage media professionalism, ethics, and integrity among Ghanaian media workers. Ghana's Action Plans, both past and present, have committed to giving citizens the chance to participate in both local and national governance because they understand the importance of civic engagement for the country's democracy and development process (Action Plan Ghana, 2015).

Additionally, the media in Ghana has always been a major factor in socio-political development and change, according to Media and Governance Series (2019). With the intention of fostering innovation and research that will enable citizens to interact with government, express their opinions and demands, and obtain government responses, Ghana joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in September 2011 (Nthiga, 2015). Once more, the Ghanaian government is attempting to make data publicly accessible through the National Information and Technology Agency (NITA), as well

as to establish channels for common citizens to learn about the actions of their government and voice concerns about service delivery.

Three main outcomes of youth civic engagement were identified by Ulti-Leaf Foundation, Ghana (2020) through their study, "Civic-Care Project Voice-Out, Step-Up, Action." These included increased civic skills and competence among youth and youth organisations, the designation of safe and friendly spaces for youth in communities and online (such as civic chats, community-youth dialogues, and youthpreneurs), and the development of civic knowledge products through the involvement of young people. The study's recommendations included the establishment of a youth civic actions trust fund, the development, institutionalisation, and dissemination of youth civic knowledge products in partnership with youth organisations and national bodies, the introduction of youth in civic actions fellowships and award schemes, the adoption of civic chats by stakeholders as a safer space for youth engagements, the institutionalisation of the youth civic pledge as part of the human resource guidelines for staff, and the creation of a "WhatsApp" page by stakeholders (including youth) to ensure effective engagement and easy accessibility for the majority of young people. Kpentey (2019) also investigated participation and local government in Ghana. The Ghanaian local government system and decentralisation were covered in the paper. The article highlighted the structural flaws and challenges that stand in the way of the nation's full implementation of a more participatory local government. It notes the various recentralization "traps" the central government has inserted into the decentralisation process, as well as its reluctance to genuinely cede control over its powers. The paper concurs that a highly responsive local government requires more than just participation without accountability.

Furthermore, according to Paller (2019), Ghana has managed to hold onto its standing as a developed democracy. The role of the media in fostering civic engagement and civic participation in democratic governance and policy making was examined by Lambon (2021). The research study used a focused-group discussion technique in conjunction with a qualitative methodological approach. Six traditional radio and television stations provided 24 responses. According to the study, the primary factors that guided the choice of these programmes were the need to uphold checks and balances among government officials and to advance nation-building, accountability, and transparency. The results show that, despite a number of obstacles, the various media outlets have a moderate influence on the nation's policy and governance discourses. The study's conclusions highlight the need for the media to take the lead in promoting governance and policy discourses that aim to increase public participation in the nation. It also urges stakeholders to work together to address the main issues preventing the media from carrying out its mandate. Additionally, Owusu's (2020) deliberative democratic citizenship education should enable all Ghanaians to freely and equally engage in a variety of activities where they can express their opinions through argumentation and provide justification for their positions. Civic engagement is consistently and significantly influenced by social efficacy, trust, and social endorsement.

The entire modern political and life process requires us to eliminate miscommunication, deadly rivalries, and hostilities in order to help people understand one another's interests and come to a consensus. Only then can we identify our shared interests (Agyeman, 2013). Agyeman (2013) claims that Ghanaians generally demonstrate a sense of commitment to the nation's civic engagement initiatives. There are several factors that contribute to Ghanaians' inclination to participate in civic affairs. Instead, a wide range

of variables, including the effectiveness of public institutions, respondents' contentment with democracy, place of residence, gender, ethnicity, and the wellbeing of the nation, as well as social capital, education, religious involvement, and overall life satisfaction, seem to be important predictors of how Ghanaians participate in civic life. Building a stronger and more cohesive civic nation is one of the potential benefits of the civic engagement process, which is defined as interacting more frequently and meaningfully with others about civic issues (Addai et al., 2012). Civic engagement in Ghana is impacted by the sense of hopelessness that permeates the nation as well as a rise in crime, material hardships, unemployment, and poverty (Addai & Pokimica, 2012).

Literature reviewed in this section provides a clear picture of the evolution of civic engagement in Ghana. This includes measures put in place to ensure that individuals and stakeholders participate in active civic activities. The review highlighted the level of civic appreciation among Ghanaians.

2.10 Concept of Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability, as defined by Sphera (2020), is the wise and balanced use of natural resources to meet the needs of the present generation without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It means putting policies and procedures into place that promote the planet's long-term health while accounting for its ecological, social, and economic components (Sphera, 2020). Reducing carbon footprints, conserving resources, preserving biodiversity, and encouraging eco-friendly behaviours are some of the main components of environmental sustainability that ensure a robust and sustainable environment for subsequent generations. Environmental sustainability is the use of resources in a way that conserves biodiversity, ecological processes, and natural resources for future generations (Lawrence, 2020). Sutton (2004) defined environmental sustainability as the ability to strike a balance between social,

economic, and environmental objectives in order to maintain the long-term qualities that people find desirable in the natural environment. The notion of environmental sustainability in this study is closely tied to Sutton's explanation, which the author understood to mean sustainability of the physical environment. Social, economic, technological, and policy factors can all play a role in the dynamics of environmental sustainability (Bresnihan, 2016).

According to the *Indeed Career Guide* (2022) there are three main categories of environmental sustainability: ecological, economic, and social sustainability. This study focuses more on ecological sustainability of the environment. Among the academics who supported the idea of environmental sustainability are Garrett Hardin, David Schlosberg, and Urie Bronfenbrenner (Jayajit, Collins, & Grineski, 2016).

This section of literature emphasised on varying definitions of environmental sustainability, environmental theories and highlighted on some supporters of environmental sustainability.

2.11 Physical Environment

According to Bruce (2019), the physical environment is the portion of the surrounding environment that is made up of elements like air, soil, and water. Again, social studies syllabus (2010) defined the environment as the surroundings within which man, animals and plants live, the environment comprises of sea, land, vegetation, soils, animals, climate, and buildings are all included in the physical environment. The actual location where people live, work, or spend their time is known as the physical environment. This is the fundamental element of life quality that affects other elements like the social and economic environment (Spacely, 2021). According to Miller (2018), the physical environment is regarded as a tangible space that fosters, influences, and

develops life. For example, the atmosphere, seas, and climate zones that are found all over the world, such as deserts and tropical rainforests. Since humanity emerged as the dominant species on Earth, its effects on the environment have become increasingly significant Bruce (2019).

Miller (2018) distinguished between two types of physical environments: the natural environment and the human or man-made environment. The human or man-made environment refers to the surroundings that have been created or significantly altered by human activities, the man-made environment encompasses all physical spaces and infrastructure designed, constructed, and maintained by humans for various purposes. Also, the natural environment refers to the part of the environment that have not been impacted by human activity, the natural environment consists of all living things on earth which encompasses the interaction of all living species, climate, weather, and natural resources. The natural environment is dynamic and interconnected, with changes in one environmental component often affecting others (Spacely, 2021).

Also, the man-made environment is characterized by its intentional design and construction to meet specific human needs and goals. It is shaped by cultural, economic, technological, and political factors and is often designed with considerations for efficiency, safety, aesthetics, and sustainability. Human activities can lead to environmental degradation highlighting the need for sustainable development practices that balance human needs with environmental protection.

Sustainability of the physical environment was emphasised in every work of literature examined in this section. Understanding these types of environment helps in planning, conservation, and sustainable development efforts. Many national and international policies, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depend on effective

land-use management (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019), cleverly crafted environmental regulations can promote efficiency, creativity, and economically beneficial environmental use. Concerning sustainability of the physical environment, the review highlighted on the vital role that civic engagement plays in maintaining the physical environment.

2.12 Inter Relatedness of Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability

Civic engagement and environmental sustainability are intrinsically linked and reliant on one another, attaining holistic and long-term sustainability depends on understanding and fostering the interdependence of civic engagement and environmental sustainability (Pulla, 2014). According to Pulla (2014), there are several factors that demonstrate the interdependence of civic engagement and environmental sustainability. Firstly, both environmental and civic sustainability aim to enhance the long-term health and well-being of communities. The goal of environmental sustainability is to safeguard ecosystems and natural resources so that both current and future generations can continue to benefit from them. Furthermore, civic engagement and environmental sustainability acknowledges the interdependence of human activity on the environment. In order to maintain the health and resilience of ecological systems, environmental sustainability highlights the necessity of integrating human actions with these systems.

Once again, community organising, activism, and volunteer work are examples of active citizen participation that can raise environmental awareness, encourage sustainable practices, and have an impact on laws that support environmental protection. Furthermore, civic well-being is directly impacted by environmental sustainability. Public health, social cohesion, and economic stability can all be

negatively impacted by degraded environments, pollution, and resource scarcity. Moreover, fair outcomes are a goal of civic engagement and environmental sustainability. Environmental justice acknowledges that communities that are marginalised frequently experience disproportionately high levels of environmental degradation and limited access to green spaces, clean water, and air. Again, attaining civic engagement and environmental sustainability depends on strong policy and governance frameworks. Enactments that support conservation, sustainable practices, and environmental protection lay the groundwork for citizen participation and civic engagement. By doing this, inclusivity and participation will be improved, allowing young people to actively participate in decision-making. Furthermore, by allowing citizens to actively participate in environmental decision-making processes, governance structures will ensure that a variety of viewpoints are taken into account and encourage environmental stewardship. In addition, a long-term outlook is shared by environmental and civic sustainability. They understand how decisions and actions taken today will have a significant impact on the future.

By acknowledging and embracing the interdependence of civic engagement and environmental sustainability, individuals, communities, and institutions can work towards a more integrated and comprehensive approach to sustainability (Rossi & Dodman, 2016). Acknowledging the mutual reinforcement between environmental well-being and civic engagement can help develop effective strategies, policies, and initiatives that address the complex challenges faced by societies and the natural world (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006).

Ecological integrity and civic responsibility are the foundations of environmental and civic sustainability, according to Societe General (2019). Schmitz, Stinson, and James (2019) went on to argue that individual engagement, grassroots movements, advocacy,

policy influence, and community collaboration are all essential for environmental and civic sustainability. Furthermore, when addressing environmental sustainability as a civic issue, Flanagan, Galloway, and Pykett (2021) noted that collaboration with nonprofits and NGOs, environmental justice, education and awareness campaigns, and public-private partnerships are all essential. In addition, Buckingham and Theobald (2003) clarified that in order to improve civic and environmental sustainability, interdisciplinary collaboration is required. This includes cooperation between environmental and civic organisations as well as between education and research. Therefore, since the study's focus is on young people's involvement in maintaining environmental sustainability, it is necessary to educate them about environmentally friendly behaviours through civic engagement.

This section of literature review focused on the interrelatedness of civic engagement and environmental sustainability and how it enhanced the sustainability of the physical environment.

2.13 Environmental Sustainability in Ghana

Economic, social, and environmental development are the three primary aspects of development that comprise sustainable development (United Nations, 2012). A series of global summits were held to address issues related to environmental sustainability, such as the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and Stockholm: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all our responsibility and our opportunity (2022).

Ghana first showed that it was willing and able to manage its environment through conscious and coordinated efforts when it participated in the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Twenty years later, at the Rio Earth Summit, Ghana signed the Rio Conventions, bringing the country one step closer to its goal of living in harmony with the environment (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2012). Managing the environment to support society as a whole is the goal of environmental management (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2012). Ensuring the quality of life and living and working environments for citizens, equitable access to land and other resources of nature, improved utilisation of social, cultural, and natural resources, public participation, and environmental governance were the goals of the National Environment Policy, which was founded on integrated and coordinated environmental management. The goal of Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to manage, safeguard, and improve the nation's environment while looking for shared solutions to the world's environmental issues. The goal of the Environmental Protection Agency is to accomplish this goal through an integrated system of environmental planning and management that involves the public in large amounts, effectively implements programmes and technical services, provides advice on environmental issues, and ensures that environmental laws and regulations are consistently and effectively enforced. The objective is predicated on comprehensive and integrated environmental management procedures and practices.

Act 490 (1994) and Legislative Instrument 1652 of 1999 (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2012) provide protection for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The organisation is committed to enhancing, protecting, and advancing the nation's environment while working towards environmentally sustainable development through responsible, effective resource management that takes

social justice and equity concerns into account. The National Environment Policy is implemented under its supervision (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2012). Environmental education, environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, environmental governance, industry and mine monitoring, natural resource management, legal compliance and enforcement, environmental performance rating and openness of environmental reporting and environmental sustainability research are all under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (2020), the National Plastics Management Policy was developed with four main pillars: resource mobilisation for a circular economy, strategic planning and cross-sectoral collaboration, behavioural change, and inclusiveness, shared accountability, and good governance. The reduction of waste, reuse, recycling, recovery, and avoidance of disposal are the core values of the policy. In order to most effectively accomplish the goal of comprehensive plastics management, a wide range of sustainable plastics management options are chosen (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2020).

A World Bank study on Ghana's environmental analysis was carried out in 2020. Their research concentrated on important institutional and policy gaps as well as the issues they present. The following are some suggestions for improving Ghana's environment and natural resource management: give environmental factors top priority when planning new projects; fortify institutions to guarantee accountability and openness in environment and natural resource management; Enforce or uphold current legislation while advancing important policy changes, resource sharing at the local level, and more robust anti-corruption legislation. The United Nations and UNCED have asked civic practitioners to integrate environmental sustainability into their work in order to achieve

sustainability; the World Bank (2020) study offers empirical support for this request. Similar to this, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2021) looked at Ghana's environment and climate change theory and found that there had been little progress made in addressing these issues and excessive use of natural resources. The study identifies gaps and challenges related to environment and climate priorities and calls for civic engagement in order to support environment and climate initiatives and create enabling environments. The report offered helpful suggestions for tackling environmental issues and climate change, such as endorsing the creation of institutional frameworks for project execution and enacting national legislation.

In 2019, Osei-Poku and Kootin-Sanwu examined Ghana's current state in light of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their study focuses on Ghana and the current state of its progress towards achieving the SDGs. Establishing national policies with an emphasis on developing sustainable cities with enough social amenities and infrastructure to raise the standard of living for their citizens is one of the recommendations. To better understand Ghana's developmental agenda, citizens should have easy access to information and receive intensive education. In the end, their study's findings indicate that Ghana is on track to meet the SDGs. Environmental sustainability and health are linked, per a 2016 United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report. The laws and policies pertaining to the environment in Ghana were examined in 2020 by Mensah, Justice, Osei, and Henrietta. The study indicates that there are still a lot of unsolved environmental problems in Ghana. Despite the large number of environmental laws and policies that have been discovered, they are dispersed and not all categorised in a single document. Because of the various technological advancements, the study suggested that in order to better support the implementation and enforcement of environmental laws in Ghana, capacity building

for environmental personnel and data is necessary. Ghana still has a lot of unresolved environmental issues (Osei-Poku, & Kootin-Sanwu, 2019).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals report also validates the findings of Srivastava and Pawlowska's (2020) study in Ghana, which focused on striking a balance between resource depletion and economic growth. According to the study, inadequate land management causes deforestation, which costs US\$400 million annually, and land degradation, which costs over US\$500 million annually. Between 2001 and 2015, five million hectares of forest were lost. Health care expenses resulting from miners' exposure to toxic mercury total \$240 million.

Approximately 2.7 million m² of Ghana's shoreline are lost annually, with 80% of the shoreline experiencing active erosion. In Greater Accra, coastal erosion and flooding are especially problematic. \$233 million was spent on overfishing, which has the potential to destroy small pelagic fisheries and eliminate 500,000 jobs. It also sets off natural disasters: during the past 40 years, four million people have been impacted by floods, and a flash flood in Accra in 2015 resulted in damages worth \$55 million. Ghana must share the benefits of growth by safeguarding the natural capital with evidence-based policies and practical measures. The cost of children being exposed to lead, mercury, and electronic waste was \$440 million. Over 3,000 metric tonnes of plastic waste are produced daily, most of which is disposed of as litter or in makeshift landfills. This garbage contaminates the ocean and clogs open drainage systems. Significant harm from water pollution amounts to 3% of Ghana's GDP (gross domestic product). The annual cost of environmental degradation is \$6.3 billion, or almost 11% of Ghana's GDP in 2017. An estimated \$2 billion is lost annually due to air pollution, which also results in the premature deaths of 16,000 children and the elderly. Last but not least,

Ghana would gain from pushing important policy changes to distribute benefits and resources to communities (Srivastava & Pawlowska, 2020).

In 2019, Cobbinah, Asibey, Opoku-Gyamfi, and Peprah carried out research in Ghana on the subject of urban planning and climate change. Ghana's urban environmental issues were the study's main focus. In the midst of growing urbanisation and climate change, Ghana's urban areas are experiencing a rapid depletion of environmental resources (Cobbinah, Asibey, Opoku-Gyamfi & Peprah, 2019). The implications of urban environmental issues for Ghana's urban future are examined in this paper. They looked at what made Ghana's urban areas more vulnerable to environmental threats, how natural events and human activity affected the country's urban environmental resources, how environmental protection related to Ghana's sustainable urban development, and how Ghana's environmental issues affected policy. The results show that policies are not clear and that urban planning does not pay enough attention to climate change issues. This essay promoted the inclusion of climate change issues in Ghanaian urban planning. In Ghana, Som & Fredua (2015) investigated environmental health. Major environmental issues, the value of environmental health, the state of environmental health today, policies, and institutional framework were the main topics of the study. According to the author, Ghana is developing a National Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) system based on the UN Sustainable Development (UNSD) Framework's System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA). The author suggested strengthening environmental health education and raising public awareness, as well as improving technical capacity at all levels, particularly in environmental sanitation. For example, National Sanitation Day; enhanced cooperation, coordination, and partnership amongst organisations engaged in environmental protection, the supply of hygienic facilities, and health services;

standardisation of data and statistics pertaining to the environment; and rigorous enforcement and adherence to environmental laws and regulations.

The long-term plan was in line with high-level plans across the world, most notably the 50-year Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 15-year Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Action Plan for Health and Pollution Ghana (2019) distinguished five categories of risk factors for pollution: exposure to indoor and outdoor ambient air pollution, exposure to household air pollution, exposure to contaminated water and inadequate sanitation, exposure to toxic chemicals and heavy metals in soil, and occupational exposure to pollution. Once more, the study identifies interventions to lower exposure to pollution and its associated health effects, and it ranks pollution issues according to the severity of their health impacts within national agencies. The study did not address e-waste, waste electrical and electronic equipment management, or artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognised the connection between pollution and health. As stated in Goal 3 of the Health and Pollution Action Plan Ghana, 2019, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all." The broad framework for state and citizen responsibilities for environmental protection and the upkeep of a safe, clean, and healthy environment that supports human wellbeing for the country's development is provided by Ghana's 1992 Constitution (Health and Pollution Action Plan Ghana, 2019).

The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (2012) recommended that in order to ensure sustainable development, the following things must be accomplished: the creation of a long-term strategy; monitoring, evaluation, and verification; finance; partners in the green economy and development; links or

coordination; policy implementation; and the transformation of the Ghanaian economy. According to Ghana's Center for Democratic Development (2022), Ghana's policy actors have indicated that they are willing to standardise the use of evidence when formulating policies in order to enhance development outcomes. The goals of CDD-Ghana are inclusive growth and development, strong governance, and democratic consolidation.

According to the National Development Planning Commission (2017), the democracy with the highest level of security is the one that guarantees its citizens' basic needs as a fundamental obligation under Article 36 of the 1992 Constitution. The key components of Ghana's long-term plan, according to the 2017 report of the National Development Planning Commission, are to: build an industrialised, inclusive, and resilient economy; create an equitable, healthy, and prosperous society; build well-planned and safe communities while protecting the environment; and strengthen Ghana's role in international affairs. According to a report by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) (2022), the Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (MTNDPF) 2022–2025 also seeks to operationalize Article 36, Clause 1 of Ghana's 1992 constitution, which directs the government to ensure the nation's economy is managed effectively to maximise the welfare of its citizens. The MTNDPF, 2022–2025, is based on the long-term national development policy framework, or Agenda 2057, which aims to create a democratic, inclusive, and self-reliant developed nation by 2057. The medium-term policy framework aims to: create a prosperous, confident, and self-assured nation by creatively utilising our natural and human resources; and function within an open, democratic, and just society where everyone can prosper economically and with mutual trust, as stated by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) (2021).

A study on Ghana and sustainable development: a retrospective of the 40-year national development plan was carried out by Abubakar, Asamoah, and Agyemang (2018). The descriptive approach based on secondary data was the main focus of the study. The study concluded that the plan will remain on paper forever and that guided development for Ghana will remain an unattainable goal until the necessary steps are taken. The long-term plan was in line with high-level plans across the world, most notably the 50-year Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 15-year Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (Abubakar, Asamoah & Agyemang, 2018). Additionally, Towah (2019) investigated how stability and good governance affected Ghana's sustainable development. A qualitative case study was used to identify and describe threats to Ghana's good governance practices and sustainable development. Twenty participants in all, representing a variety of backgrounds and occupations, were directly involved. The study concluded that active, effective, and equitable governance was essential to sustainability.

Regarding sustainable development, the review shed light on the vital role that public participation plays in maintaining environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability was emphasised in every work of literature examined in this section as a means of achieving sustainability in Ghana. Sekar (2017) defines environmental sustainability as the long-term maintenance of the components and practices that raise the standard of the environment. Humanity must first make significant progress towards environmental sustainability and refrain from acts that damage or deplete the environment in order to preserve its natural beauty and functions (Gillaspy, 2021).

2.14 Youth Participation in Civic Engagement and Environmental Practices in Ghana

"Ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" and "exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities as citizens as social actors" It entails cultivating the values, motivation, abilities, and knowledge necessary to make that difference, these are two definitions of youth civic engagement provided by (UNESCO, 2014). According to Suhonen (2014) these activities improve young people's lives and benefit the community on a social level. Once more, the study and practice of youth civic engagement covers a broad and intricate domain which includes youth development, politics, education, the media, nonprofit organisations, and a host of other sectors and players that affect young people's engagement in civic life (Circle, 2023).

Brady et al. (2012) listed the following categories into which to group youth civic engagement activities: a) volunteering and community service; b) mutual aid, or support to others in the same community or social group; c) advocacy and campaigning; d) youth media; e) social entrepreneurship; and f) leadership practice and training. Civic engagement initiatives can be carried out at the local, grassroots level, in educational settings such as schools or colleges, by non-governmental organisations, political parties, or institutions of higher learning. Separating civic engagement into individual and collective forms is another helpful typology. Individual forms include things like writing to an editor, donating to charities, talking with friends about politics and social issues, keeping up with political news coverage, or recycling. Volunteering for social or charitable causes or participating actively in neighborhood-based organisations are examples of collective acts (Brady et al. 2012). A well-run civic engagement

programme can foster nondiscrimination, equal access to opportunities, social inclusion, and dialogue. (UNESCO, 2013).

Reduced risky behaviour, improved academic achievement, and more active civic engagement in later life are additional anticipated advantages of youth civic engagement. Young people can acquire work experience, acquire new life and job skills, develop responsibility and accountability, and support the growth of their communities by getting involved in civic life (Conner & Rosen, 2016).

However, it is important to remember that a variety of factors other than civic engagement initiatives influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people. The environment as well as social and cultural norms have an impact on how society reacts to young people's attempts to engage in civic life (Conner & Rosen, 2016).

In Ghana, youth civic engagement on environmental issues is essential to advancing environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and the building of a more accountable and inclusive society (Gyampo, 2013). Despite the low youth participation rate, the following are some instances of youth civic engagement in environmental practices in Ghana (World Bank Group, 2020). To begin with, one way that young people in Ghana participate in civic engagement regarding environmental practices is through environmental conservation. Ghanaian youth actively participate in environmental conservation initiatives. They participate in initiatives that promote sustainable living, waste minimization, and the preservation of natural resources, such as awareness campaigns, clean-up days, and tree planting events. Climate activism conservation is another way that young people in Ghana are participating in environmental-related civic engagement. Youth in Ghana are becoming more and more involved in climate change activism and advocacy. To promote renewable energy,

encourage sustainable development strategies, and bring attention to the issues surrounding climate change, they organise public awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and demonstrations. An additional part of young people's participation in environmental civic engagement is represented by Eco-Clubs. Eco-clubs, which give young people a platform to learn about environmental issues, engage in practical activities, and promote environmental sustainability in their local communities and schools, have been established in many communities and schools throughout Ghana. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge sustainable agriculture as an extra channel for public engagement with environmental sustainability. Ghanaian youth engage in initiatives that promote ecologically friendly farming practices. They participate in organic farming, community-based farming, and agroforestry projects that improve food security, reduce environmental impact, and promote sustainable livelihoods. Enhancing environmental education is another objective of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Youth-led organisations and initiatives in Ghana host workshops, seminars, and educational campaigns on topics like biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable resource management in an effort to raise youth awareness of environmental issues. Advocacy and policy engagement, in which Ghanaian youth actively participate, are further strategies to enhance environmental sustainability and civic engagement.

They work with stakeholders and policymakers, attend national and international conferences, and contribute their perspectives to policy discussions in order to have an impact on decision-making processes. As stated previously, improving recycling and waste management is the aim of community involvement in environmental sustainability. Youth in Ghana take part in waste management and recycling initiatives. They create recycling programmes, support proper trash disposal techniques, and

educate the public about the importance of recycling in reducing pollution and promoting a circular economy. Enhancing environmental research and innovation is another goal of youth civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Ghanaian youth are involved in environmental research and innovation. They conduct research, devise original solutions, and employ technology to address environmental problems like deforestation, water pollution, and climate change. Initiatives to promote and strengthen youth civic engagement with environmental issues are being implemented in Ghana (Grey, 2018). Through platforms, funding, and capacity-building programmes provided by governmental, non-governmental, and international organisations, youth can demonstrate their ideas, abilities, and contributions in these areas (World Bank Group, 2020).

The concept of youth participation in environmental civic engagement is still relatively new in Ghana. However, this section's research offers a clear picture of Ghana's youth environmental civic engagement landscape and highlights the benefits of combining thoughtful civic projects to achieve successful environmental sustainability.

2.15 Stakeholders and Change Agents of Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability

Achieving civic and environmental sustainability will require the effective participation of individuals, communities, government agencies, private organisations, citizen groups, NGOs, recreational interest groups, expert groups, business affiliations, academic organisations, and others with an interest or "stake" in both civic and environmental processes and outcomes (Irish Environmental Protection Agency, 1995).

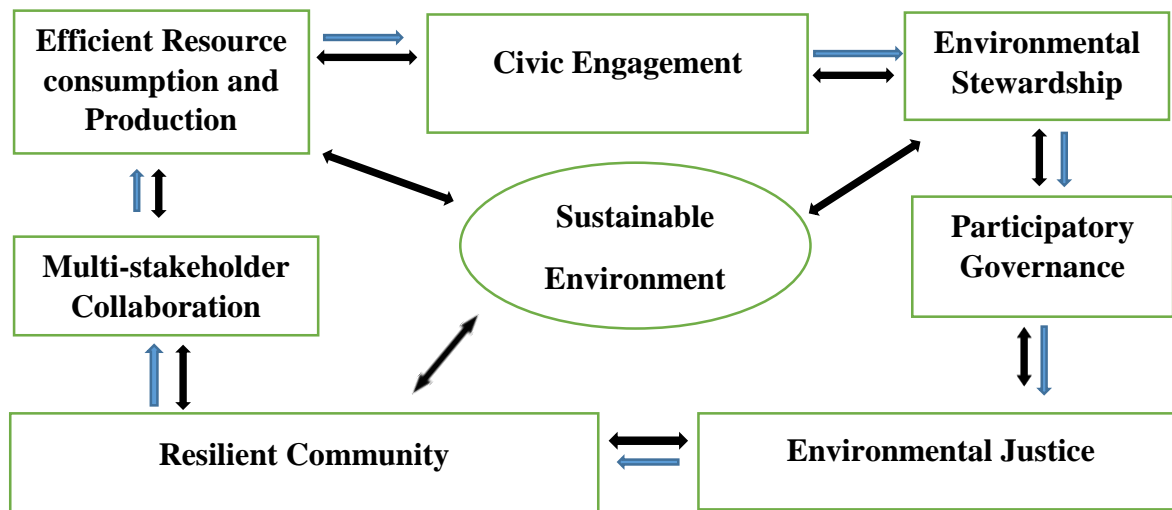


Figure 1.

2.16 Self-Constructed Conceptual Framework on Civic Engagement and Environmental Sustainability

A conceptual framework is a structured plan that organizes and guides the development of ideas. It serves as a roadmap that outlines the key components, relationships and variables in a study (Adom, Hussein & Agyem, 2018). The main variables within the conceptual framework were indicated in boxes which include the following: civic engagement, environmental stewardship, participatory governance, environmental justice, resilient community, multi-stakeholder collaboration and efficient resource consumption and production. The oval shape highlighted on the cyclic or continues daily efforts that people need to practice to attain environmental sustainability. Civic engagement as it is used in this study focused on the fact that individuals and environmental agencies need to work collectively and effectively towards attaining environmental sustainability to enhance environmental stewardship by responsibly managing and caring for natural resources and ecosystems. Moreover, the framework emphasised on participatory governance to ensure citizens are actively involved in the decision-making processes of governance, as well as enhancing local laws and

government policies to improve environmental justice through fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental policymaking and the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Additionally, a resilient community is also needed to enhance the capacity to withstand, adapt, and recover from environmental challenges. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed to promote activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations working together to address environmental challenges. Furthermore, efficient resource consumption and production should be ensured to maximize environmental values while minimizing waste, pollution, and environmental impact.

The framework emphasised on fostering a sense of responsibility to conserve natural resources through fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people and stakeholders who have the capacity to withstand, adapt and recover from environmental challenges within a community. The mode of interrelatedness is indicated by arrows in figure 1. The double edged dark arrows show the cyclical motion in attaining environmental sustainability through civic engagement whereas the blue arrows only show the directions within the framework. The framework indicated that civic engagement on environmental sustainability has a cyclical motion but over lapses when individuals or community members are able to establish habitual attitude of being environmental stewardship, ensuring a continues ability to withstand, adapt, and recover from environmental challenges and being able to ensure efficient resource consumption and production to attain environmental sustainability. The framework focused on interconnected and collective contributions to create sustainable, just, and thriving communities and ecosystems through active participation, equitable resource management, and collaborative approaches to addressing the pressing environmental challenges.

2.17 Social Ecology Theory

Murray Bookchin developed and formulated the theory of social ecology in the mid-1960s (Bookchin, 2006). Social ecology serves as a framework for comprehending human-environment interactions, particularly the interdependence of individuals, institutions and the environment (Biswas, 2020). Social ecology places more emphasis on institutional, cultural, social, and psychological contexts of human-environment interactions (Bookchin, 2007). Within the behavioural and social sciences, the idea has been used to research a wide range of social issues and policy (Stojanovic, 2016). Social ecology theory comprises of five stages, namely individual, interpersonal, organisational, community, and public policy (Gerber, 2016). The core principles of social ecology, as outlined by Stokols, are as follows: critique of hierarchies and domination, integration of social and ecological issues, decentralization and community-based approaches to government and resources management, sustainable ecological ethics and understanding, vision of an ecological society (Stokols, 2013). The theory posits that the exploitation of nature are closely linked to the domination of humans and industrial systems, as the root causes of environmental degradation (Janet, 2007). The theory emphasised that the same structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice among people also lead to the exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems (Schill, 2017). Social ecology promotes decentralization of power and decision-making, encouraging local communities to manage their own resources and environments through participatory democratic processes (Nash, 2008). According to Aggarwal (2023) the theory emphasised on the use of appropriate technologies and development of practices that do not harm the environment. Also, Biswas (2020) suggested that transforming social relations positively we create a sustainable

relationship with the environment, social ecology envisions a future society that is democratic, just and ecologically sustainable.

In summary, social ecology is a holistic approach that links social justice with ecological sustainability, advocating for systemic change to create a more equitable and environmentally sound world. Social ecology is based on the belief that addressing ecological issues requires a profound transformation of social structures and relationships, moving toward a society that is both socially just and environmentally sustainable. It is from this view, that these ecological problems cannot be understood, let alone solved, without a careful understanding of our existing society.

2.18 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

Similar studies conducted on civic engagement on environmental sustainability by Macheka & Hardman (2021) used political ecology. However, my study utilised the social ecology theory because the theory posits that the exploitation of nature resources are closely linked to the domination of humans and industrial systems, as the root causes of environmental degradation (Janet, 2007). When applied to civic engagement in environmental sustainability, social ecology provides a lens for understanding how grassroots movements, community participation, and democratic practices can address both social injustices and environmental degradation simultaneously. The theory emphasised on the same structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice among people also lead to the exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems (Schill, 2017). Social ecology promotes decentralization of power and decision-making, when applied to civic engagement in environmental sustainability, encouraging local communities to manage their own resources and environments through participatory democratic processes (Nash, 2008). According to Aggarwal (2023) the theory emphasised on the use of appropriate technologies and development of practices that do not harm the

environment. Civic engagement in environmental sustainability, emphasised how people can adopt technological devices and tool to improve the state of the environment.

I deem it necessary to use social ecology theory because it will help explain the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability, the barriers to civic engagement on environmental sustainability and effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment.

Social ecology theory has a lot to do with environmental sustainability and civic engagement, since it highlights on the relationships between political, social, and ecological systems within a community. It offers a framework for comprehending and resolving the underlying causes of environmental and social issues, with an emphasis on changing human society to build a just and sustainable world. When it comes to civic engagement, the theory recognises that environmental issues have their fundamental roots in social and political structures. It highlights how important it is to distribute resources fairly, empower communities, and use democratic processes for making decisions. The theory aims to create communities that are resilient and sustainable by putting participatory democracy into practice and encouraging citizen participation in decision-making. It emphasises on the need for inclusive governance structures that consider the interests of diverse stakeholders, including marginalised groups, in order to address social and environmental injustices. Moreover, the theory recognises that environmental sustainability and social justice are inseparable. It argues that in order to build a society that is truly sustainable, issues like inequality, poverty, and discrimination must be addressed. Through the promotion of social and economic equity, social ecology theory seeks to create the framework necessary for long-term

environmental sustainability. It emphasises on how important it is to cultivate an ecological citizenship, ecological literacy, and an ethic of care for the natural world.

In conclusion, social ecology theory provides a thorough framework for comprehending and encouraging community involvement in environmental sustainability projects. It promotes the creation of comprehensive and revolutionary solutions that can lead to the creation of a more sustainable and just society by addressing the social, political, and ecological aspects of sustainability.

2.19 Empirical Review

Andreas, Demetra, Eleni and Anastasia (2022) studied Green Cities for Environmental Citizenship: A Systematic Literature Review of Empirical Research from 31 Green Cities of the World. The study examined citizens' engagement in green cities and its interrelatedness with Environmental Citizenship. In total, 31 green cities were studied. Thematic and frequency analysis were used which revealed that green cities encourage citizens' engagement with the implemented green policies, while also advancing citizens' Environmental Citizenship. Also, Suvi, Maria, Anna and Heli (2022) conducted a literature review on citizen engagement on sustainability transitions research. The study identified four key forms of citizen engagement in transitions research: (1) envisioning sustainable futures; (2) local transition implementation; (3) revealing public perceptions; and (4) developing participatory methods to facilitate transitions. The study revealed that there is a need to deepen citizen engagement and more explicitly address power relations, more creative methods can better enable the active contribution of citizens. Again, Jenni (2018) conducted a qualitative study on the role of civic engagement in creating a sustainable city. The results indicated that there is a positive connection between civic engagement and sustainability efforts of the city, creating more sustainable practices and developing environmental policies that the

citizens are concerned about and want to participate in order to make the cities and urban environments they live in more sustainable. Moreover, Fiona and James (2024) analysed a qualitative study to address the limitations of traditional, solely quantitative approaches on meaningful community engagement through advanced indicator systems for sustainable destination planning by examining socio-ecological, environmental, cultural, and economic dimensions. The study concluded that relying solely on quantitative indicators, limits results and failure to capture effects or impacts observed. The study highlights the insufficiency of solely using quantitative indicators, which risk oversimplifying community inputs and misinterpreting resident dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Constantinos, Verena and Bodo (2022) studied consumers' environmental sustainability beliefs and activism: a cross-cultural examination. The study showed that religiosity and interdependence are consistently related to environmental sustainability beliefs. The results revealed that family values and environmental sustainability beliefs influence environmental sustainability activism, which in turn is linked with individual perceptions of superior quality of life. Yiannis, Hadjichambis, Demetra and Anastasia (2023) study focused on Systematic Literature Review of Empirical Research on Behaviour Change Games for Environmental Citizenship. The study indicated that pro-environmental empowerment is well-aligned with the notion of environmental citizenship, which aims at transforming citizens into environmental agents of change. This article is grounded on a systematic review of empirical articles on behaviour change games for environmental citizenship covering a time span of fifteen years and published in peer-reviewed journals. Overall, 44 articles were reviewed to shed light on methodological underpinnings elements and the persuasive strategies of behaviour change games. Findings of the study indicated that while behaviour change games seem to promote

pro-environmental knowledge and attitudes, is not fully warranted for pro-environmental behaviours. A study conducted by Linda, Bhishna and Isara (2013) focused on developing a sustainable campus through community engagement. The study developed a 6-P community engagement framework for promoting eco-centric practices within university campuses. The objective of the study is to apply the framework to a university community. To this end, interviews with staff and students at Bond University were undertaken. The interviews revealed that the 6-P framework is highly applicable to the Bond university community. Interviewees suggested that all 6-P factors (psychological, physical, personal, public perception, price and policies) are relevant and have a positive influence towards an eco-centric behaviour. The framework is useful as a template for other universities in developing a community engagement strategy to fit into the vision of a sustainable campus. Tsykalova and Lyudmyla (2021) conducted a quantitative analysis on comparative cross-cultural study of youth environmental engagement and Environmental Outcomes on the future of humankind Based on data from 40 countries across the world. Revealed that throughout history, the relationship of humans with nature evolved with culture. Climate change calls for a cultural shift in how we relate to nature and fellow humans, pointing to the need to rethink most human activities. Youth are frequently seen as agents of change. However, the widespread understanding that youth environmental engagement is necessary and brings more sustainable outcomes has almost no supporting empirical evidence. The study emphasised that research is needed to reveal whether youth environmental engagement is related to climate policies and ecological consequences and how this engagement varies across cultures. The study analysed youth environmental engagement to examine: (a) how it differs across cultures and how it corresponds to environmental degradation. The study offered new insights into the

associations among youth environmental engagement, culture, and environmental performance. It further supports the growing call for cross-cultural research to understand the primary factors influencing individuals' and societies' environmental attitudes and behaviours. Within the context of the role of community engagement in urban innovation towards the co-creation of smart sustainable cities. Bokolo (2024) adopted a semi-systematic review method to analyse 71 sources from Web. Findings from this study specified factors that influenced community engagement for smart sustainable city development. Furthermore, the study recommended that community engagement involving different stakeholders can help to achieve resilient technological driven city by supporting sustainable developmen. In Mekonnen, Amanuel and Terje (2022) study, the focus was on to empower rural society through non-formal environmental education. The study examined how non-formal Environmental Education was used as interventions aimed at empowering rural society in Ethiopia using qualitative data collection methods and thematic analysis as an analytical strategy. In all, forty-six community members participated in the study. The findings indicated that project-based learning could be used as a tool for community empowerment initiatives aimed at responding to and improving environmental challenges.

Paul, Adena, Barbara, Chris, Eugenia, Megan, Laurie, Peggy, Nina and Barbara (2023) analysed a qualitative exploratory of sustainability in long-standing community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnerships. Thematic analysis of 21 semi-structured interviews was conducted, including 10 academic and 11 community experts of long-standing CBPR partnerships. The key defining components of sustainability that were identified include the following: distinguishing between sustaining the work of the partnership and ongoing relationships among partners; working towards a common

goal over time; and enduring changes that impact the partnership. The study revealed that while sustainability is crucial to the success of community based participatory research (CBPR) partnerships, there is a lack of conceptual clarity on what defines sustainability and what characterizes sustainable practices in long-standing partnerships. Tennakoon, Janadari and Wattuhewa (2024) analysed environmental sustainability practices. The study explores the evolution and significance of environmental sustainability practices from 2010 to 2023. Through this exploration, the study aim to uncover patterns, emerging trends, and valuable insights that shed light on the trajectory of environmental sustainability practices and their far-reaching consequences for environmental conservation and sustainable development. The review highlights the growing awareness of ecological sustainability by using a four-step technique to select 351 papers. The key findings revealed that critical role of multidisciplinary collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and adaptive management strategies in advancing environmental sustainability practices were needed to enhance environmental sustainability practices. Notably, technological advancements in data collection, analysis, and modeling, such as remote sensing, satellite technology, and citizen science initiatives, have substantially enhanced the efficacy of these practices. Furthermore, shifts in governmental frameworks and international agreements, have profoundly influenced the trajectory of environmental sustainability practices. This review serves as a valuable tool for comprehending the evolution and impact of environmental sustainability initiatives, offering insights that can inform policy decisions, future research, and practical applications toward fostering a more sustainable and harmonious coexistence with our planet.

Nevertheless, several limitations hinder individuals, community and environmental agencies ability to attain civic engagement on environmental sustainability. There is a

contradiction between the persuasive language and the practical ability to attain environmental sustainability.

2.20 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on civic engagement on environmental sustainability of the physical environment from a global perspective, narrowing it down to the regional perspective. The literature was reviewed in order to understand effect of civic engagement and its role on sustainability of the physical environmental. Through the literature, Civic engagement is seen as an essential concept for environmental sustainability. From the literature, it became evident that civic engagement practices are being encouraged as a way to ensure effective environmentally sustainable practices. Again, studies have shown that when civic practices are encouraged among institutions and the youth, it gives a positive advantage in addressing issues related to environmental sustainability. Again, it was revealed that civic engagement is used as a legitimacy tool to promote environmental sustainability. The study is underpinned by the social ecology theory. The social ecology theory establishes that social ecology is based on the conviction that nearly all of our present ecological problems originate in deep-seated social problems (Bookchin, 2007). However, if there is a breach in civic engagement due to institutional factors and declining participation of the youth, environmental sustainability is threatened. The social theory will help explain the current contributions of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa, the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa and the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the philosophical assumptions that underpin the study as well as the rationale behind the selection of participants. The chapter also discussed the research approach, research design, study area, sample and sampling technique, data collection, and data analysis methods.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This research explored civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa in the Western Region. It is important to situate the study within a paradigm because it will guide the design of the study. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) (cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), a paradigm is a set of beliefs or worldview that directs research. This study was underpinned by an interpretivist philosophical paradigm, which is based on the assumption that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Schwandt, 1994).

This study was situated in this paradigm because, it allow participants to make subjective meaning of the knowledge and understanding of engaging in environmental activism and how it benefit and effects shape personal experiences, beliefs, and values. During interviews and focus group discussions with participants, I ask questions to uncover personal motivations for participating in environmental activities. This study was situated in this paradigm because the researcher sought to make subjective meanings of the data collected and also, information gathered from individual participants' understanding of the effect of civic engagement in environmental practices in Asankrangwa in the Western Region (Schwandt, 1994).

3.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research approach was used in this study. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research entails information often gathered from participants in their natural environments. In addition, the qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to analyze data inductively from specifics to general themes and also help researchers to make interpretations of the data collected (Creswell, 2014). Kvale (1996, p.11) avers that qualitative research is not “objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted.” Since this study will explore participants’ level of understanding and participation, a qualitative research approach was to investigate the effect of civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa in the Western Region. Furthermore, the research approach was utilized because of its exploratory nature, and its ability to produce in-depth data that make inferences about the effect of civic engagement practices on the physical environment in Asankrangwa in the Western Region (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The study aims at interpreting and making meaning of the participants’ perspectives and experiences that was expressed in the data to be collected (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.3 Research Design

According to Yin (2009), the research design is what connects the data gathered and the conclusions reached to the study's research questions. As a result, the research design directs the researcher through the entire study, from its inception to its conclusion. Therefore, the study design is important since it act as a roadmap for the researcher. According to Creswell (2014), choosing a research design is largely influenced by the nature of the phenomenon being studied, the researcher's personal experiences, and the study's participants. Case study, ethnography, and phenomenology are some of the research designs available to qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2013).

Yin (2009) defines a case study as an accurate investigation that probes an ongoing phenomenon within a real-life context. I chose a case study because the problem of environmental degradation still persist in Asankrangwa, as indicated in studies conducted by Buadee, Gawu, and Foli (2018), Meridia (2020) and Afriyie, Arthur, Gikunoo, Baah & Dziafa (2023). Case studies are classified based on the following: multiple or single case study (Johanna, 2017). Descriptive, explanatory and exploratory are some of the types of case study available to qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2013). Considering the purpose and nature of the research problem, the research design for this study was a single descriptive case study. The research adopted a descriptive case study because the work aimed at proving a comprehensive description and understanding of the research issue understudy, which is civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa.

A case study is described in terms of the research procedure (Yin, 2009). Among all the other qualitative research designs, a case study was adopted because the research questions of this study were formulated to answer questions on the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa, the barriers to the initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa and the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

Starman (2013) asserts that case studies are adopted when the researcher is keen to answer the question of 'how' and when the researcher wants to probe into related cases because of the relevance of the cases to the study. Hence, a case study offers the opportunity to conduct an in-depth investigation into civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa (Starman, 2013).

3.4 Sources of Data

The research made use of both primary data and literature from Environmental Health Department, which were collected from varied sources, including annual drafts, annual reports and sanitation guards' reports from environmental health department. The primary data were collected to suit the requirements of the research. This research involved the collection of raw data, which forms the main basis for attaining the research objectives. The research also made use of literature from Environmental Health Department. Literature from Environmental Health Department provided relevant analysis of data found in primary sources (wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

3.5 Area of Study

The basis for the selection of this site is that the problem of environmental degradation still persists in Asankrangwa, as indicated in the study design.

The capital of the Amenfi West Municipal Assembly is Asankragwa. The Amenfi West Municipal Assembly is located in the country's Western Region. Its borders are as follows: Jomoro and Ellembelle District to the south, Amenfi Central and Prestea-Huni Valley to the east, and Suaman and Aowin districts to the west. The Municipality has a total area of roughly 1,448.556 square kilometres of land. It is located between longitudes 1^o 45'W and 2^o 11'W and latitudes 5^o 30'N and 6^o 15'N. There are more than 150 communities. Amenfi West Municipality's current population is estimated to be 129,882 based on data from the 2021 population census, of which 52.6 percent are male (68,292) and 47.4 percent are female (61,590). The concentration of people is in the principal towns of Asankragwa, Samreboi, Breman and Wassa Dunkwa which are commercial towns within the municipality (Ghana Districts Home, 2021).

3.6 Population

The population of the study consisted of adult residents of Asankrangwa in Amenfi West Municipality. The population was drawn from the Municipal Assembly and youth environmental clubs.

3.7 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Bryman (2012), qualitative sampling often consists of small sampling units that are carefully conducted. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), the right number of participants for qualitative research largely depends on the type of research questions of the study. Based on the research approach, a qualitative sampling technique was utilized and participants for this study were selected based on the objectives of the study and their knowledge and understanding of the issue under investigation, the amount of time and materials available to the researcher. Silverman (2019) affirms that a sample size ranging from 6 to 15 can adequately facilitate the emergence of significant themes and valuable interpretations, particularly in studies where the population exhibits a high degree of homogeneity. Overall, fourteen (14) participants were purposively sampled for their knowledge and understanding on civic engagement in environmental initiatives under study, after the data collection reached a point of saturation (Dworkin, 2012). Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained saturation in research to mean a situation where the pattern of responses gathered appear similar or repeated. Consequently, an appropriate number of participants were included until the study obtained the most favourable findings. The point of saturation was reached once the 14th participant was interviewed. Hence, the study utilised a sample size of 14 (fourteen) participants. Thus, two (2) participants were engaged in one-on-one interviews and twelve (12) in the focus group discussions. The component of the

sample selected for the study was based on qualities such as organization or number of involvements in civic engagement in environmental initiatives.

The target population came from two settings, the municipal assembly and the youth environmental clubs. The sample size was dictated by the objectives of this study. Thus, there was a specification as to whom the researcher sought to use in the study, this were people who were involved in civic engagement in environmental initiatives within Asankrangwa not all staff of the municipal assembly and the youth were relevant in the study. The population was purposively drawn from Asankrangwa Township, purposive sampling technique was used to select two (2) environmental clubs and two (2) participants from the Municipal Assembly. The youth consisted of residents within Asankrangwa aged from 15-35 years. This is in line with Ghana's national youth authority act 939 (2016), definition of youth as individuals aged from 15 to 35 years (Kwarteng, 2021). Hence, this is why I am using this age range. The participants from the municipal assembly consisted of the following: Municipal Director of Environmental Health Department and Municipal Director of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). The primary data was complemented with documents and reports derived from environmental health department on civic engagement in environmental activities. The youth environmental clubs, assembly and stakeholders need to work to ensure that they play their roles to contribute to the realization and resolution of environmental problems the Municipality is confronted with.

The sampling technique that was utilized for this study was purposive sampling, the technique was employed based on how the assembly helps the youth protect the environment through civic engagement for future generations because of this gap, how the assembly used civic engagement in environmental initiatives to promote the sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa in the Western Region

needs to be well established. In line with this, Patton (2002) argues that “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting “information-rich” cases to be studied in depth” (p. 230). Purposive sampling aims to select participants in a deliberate manner to ensure that their contributions are relevant to the study (Bryman, 2012). Lindlof and Taylor (2017) asserted that the right selection of a sampling strategy helps the researcher in determining what to study and also provides justification for what to study.

For this study, participants and documents with detailed information on the civic engagement on environmental sustainability practices in Asankrangwa in the Western Region were purposefully selected because they have experiences in how civic engagement in environmental initiatives are adopted and implemented. Their experiences will enable detailed probing and understanding of civic engagement in environmental practices in Asankrangwa.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

In this study, the researcher utilized interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis.

3.8.1 Interviews

I employed in-depth interview sessions with the participants at their offices, a setting participants would feel free to assertively articulate and interpret their experiences regarding civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa (Creswell, 2014). According to Brennen (2017), an interview is a deliberately focused discussion between an interviewer and an interviewee with the goal of clarifying the perspectives, opinions, and important aspects of the participants' knowledge, understanding and experiences. These interviews involved unstructured and generally open-ended

questions that were few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.

At the initial stages, the researcher requested and secured an introductory letter from the Department of Social Studies Education at the University of Education, Winneba, where the researcher is a student. The introductory letter was personally delivered to participants. A week after the letter was delivered, the participants called to communicate the interview date to the researcher. Aided by the purposive sampling technique, the researcher informed the participants about the category of people who would be interviewed for the study. Prior to the scheduled day for the interviews, the researcher had formulated a semi-structured interview guide. On the scheduled day, the researcher met with participants at their offices or workplaces.

The researcher introduced himself to each participant and a brief narrative about what the whole study was about. I also made it known to the participants that they had the right to decline questions they were uncomfortable with or stop the discussion. I encouraged each participant to feel free to share their views. Again, I asked for their permission to record the discussion with my mobile phone. Once the interview started, I used the semi-structured interview guide to moderate the discussion to prevent participants from straying away from the boundaries of the discussion. Overall, the researcher interviewed two (2) participants (PT1 and PT2), which included the Municipal Director of Environmental Health Department and Municipal Director for the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) as they constitute the civic engagement in environmental initiatives for my study within the Municipal Assembly. The interviews lasted between forty-five (45) minutes and fifty minutes (50), respectively. I also wrote down notes in my notepad as the discussion and interview

were ongoing. Overall, the discussions and interviews were conducted in a cordial and relaxing setting.

3.8.2 Focus Group Discussion

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), focus group discussion have developed into a stand-alone method for gathering data, even though they are a type of interview. "Focus group discussion is a process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people," according to Creswell (2012) (p. 218). The individuals in the group are typically those who have been invited by a researcher to discuss their opinions, beliefs, and feelings regarding a subject that is being studied (Denscombe, 2007). According to Creswell (2012), focus groups are beneficial when interviewees are cooperative and similar to one another, and when the interaction among them would probably produce the best information. Krueger and Casey (2000) explain that within a group setting, participants are influenced by other participants just as they are in real life, thereby, stimulating the ideas and experiences of participants. In consonance with the above explanations, focus group discussion was employed for a wider reach to seek for divergent views from participants on the research questions at the same time.

At the initial stages, a list of environmental clubs (Asanko locals and Asankrangwa youth) and contacts of their leaders was given to the researcher by the Municipal Director of Environmental Health Department. The researcher conducted a background check on the resident youth of Asankrangwa to affirm if they participated in civic engagement in environmental initiatives. After getting an affirmative response from the resident youth, the researcher personally delivered an introductory letter to the identified environmental clubs in Asankrangwa. However, the various groups nominated representatives for the focus group discussions. A meeting was scheduled a week after the letter was delivered. On the said day, the researcher traveled from

Winneba to Asankrangwa to meet participants at the Municipal Assembly Hall. The focus group discussion was in two sessions (FGD1 and FGD2), each session lasted about an hour with six participants. Upon my arrival, I was joined by the first group of six (6) resident youth around 9:00am and the second group of six (6) resident youth around 12:00pm who were members of the environmental clubs in Asankrangwa. However, in line with Creswell (2014) assertion that a focus group discussion is a group interview with a minimum of six participants the researcher conducted the focus group discussions with participants (FGD1Y1-6 and FGD2Y1-6) as they constitute the civic engagement in environmental initiatives for my study within Asankrangwa Township. After exchanging pleasantries, the researcher introduced himself to the participants and provided a brief narrative about what the whole study was about. I also made it known to participants that they had the right to decline questions they are uncomfortable with or stop the discussion.

I encouraged each participant to feel free to share their views. Again, I asked for their permission to record the discussions with my mobile phone. Once the interview started, I used my semi-structured interview guide as a moderation instrument for the discussions, to prevent participants from straying away from the boundaries of the discussion. I also wrote down notes in my notepad as the discussions and interviews were ongoing. Overall, the focus group discussions were conducted in a cordial and relaxing setting. Therefore, participants had the opportunity to express themselves fully. Focus group discussions enabled the researcher to collect rich and detailed data from participants on their experiences on civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the resident youth in Asankrangwa within a short space of time (Daymon & Hallaway, 2011). It also gave the researcher the opportunity to have in-depth

knowledge and insight into the experiences and ideas of the participants on civic engagement in environmental practices of the youth in Asankrangwa.

3.8.3 Document Analysis

In addition to the focus group discussions and interviews, the researcher analyzed documents. As a data collection method, after the interview sessions and the focus group discussions, a participant from the environmental health department gave the researcher documents that consisted of civic engagement in environmental initiatives that the department had conducted over a three year period (2021-2023). Document analysis, according to Daymon and Holloway (2011), is especially useful for qualitative case studies that seek to generate a thorough description.

I reviewed the official documents released by the environmental health department after carefully checking the source of the document, content and date. Also, I read through the documents several times to identify the objectives, content and recommendations of the documents that explain the research issue. These include the report on sanitation guard phase one (2023), environmental health department report (2021) and environmental health department report (2022). Also, I compared the reports and documents to establish a relationship to the study. The documents were used in this study because they were current and contained written text of civic engagement in environmental initiatives the Municipal Assembly has embarked on from 2021 to June, 2023. The documents were added to provide information that might not have been provided during the discussion session or may contain information that placed more emphasis on the information collected during the interview session. Thus, Daymon and Holloway (2011) assert that documents can be a rich base of comprehensive primary or supplementary data than interviews conducted over a short time period.

Document analysis provided a rich understanding of how civic engagement contributes to environmental sustainability within a community. By systematically reviewing and analyzing different types of documents, I uncover the ways in which civic engagement and environmental groups influence policy, engage the public, and overcome challenges in their efforts to promote sustainability. This method allow the researcher to triangulate data from various sources, leading to comprehensive and robust conclusions.

3.9 Data Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis was conducted using Voyant Tools software to analyze the information gathered from the interview sessions, focus group discussions, and documents. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), thematic analysis is a technique for finding, examining, and presenting patterns (themes) in data. Creswell (2013) indicated that a researcher's interpretation and commentary on the gathered data constitute another step in the thematic analysis process. In embarking on the interpretative process, I looked out for issues raised in the transcribed data and the documents, how these issues were related to one another and to other literature, and then meanings were drawn based on the theory underpinning the study. This study also employed a thematic analysis approach to interpret the findings and draw meanings from responses from participants. Direct quotations were also used to support the interpretations and discussions.

The first step of the analysis involved the transcription of the recorded data. I did this by continuously playing the recording back and forth to get the exact responses given by the participants during the focus group discussions and the interview sessions. I read through the documents and interview transcripts several times looking out for trends and patterns that ran through the data collected and also to ensure that in-depth and

direct quotations were given to support the detailed descriptions when it came to discussions of the specific research questions. Afterward, all responses and sections of the documents, which were considered irrelevant were either merged with others or discarded. This enabled me to clean the data and make it wholesome for further analysis.

The second stage involved the coding of all relevant materials. I started with detailed open coding, progressing through stages of coding such as focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding (Gurun & Jnanathapaswi, 2021). Codes were also assigned to participants to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Participants were identified with pseudonyms instead of real names. Thus, participants' identities were coded. The one-on-one interview participants were named PT1 and PT2. The focus group participants were referred to as (FGD1Y1-6 and FGD2Y1-6). Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) added that segmenting and reassembling the data are the two steps in the coding process, the research questions and purpose are taken into consideration when performing the segmentation and reassembling of the data. Data coding creates categories, which allowed for further interpretations, and generates a theoretical understanding of the subject under study. After transcription, an analysis was performed by identifying emerging themes relevant to the research. These themes were interpreted, explained, and consequently related to the theory revealed in the literature regarding civic engagement in environmental initiatives.

In bracketing my biases, I would like to state emphatically that I have never worked in the civic or environmental sector before. Therefore, I do not have any preconceptions about civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa, nor do I have any biases against the assembly and the youth, which could have affected the way I analyzed and interpreted the data. I am just a student researcher whose desire is to investigate

civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa and how civic engagement in environmental initiatives would contribute to sustainability of the physical environment.

3.9.1 Transferability

Transferability is the state in which knowledge gained in one context affects knowledge gained in another. This can be advantageous, as in the case of learning a behaviour that makes learning another habit easier (Korstjens & Albine Moser, 2018). The findings from civic engagement efforts on environmental sustainability are not only effective locally; philanthropic initiatives such as participation in sanitation exercises and supporting local initiatives are adopted and applied to other settings facing similar challenges (Norman & King, 2020). This process ensures that the insights from the study are both relevant and effective in a new, diverse context. Future researchers will be able to understand how environmental sustainability is promoted in Ghana through civic engagement in environmental initiatives thanks to the methodology employed in this work.

3.9.2 Dependability

To ensure the dependability of the research process, the researcher used a variety of data collection methods, sources of data, detailed descriptions of research design and analysis, recording of participants' responses and taking field notes (Creswell, 2013). In order to improve steady, trustworthy, steadfast, faithful, and responsible data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, researchers use a variety of data collection approaches (interviews, document and focus group discussion) combined with triangulation (Norman & King, 2020). Insights from interviews are cross verified with focus group discussions and reports to improve participants' responses.

3.9.3 Conformability

Prior to following the studies direct protocols, I will first take honesty into consideration. I determined the research area, sample size, and research questions in order to ascertain or test the conformability of the data or the research generally. I conducted counterchecks with research participants and procedures to verify data conformance. In order to ensure clarity, I created a semi structured interview guide that is easy to understand and helps me obtain answers that align with the goals and objectives of the study. I advised participants to address the face value of the questions asked and not their personal opinions. Also, as articulated by Creswell (2013), I recorded the interviews and preserved the field notes to keep audit trails of the research.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

According to Halai (2006), good research is morally and ethically concerned with making sure that study participants did not suffer any harm as a result of the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the expectations regarding consent and information sharing. The option to accept or reject being interviewed was presented to the participants. With their assent, each participant committed to taking part in the interviews and focus group discussions. I recorded everything that was said during the discussions on my phone, but only after getting everyone's permission.

The anonymity of the participants was maintained. During the fieldwork, all forms of identification, such as the names and phone numbers of the participants, were deliberately omitted. Participants were identified with pseudonyms instead of real names.

In terms of authenticity, Macdonald, (2008) as cited in Daymon and Holloway (2011) avers that “if a document is genuine, complete, and reliable and of unquestioned

authorship, then it can be said to be authentic” (p. 281). Daymon and Holloway (2011) posit that credibility is concerned with whether a document is free from error or distortion. The authors suggested that to be assured of the credibility of a document, the researcher needs to ask questions such as who produced the document, why, when, for whom and in what context.

The documents used for this study were given to the researcher by the management of the environmental health department which contained civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the environmental health department, the researcher believed that data from these documents are complete, genuine and reliable.

3.11 The Credibility of the Study

In order to make the study's findings more understandable, I made sure that the interviewees understood the questions asked of them and that their responses matched the questions exactly, as well as the research's intended objectives and goals. I also carefully evaluated the data, revisited the methodology, and reexamined the analysis and interpretation. All of the data were kept confidential. Member checking was another method I used to make the study's findings understandable. It involved giving interviewees a copy of their responses so they could confirm their answers. Additionally, the participation of peer reviewers and subject matter experts remained relevant (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Even much more essential was the value of complying with the requirements laid down by University of Education, Winneba with respect to this research which was observed fully.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The chapter discusses the procedures and processes that were employed to gather data for the research. The research adopted a qualitative approach anchored in a descriptive

case study design to obtain detailed information on civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa. Multiple data collection methods, including interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, were used to gather the data. Additionally, rationalization was provided for each choice of method used. The chapter also discusses the research approach, research design, sampling technique and size, data collection methods, data collection processes, the method of data analysis, and ethical considerations.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from the data collected from Asankrangwa and resident youth leaders of environmental clubs. The chapter analyses the documents, interviews and focus group discussions sessions with fourteen (14) participants which explored their understanding, motivations and perceptions about the research issue to obtain detailed information from participants' responses. In order to ensure the interviewees' anonymity, the researcher used codes to represent the participants. Participants were identified with pseudonyms instead of real names. Having had focus group discussions and interview sessions with participants as well as documentary analysis, it also features the discussion of the findings in light of existing literature and theory.

The following research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

- a) What is the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa?
- b) What are the barriers to initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa?
- c) How does civic engagement affect sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa?

The findings of the study are presented in themes and sub-themes below. The anonymity of the participants was maintained. During the fieldwork, all forms of identification, such as the names and phone numbers of the participants, were deliberately omitted. Participants were identified with pseudonyms instead of real names. Thus, participants' identities were coded. The one-on-one interview participants

were named PT1 and PT2. The focus group participants were referred to as FGD1Y1-6 and FGD2Y1-6.

4.1 Current State of Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in

Asankrangwa

The first research question sought to investigate the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa. The data analysis process generated two major themes critical to the central question regarding the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability: Community Participation and Involvement as well as Government Policies and Support. Some sub-themes developed from each major theme. These sub-themes helped the researcher to examine the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. All the participants responded that civic engagement in environmental initiatives had declined when asked about the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Agyeman (2013) claimed that Ghanaians generally demonstrated a sense of commitment to the nation's civic engagement initiatives. The idea behind the decline in civic engagement in environmental initiatives varied among participants. Regardless of how participants explained the notion for the decline in civic engagement in environmental initiatives, the dominant understanding from all participant's response was *'citizens are much focused on income generated activities at the expense of their health than extending a helping hand by means of voluntarily solving some of the environmental needs of the community in which they live.'*

Gaventa and Barrett (2012) stated that over the years, the idea that civic engagement could contribute to improved governance and development outcomes had been mainstreamed in development policy and discourse. Yet despite the normative beliefs that underpinned this approach, the impact of participation on improved democratic and

developmental outcomes had proved difficult to assess. Nikitina et al. (2021) indicated that there had been a clear downward trend in youth participation in civic engagement processes and practices in recent decades. This had manifested in the low turnout of youth in civic engagement initiatives and a decrease in the number of members in youth environmental clubs.

4.1.1 Community Participation and Involvement

Community participation and involvement encompassed both conceptual and practical involvement of individuals or action groups actually interested in a decision or action that would lead to positive change. It was found that sustainability of local initiatives and practices, education and awareness programmes, collaborative decision making and cultural influence were the factors that determined the nature and level of communal participation and involvement.

4.1.1.1 Education and Awareness Programmes

The analysis of the current state of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability indicated that level of education and awareness of people in a community determined the achievement of environmental protection and conservation.

PT1 indicated that civic engagement in environmental initiatives consisted of components such as collection and sanitary disposal of wastes, disinfection or fumigation of public space and facilities, food safety and hygiene, monitoring and observance of environmental standards, inspection and enforcement of sanitary regulations, environmental sanitation education and control of stray animals. These components were categorized into two forms environmental protection and standard enforcement. PT1 also specified promoting civic engagement in environmental

initiatives as a complex effort that comprised of various strategies and approaches, by exploring the responses of PT1, these strategies and approaches included the following; education and training programmes, environmental club formation and advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, collaboration with stakeholders and innovative practices.

PT1 also indicated that the department drafted an annual report on monthly and quarterly activities that will be undertaken within the year. The report is then submitted to the municipal planning office for review, which is then incorporated into the municipal annual action plan which equally will be considered within the annual composite budget. When the budget and planning is sorted, the department undertakes the initiative and it is not all the initiatives that the assembly is able to sponsor or implement.

According to Winter (2020), there are a few difficulties to civic engagement in environmental initiatives, including inadequacy of follow-ups because of poor logistics and insufficient funding for community engagement initiatives.

Contrary to Winter's (2020) statement, PT1, in his opinion, explained that the department is committed to achieving and maintaining high standards. Therefore, the department focused more on civic engagement in environmental initiatives to improve the environment regardless of the challenges the department faces.

However, Bookchin (2007) contended that environmental sustainability could be threatened if there is a breach in civic engagement caused by institutional factors and declining participation. Furthermore, he clarified the relationship between ecological and social issues. He maintained, that human domination and destruction of nature occurred from social domination between humans. Once more, Schill (2017) stated that evolutionary cooperation and self-organization are the foundations of life. Furthermore, according to Herman (2018), students are more likely to start engaging in civic life if

they have the free time to do so or if they believe that being involved in such an environmental activity will benefit them.

FGD1Y1, FGD2Y3 and FGD2Y6 specified that;

the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability practices in Asankrangwa is very appalling because we practice indiscriminate ways of disposing waste, people are building in water ways, the channels of waterbodies within the township have not been properly constructed and they are not dredged periodically this affects the inhabitants, little efforts have been made to reduce environmental degradation which is caused by mining activities in the town and when gutters or drains are chocked it causes floods during the raining season (Field Data, 2023).

Even FGD1Y4 who was unsure, said

"I think peoples engagement in environmental initiatives in the past was better, because of national sanitation day even though I have no idea of the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability" (Field data, 2023). Only FGD2Y2 stated that "natural desaster can prevent people from achieving environmental sustainability" (Field Data, 2023).

In a whole, participants perceived financial constraints and inadequate support were to be largely consistent with the decline in civic engagement on environmental sustainability.

Also, FGD1Y6 detailed that;

"There is inadequate attendance, information and interpretation of community environmental projects" (FGD1Y6, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 explained that;

"In making efforts to raise environmental awareness they embark on series of educational and sensitization efforts; we form community environmental clubs. We also work with various local and international stakeholders such as F.A BESSEY Enterprise and EDCOWD COMPANY LTD. They were selected to push and level refuse at the final disposal site and "galamsey" pits for reclamation. Also, Zoomlion Ghana limited, Global Community (GC) and Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme developed and implemented environmental conservation strategies, by employing sanitation guards and giving leadership roles to community members to address environmental issues" (PT1, Field data, 2023).

This is consistent with Owusu's (2020) explanation that the goal of deliberative democratic citizenship education is to enable all Ghanaian citizens to freely and equally participate in a variety of activities where they could express their opinions through argumentation and provide support for the positions they took. Furthermore, Alcantar (2017) asserts that universities had an unquestionable capacity and obligation to help students develop their civic engagement skills. According to Hollstein and Smith (2020), more work had to be done to influence curriculum modifications at all levels of education in order to guarantee that educational models that prioritise environmental concerns were encouraged and seen as civic duties that should be adhered to. Also, Valley (2021) pointed out that civic engagement on environmental sustainability is a method of instruction that facilitates learning by having students apply the knowledge and skills they have learnt and make connections between the lessons and their own experiences and communities.

4.1.1.2 Cultural Influence

Cultural beliefs, practices and traditions influences the current state of civic engagement in environmental initiatives. FGD2Y1 also gave examples that cultural practices in the past such as sweeping the compound and attending community sanitation exercises was a priority in most households unlike the poor attitudes by families to educate children on impact of environmental sustainability.

FGD1Y1 and FGD2Y5 also specified that,

“We need a mouth piece, we have chieftaincy dispute and currently we don't have a chief. If there was a chief, the assembly can coordinate with him to bring citizens on board and give directives on the mode of civic engagement on environmental activities to be undertaken within the town. In the absence of a chief everyone does what he or she likes. Also, the chief can solicit for national support and investment to the community” (Field Data, 2023).

The best kinds of civic engagement must continue to be responsive to circumstances that foster inequality and injustice, according to Holley (2016). Inequitable access to meaningful civic engagement opportunities could lead to inequitable participation and consequently, unjust investments, conditions, and outcomes. Engagement work could not be isolated from the larger cultural, political, and socio-economic context in a community.

FGD1Y2 and FGD1Y5 stated that;

“Some community leaders engage in land degradational activities such as mining within the community” (Field Data, 2023).

This is in line with Herman's (2018) assertion that, by forming partnerships with non-civically engaged community members, institutions could encourage civic behaviours and spark action. In order to make people understand one another's interests and bring them all into common counsel, we must also eliminate miscommunications, hostilities, and deadly rivalries (Agyeman, 2013).

This contrasts with the claim made by Asante (2020) that individuals would gladly discuss topics of public concern in casual settings but appear hesitant to approach state officials about them. There is a contrast between this noncommunicative attitude towards state institutions and state employees and higher involvement in customary and religious institutions as well as higher levels of interaction with leaders in these domains. This demonstrates a non-formal method of civic participation. According to Bookchin (2007), the social ecology theory posits that the foundation of social ecology is the belief that a significant portion of the current ecological issues stem from entrenched social issues.

4.1.1.3 Collaborative Decision Making

The is in adequate demographic representation considering the involvement of diverse demographic groups, ensuring representation from different age groups, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

FGDIY4 stated that;

“The poor and marginalized are sidelined when dealing with civic engagement on environmental sustainability” (FGDIY4, Field Data, 2023).

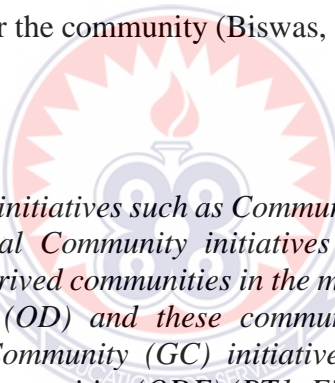
According to Asante (2020), a proper theory of citizenship and civic activism must take into account the ways in which civic actions are based in order to enhance citizens' adaptable relationship with the state and their willingness to retreat when called upon. This result is consistent with the claim made by Paton and Spear (2010) that deliberate efforts were made to elicit participation from a broad range of stakeholders foster, community consensus, guarantee a more equitable allocation of costs and benefits and enable representative decision-making that would take into account the interests of all stakeholders. However, the description of civic engagement used in this study defined as a commitment to act morally and support environmental sustainability while enhancing the physical environment and the community (Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership, 2007). The Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership (2007) defines civic engagement as a broad concept that encompasses social, economic, and environmental responsibilities that society expects individuals and organisations to be aware of.

Although there were similarities in the responses from the participants on the declined state of civic engagement in environmental initiatives, PT1 in his explanation acknowledged the fact that the community acquired tangible and intangible benefits from civic engagement in environmental initiatives, hence it is mandatory for the

department to bring citizens on board as a way to pay their quota, as little as it may be, to improve environmental conditions in the community.

This result confirms the definition of civic engagement in relation to environmental initiatives as "a voluntary activity focused on helping others, achieving a public good or solving a community problem, including work undertaken either alone or in cooperation with others in order to effect change" according to Zani and Barrett (2012, p. 274). This relates to the social ecology theory's postulate, which asserted that a community and its environment had a contract. As a result, in order to achieve environmental sustainability, society must provide the necessary human, material, and legal resources. The community members must ensure that the physical environment is clean, safe, and healthy for the community (Biswas, 2020).

Also, PT1 stated that;



For instance, with initiatives such as Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and Global Community initiatives the aim is to provide latrines within deprived communities in the municipality that practice Open Defecation (OD) and these communities after undergoing through Global Community (GC) initiatives were declared Open Defecation free communities (ODF) (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This affirms Bodin's (2017) argument that inadequate understanding of complex ecosystem and societal dynamics, a large number of stakeholders, and the permeability of man-made political and jurisdictional demarcations in relation to the temporal and spatial extent of biophysical processes make ecosystem management difficult. Once more, Bodin (2017) claimed that under these circumstances, collaborative governance was frequently proposed as the best way to deal with environmental issues.

PT1 also specified that;

Government of Ghana in collaboration with community water also brought an initiative that was called digging use were community members were provided with portable latrines or guided to construct their own latrines with local materials and provision of water for

deprived and communities living in waterlogged areas (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 detailed that;

“Environmental health department worked with Zoomlion Ghana Limited to conduct fumigation exercises and provision of sanitary and waste bins to various households” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This result supports the claim made by Addai et al. (2012) that civic engagement was the process of engaging more frequently and meaningfully with other stakeholders regarding civic issues, with the goal of strengthening and uniting the nation's civic community. In order to achieve sustainable development and environmental dimensions, Hollstein and Smith (2020) linked civic engagement to institutional obligation to be accountable to all its stakeholders in all operations and activities. According to Hollstein and Smith (2020), societies should align their interests with factors that promote civic engagement and its effects on the environmental sustainability of their society in order to achieve collaboration and partnership. Social ecology is the study of human-environment interactions, particularly the interdependence of individuals and institutions (Biswas, 2020). According to Aggarwal (2023), social ecology is a philosophical theory that examines the connection between ecological and social issues. According to Hollstein and Smith (2020), societies are not able to resolve all of their problems; environmental sustainability is crucial, just like civic engagement; positive environmental sustainability is a reward for a society's ability to survive; and it is advantageous if society works in partnership and collaboration with the environment.

4.1.1.4 Sustainability of local Initiatives and Practices

For the researcher to fully understand the current state of civic engagement in environmental initiatives, all participants were asked to list the activities that require

civic engagement in environmental initiatives. The participants indicated that civic engagement in environmental initiatives composed of quarterly fumigation, regulation pollution, dislodgment of latrines and sewage, safe collection and disposal of waste, clean up exercise, community environmental health inspection, Health promotion and hygiene sensitization, food hygiene and safety, domicile inspection, water and sanitation, industrial inspection of premises and control of stray animals.

Extract from civic engagement on environmental sustainability reports of the Amenfi West Municipal Environmental Health Department

Major civic engagement in environmental initiatives carried out by the department within the period of 2021 to April 2023 include the following: domicile inspections, waste bin container site visit, public sensitization, issuance of medical certificates, public education, enforcement of sanitary laws, collection of environmental health data, hygiene and environmental education promotional activities, and monitoring and supervision of environmental sanitation services (report on sanitation guard phase one April, 2023).

During the discussion, the researcher realized that environmental initiatives listed reflected the activities that require civic engagement in environmental initiatives. That is, civic engagement in environmental initiatives listed by all the participants were philanthropic in nature and skewed towards improving the physical and social environmental needs of the community.

According to Pulla (2014), because philanthropy has become embedded in African culture, it typically shows up more in civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Africa than the other dimensions. According to him, organisations and individuals in African communities view environmental needs as so great that giving back to the environment is expected. Pulla (2014) asserted that civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the environmental health department revolves around the physical and social needs of the community. Document analysis of the reports on civic engagement in environmental initiatives supported this claim. Pulla (2014) explained that aspects

that highlight interrelatedness of civic engagement on environmental sustainability include the following: civic engagement on environmental sustainability share common goals of promoting the well-being and long-term health of communities. civic engagement on environmental sustainability aims to protect and preserve natural resources and ecosystems ensuring their availability for present and future generations. In line with Pulla's (2014) assertion, documents analysis of the civic engagement on environmental sustainability reports showed that civic engagement in environmental initiatives of Amenfi West Municipal Environmental Health Department orbits around environmental needs of the community.

PT1 stipulated that;

“In the past we conduct national sanitation day exercises every month, we also conduct “E-Tankers” we are making enough efforts to curb environmental challenges but due to in adequate logistics we have not been able to reach out extensively to the community” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

Also, PT1 asserted that ever since the E-tankers policy was imposed with the idea of improving the activities of environmental health, the department finds it difficult to execute this initiative due to excessive influence and interference from community members which led to its neglect. Towah (2019) claimed that active governance, effective governance and fair governance were essential for promoting the current state of civic engagement in environmental initiatives. Therefore, in order for the individual and institutional value system to correspond with that of the state, the individual and institutions are bound to adhere to these legislations, as the state will jail or revoke their license if it senses any form of rebellion from the institutions.

FGD1Y5 detailed that;

“As youthful members of the community we need to ensure self-discipline, we need to set goals for ourselves and even if no one is looking you still go by our rules. Cleanliness is a general thing we should not wait to be told” (FGD1Y5, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y3 and FGD2Y4 detailed that;

In order to improve the current state of civic engagement in environmental initiatives the assembly and various stakeholders need to ensure enough advocacy is done for citizens to be properly informed about the need for civic engagement in environmental initiatives (Field Data, 2023).

This supports the claim made by Logan et al. (2021) that community policy and advocacy are concerned with increasing public knowledge of problems and support for particular causes or policies that seek to effect change. Our understanding of the ways in which people already engage in these vital but unpaid contributions to the common good on a daily basis is a necessary prerequisite for fostering and building support for civic engagement in environmental initiatives. Additionally, advocates have expressed concern over a lack of information regarding who engages in civic engagement, how much they contribute, in what formats, and what the results are, according to (Logan et al., 2021). Understanding who participates, why they do so, and under what circumstances is a basis for encouraging civic participation and volunteerism effectively.

FGD2Y3 specified that;

the market is unkept especially during and after market days the litters are left on the roads (FGD2Y3, Field Data, 2023).

According to Colliver (2011), the organisations that control human activity as well as patterns of human use of the environment contribute to the global decline in ecosystem health. Numerous social issues and policy topics have been studied using the notion of social ecology theory (Stojanovic, 2016). The relationship between social justice, environmental sustainability, and how to resolve these problems is acknowledged by social ecology theory.

4.1.2 Government Policies and Support

Government policies and support involve principles, guidelines, or rules established by a government aimed at fostering sustainable practices and community involvement. This involved the following: motivation and value, policy implementation gaps and innovation and technology adoption.

4.1.2.1 Policy Implementation Gaps

There are gaps or challenges within the current state of civic engagement that has to be highlighted during implementation of environmental policies at the local level, and how this impact civic engagement on environmental sustainability.

PT1 indicated that;

“there is a lot of environmental policies that needs to be effectively implemented devoid of any external and internal influences” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y4, FGD2Y6, and FGD2Y2 also supported PT1’s claim that, with regards to sanitation the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability is bad but I see the assembly putting efforts, it is on our path to also try and help by putting in much efforts to improve the state of the environment, cleanliness is something that has to do with the condition of the mind, I should not wait for someone to tell me what to do.

Extract from environmental health and sanitation department 2022 reports of the Amenfi West Municipal Environmental health department

In addressing environmental challenges, the department takes into consideration the geographical distribution of the area such as; age dependency ratio, population size, growth rate and distribution, demographic and water distribution situation in the municipality in annual action plan (environmental health and sanitation department annual report, 2022).

PT1 asserted that;

Decisions are made in correlation to drafted action plans and the outcomes of our annual reports, where measures are taken to address various weakness (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

Nevertheless, disruptive power dynamics operating across the individual, interpersonal, and structural levels reproduce inequities. This supports Roura's (2020) assertion that social ecology is based on the idea that experiential and academic sources of knowledge should be equally weighted and combined to contribute to a fairer allocation of environmental resources.

PT1 indicated that;

In working towards ensuring a long-term sustainability of the environmental projects, we assign sanitation guards and field officers who frequently visit the community and come with reports solutions to challenges are included in our annual drafted budget to be addressed (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

Extract from environmental health department annual report on 2021 of the Amenfi West Municipal Environmental health department

Activities undertaken during the period 2021 included the following premises inspection, control of stray animals, meat and slaughter slab hygiene, market sanitation programme (MSP), health and hygiene education programmes, waste management, household toilet facilities coverage in the municipality between 2019 and 2021, food hygiene, maintenance of refuse dump sites and clean-up activities (environmental health department annual report, 2021).

Extract from environmental health department annual report 2022 of the Amenfi West Municipal Environmental health department

Monitoring activities undertaken under the period 2022 included the following; waste management, clean up campaigns, premises inspection, vector control, health promotion and sensitization, slaughtering of animals at slaughter house or slab, water supply, institutional sanitation, waste management, clean up campaigns, household toilet facilities coverage in the municipality between 2019 and 2022, premises inspection vector control, health promotion and sensitization, water supply (rural and urban), institutional sanitation, liquid waste and disposal, food handlers test (environmental health department annual report, 2022).

This is in with the claim made by Action Plan Ghana (2015) that Ghana's action plans, past and present, have committed to giving citizens the chance to participate in both local and national governance because they understand the importance of civic engagement for the country's democracy and development process. In this context, Bookchin (2006) suggested that social ecology offers ethical guidelines for supplanting a society's inclination towards dominance and hierarchy with democracy and freedom. Extract from environmental health department annual report from 2021 to April 2023 of the Amenfi West Municipal Environmental health department

From the period of 2021 to April 2023, sanitation guard submitted a report on the sanitation guard programme (end of phase one). The major activities sanitation guard assisted environmental health officers to carry out within the period under consideration included the following container site visitation, public sensitization, domicile inspection, public sensitization, issuance of medical certificates, public education, enforcement of sanitary laws, collection of environmental health data, hygiene and education promotional activities, and monitoring and supervision of environmental sanitation services (report on sanitation guard phase one April, 2023).

This is consistent with Rossi and Dodman's (2016) argument that people, communities, and institutions can work towards a more integrated and all-encompassing approach to sustainability by realising and embracing the interconnectedness of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. According to Barrett et al. (2014), there is a growing interest in making sure that citizens are effectively involved in the decision-making process when it comes to various policies. This brings us back to the social ecology theory's central principle, according to which there is a social compact between society and the environment and that almost all of the ecological issues we face today have their origins in long-standing social issues.

FGD1Y1 affirmed that;

The youth are doing well, we have two environmental youth associations one of which is “Asankrangwa youth Association”. we have emulated efforts from other youthful members from other parts of the county some of us have adopted the attitude of joining communities who are organizing environmental initiatives or cleanup exercises as a form of support (FGD1Y1, Field Data, 2023).

This is resonated with the claim made by Barrett et al. (2014) that the participatory approach is thought to be the most successful way to involve people in the creation of policies. Comprehending the distinctions between civic engagement and environmental development in terms of participation, voice, accountability, and responsiveness has become essential. According to Hendricks (2019), civic engagement has become essential for raising awareness of issues pertaining to community-related activities, policy-making, and governance. Bookchin (2007) asserts that democratic processes, as opposed to administrative ones, are what link human communities together. He offers an evolutionary theory of human nature that integrates social and biological aspects. Once more, Bookchin (2006) claimed that social ecology offers moral guidelines for displacing a society's inclination towards dominance and hierarchy with democracy and freedom (Biswas, 2020). Social ecology is the study of human-environment interactions.

FGD1Y2 and FGD2Y3 explained that;

With illegal mining much monitoring and evaluation needs to be done to curb activities of illegal mining. When the mining sites are deserted, they become traps, some are water locked and others become busy and when you see the places you might think it's a firm ground only for people or animals to pass through and get stuck which is life threatening, some animals lost their lives (Field Data, 2023).

FGD2Y1 asserted that;

We should be each other's keeper with support from the chiefs and the assembly when you see someone indiscriminately disposing waste you insist on ensuring that the person does the right thing (FGD2Y1, Field Data, 2023).

As per the principles of social ecology theory, individuals who recognise and assist communities with their human and environmental requirements are considered to be part of the social ecology. According to Lejano and Stokols (2013), the foundation of social ecology theory is the belief that a community should act with awareness of the law, accepted ethical standards, and the environment.

FGD1Y4 stated that;

the youth are handicap, the activities of illegal mining is so close to households just within the community and we are not able to complain. When mining activities started in our community, they were done in the forest but now the activities are done within where we reside, mining activities have degraded the landscape and causing all forms of pollution and we cannot confront or do anything about it because our leaders are involved (FGD1Y4, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y4 also specified that;

Early this year, we embarked on a peaceful demonstration twice “stop galamsey and indiscriminate disposal of waste” we did but it did not yield any results, If the sub chiefs and elders have commissioned someone to do something, who are we to stop them (FGD1Y4, Field Data, 2023).

This result supports the claim made by Logan et al. (2021) that the modes of participation include going to community meetings, collaborating with others to bring up issues, getting in touch with representatives of the government or civil society, and participating in community or volunteer associations.

At this level, social ecology, according to Wildenberg (2005), refers to the actions of governing bodies that advance the welfare of people and the environment. This result is consistent with the social ecology theory, which emphasises the necessity of establishing a moral, decentralised, cohesive society that is directed by reason. Government regulations undoubtedly have a significant impact on a large number of people and guarantee that they behave legally and in accordance with legal principles.

Contrary to Logan et al. (2021) assertion FGD1Y3 specified that, the community leaders mostly when given verbal suggestions, they do not take them seriously since we can contact the environmental health department, we can write to the department and also use the local media for the appropriate measures to be taken into consideration.

4.1.2.2 Motivation and Value

Motivational initiatives that focused on building the capacity of local communities to gain value through training programs, workshops, and educational campaigns to enhance their understanding of environmental issues and sustainable practices are aspects that the current state of civic engagement has to be improved.

PT1 asserted that;

“The assembly has inadequate financial incentives to motivate people to participate in civic engagement in environmental initiatives” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

According to Bennett (2022), communities may encounter a number of participation barriers that hinder the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability. These barriers include inadequate time, disability or impairment, mistrust, low digital capability, privacy concerns or discrimination, language barriers, internet access, financial strain, education level, and location. Higher earners are less inclined to engage in activism (Zanbar et al., 2019). Moreover, Chawla (2007) noted that people are more likely to stay involved with the environment when they get information in response to what they do; social ecology, which situates people and the environment in a shared space, explains the environmental context of action and development. Once more, Chawla (2007) claimed that perception and behaviour of individuals and stakeholders aid in identifying environmental elements that are

functionally significant for preserving environmental awareness and producing favourable results.

Also, FGD1Y5 specified that we need to work on our responsibility to pay for our waste to be collected and issues of waste management will not become a problem.

FGD1Y5 asserted that;

The assembly is putting much effort currently to broadcast on issues of sanitation on radio stations, also the assembly distributed waste bins and people were asked to pay an amount for collection and disposal of their refuse at the end of the month, the compliance rate was very high but it has dwindled (FGD1Y5, Field Data, 2023).

Also, FGD1Y5, FGD2Y6 and FGD1Y2 stated that because of unemployment the youth are willing to risk everything for money even to the point of degrading the land.

This is resonated with Lambon's (2021) claim that the media needs to be much more assertive in leading conversations on policy and governance that are meant to encourage civic engagement in the nation. It also urges stakeholders to work together to address the main issues preventing the media from carrying out its mandate. Additionally, according to Media and Governance Series (2019), Ghana's media has always been a major force for development and change. According to Biswas (2020), social ecology used the model of a society that was adjusted to both environmental changes and human development in order to address issues related to both people and the environment.

According to Handy, Shier, and McDougale (2014), organisations that promote civic engagement in environmental initiatives fall into four categories, which are further divided into direct and indirect activities: enlisting the help of volunteers and donors, uniting the community, fostering collaborative engagement, education, and awareness.

It is important to remember that societal norms, values, and beliefs served as a driving force for civic engagement in environmental initiatives that address the social

environment among others. For example, PT2 asserted that initiatives such as community safety, employment and social support help improve Civic Education.

PT1 stated that;

some households do not have money to dislodge their excrement their compelled to practice open defecation subsidized cost for dislodging and disposal of household excrements is needed (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT2 stressed that they feel indebted to the community as such their willingness to do more for the community. However, PT1 revealed that the activities that promote civic engagement on environmental sustainability of the physical environment had been affected by political interferences and economic constraints; thereby, restricting civic engagement in environmental activities.

4.1.2.3 Inadequate Innovation and Technology

Inadequate innovation and technology imply that the existing technologies or innovative approaches are insufficient or not effectively meeting the needs and demands of the community or the objectives of the environmental initiatives. In the context of civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa, inadequate innovation and technology could manifest as a shortfall in the use of modern solutions, digital tools, or progressive methods that could enhance the efficiency, impact, and inclusivity of environmental projects. This inadequacy affects various aspects, including communication, community involvement, data analysis, and the overall effectiveness of efforts aimed at addressing environmental challenges.

PT1 detailed that;

The municipality do not have a treatment plant so every three months we use a machine to compact the waste it's called waste reduction this is to create enough room for dumping of waste (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This is in accordance with the claim made by Pesch, Spekkink, and Quist (2019) that the application of new product innovations, value chain solutions, and technological devices frequently entails identifying particular fields in which technology can play a transformative role and putting solutions in place to achieve a more responsible and efficient use of natural resources.

Also, PT1 indicated that;

The is absence of improved Sewage and treatment systems which can be interconnected to a treatment system (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

Green Innovation Policy Commission (2021) indicated that community members can engage in environmental initiatives by having access to local technological infrastructure and tools like internet connectivity, devices, and software. Additionally, innovative solutions like environmental monitoring tools could improve environmental efficiency. The affordability and accessibility of technological solutions is also important.

Again, PT1 specified that;

most households do not adopt the use of bio digester to reduce the high cost of dislodgement by septic emptier trucks (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This affirm the findings of Ntoa, Margetis, Antona, and Stephanidis (2022) regarding the necessity of making sure that the resources needed for participation are accessible, the development of platforms for community engagement such as websites or mobile apps that encourage participation from the community in environmental projects and disseminate knowledge about sustainable practices, and the use of technology to gather and analyse data in order to make well-informed decisions. Therefore, without a thorough understanding of the current state of our society and the irrationalities that permeate it, ecological problems cannot be comprehended, much less solved (Biswas,

2020). According to Lejano and Stokols (2013), social ecology is a framework designed to comprehend the various levels of society and the interactions that occur between people and their surroundings.

In summary, by aligning local community based efforts with the principles of social ecology such as decentralization, participatory democracy, and the integration of social and ecological systems civic initiatives can become powerful tools for fostering both environmental and social transformation. However, the full realization of social ecology's vision within civic engagement efforts requires addressing persistent social inequalities and navigating the tensions between local autonomy and the need for external support. By continuing to build on the strengths of civic engagement and addressing its challenges, communities can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world, in line with the holistic principles of social ecology (Brown, Jeanes, & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2013).

4.2 Barriers to Initiatives of the Youth and the Assembly in Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in Asankrangwa.

The second research question sought to examine the barriers to civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa. The data analyzed provided an understanding of two major barriers to civic engagement in Asankrangwa. These barriers were categorized into two themes; those that stem from within the individual (internal or psychological factors), and those that were from the external environment (physical factors). The themes were identified by exploring the responses of the participants that reflected the barriers to civic engagement in environmental initiatives. Several subthemes emerged from each major theme. These subthemes aided the researcher to examine how the individual barriers limited civic engagement in environmental initiatives. According to Barrett and Brunton-Smith (2014),

institutional, psychological, and demographic factors are the foundation of civic engagement.

4.2.1 Internal or Psychological Barriers/Factors

Psychological barriers are the inside compelling factors that inhibit the individual from participating, adopting and implementing civic engagement environmental initiatives. It was found that social norms and peer pressure, fear of consequences and low self-esteem were the internal factors that inhibit the individual from participating, adopting and implementing environmental initiatives.

4.2.1.1 Social Norms and Peer Pressure

The data analysis indicated that the internal or psychological barriers to civic engagement in environmental initiatives were mostly influenced by social norms and peer pressure. It is also worth noting that civic engagement has been discouraged by some community leaders and citizens leading to a reluctance to participate in environmental initiatives. Hence, the personal philanthropic intentions and values that inspired individuals to indulge in environmental initiatives, has been limited. Planning decisions are made in secret to avoid public backlash, so Thomas (2018) claimed that inappropriate accountability and mistrust about leaders discourage people from engaging in civic activities. People feel their opinions won't be heard, and there is no desire for the community to be involved.

FGD1Y3 asserted that the leaders and some of the residence of the community are unresponsive with regards to activities that causes land degradation because they are more focused on making a fortune which has strongly influence individual's decision to engage in environmentally sustainable activities. FGD1Y1 asserted that;

“some of us have adopted the attitude of joining communities who are organizing environmental initiatives or cleanup exercises as a form of

support, the leadership of Asankrangwa Youth Association have made several efforts in the form of letters and visit to the chiefs palace to meet with elders on issues of land degradation and nothing was done” (FGD1Y1, Field Data, 2023).

This affirms the claim made by Schusler and Krasny (2008) that removing obstacles to civic engagement requires a multifaceted strategy that includes efforts to increase the accessibility and reward of civic engagement in environmental initiatives, as well as educational programmes, community organising, better resource access, and representation of marginalised groups.

PT2 asserted that;

“The involvement of the youth in environmental activities is low due to the voluntary nature of most community environmental initiatives. Most of the youth are focused on income generating activities, also we live in a society where we do not question peoples’ sources of wealth, society hails wealthy people regardless of whether the source of their wealth pollute the environment” (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

Contrary to FGD1Y1 assertion that civic engagement in environmental initiatives had dwindled devoid of any internal or external influence, document analysis of the environmental health departments civic engagement in environmental initiatives showed that officers of the department as part of their civic engagement in environmental initiatives partnered with community members to form Asankrangwa youth recreational centre and recruited some members of the community to form environmental clubs, sanitation guards and fumigation workers.

Furthermore, the data also showed that some people make personal commitment of their own to improve the state of the environment within the community. The results support Arvanitidis's (2017) claim that civic engagement is defined as an attempt to directly address public concerns through one's own work, group efforts, or participation in democratic institutions. The results are consistent with Lejano and Stokols (2013), who used the sustainability dimensions of social ecology theory as a framework to

comprehend the various levels of society and the interactions between people and their surroundings. Additionally, a person's decision to participate in civic activities can be greatly influenced by social norms and peer pressure. In certain social circles or communities, civic engagement may be discouraged, which makes people reluctant to participate (Mischelle, Smith & Blevins, 2022).

4.2.1.2 Fear of Consequences

The data also revealed that fear of consequences played a very significant role as an internal factor for civic engagement in environmental initiatives. For example PT2 and FGD2Y4, indicated that participation in some civic engagement initiatives could be risky because violence can easily occur. Contrary to PT2 and FGD2Y4 assertion, FGD1Y6 stated that despite violent nature of some voluntary activities civic engagement improves conditions for all within society. Also, people's fear of negative outcomes like losing their jobs or facing harassment could prevent them from participating in some civic activities, which would be a major deterrent (Web Team, 2019). Moreover, engaging in civic life can occasionally be dangerous, especially in areas with authoritarian governments or in highly contentious environments (Ilona, 2021).

As part of civic activities that could be risky, participants from the youth listed advocacy, demonstration and protest, civil disobedience, online activism and starting a movement. Nevertheless, participants from the youth also indicated that they have been threatened by armed men whenever the youth association approach people whose activities degrade the land and some demonstrations resulted in violence.

FGD1Y4 stated that;

The youth associations has embarked on two demonstrations which nearly resulted in misunderstanding between the youth and community leaders (FGD1Y4, Field Data, 2023).

On their part, FGD1Y3 stated that some of our elders mostly when we give them verbal suggestions, they do not take them seriously. FGD1Y1 from the youth, in his opinion, attributed this to chieftaincy dispute and absence of a chief in the community. Therefore, their efforts were met with resistance and criticized by some community members. The youth also stressed that they are limited when it comes to addressing environmental issues, those who destroy the environment have connections and they are rich and little can be done to stop them.

FGD2Y6 indicated that;

“I don’t want to lose my source of livelihood and we don’t have what it takes to stop environmental degradation, we are only doing the little that we can to improve environmental conditions” (FGD2Y6, Field Data, 2023).

This confirms the findings of Flanagan, Gallay, and Pykett (2021) that a number of obstacles, including fears of being arrested, fines, losing one's job, personal safety, reputational harm, and family concerns, can prevent people from actively engaging in civic engagement in environmental initiatives. These obstacles may differ according to context, culture, geographical location, time restraints, socioeconomic differences, language barriers, and access to technology and information.

4.2.1.3 Low Self-Esteem

Aside the above-mentioned internal factors, FGD1Y1-6 asserted that self-esteem, or an individual's belief in their ability to make a difference, is a critical psychological factor affecting civic engagement, individuals with low self-esteem may feel that their actions are inconsequential, leading them to abstain from participating in environmental activities. According to Cooper (2023), a lot of people don't know about opportunities for civic engagement or how to get involved. A lot of people are also afraid to

participate because they don't want to appear unwise or ignorant. Finally, even among those who are aware, not everyone knows why participation is important, which causes reluctance.

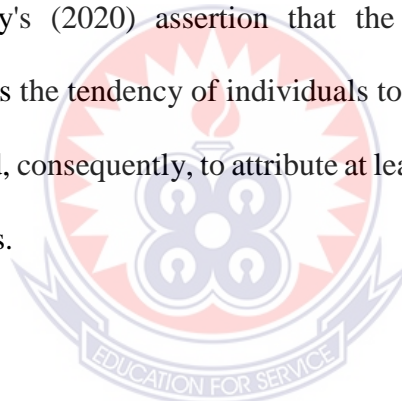
PT2 indicated that;

“Most community members especially women do not really have the courage to participate in environmental initiatives, this is predominantly because they do not believe in their ability to make a change” (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y2 specified that;

Some people have self-doubts and struggle to make choices, especially when they are faced with unfamiliar situations or in the mist of people with different backgrounds (FGD1Y2, Field Data, 2023).

This supports Longley's (2020) assertion that the success of civic engagement programmes determines the tendency of individuals to perceive themselves as integral members of society and, consequently, to attribute at least some of the causes of societal problems to themselves.



PT2 stated that;

The fear of failure and feeling of being inferior leads to people isolating themselves from participating in civic engagement in environmental initiatives (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

This resonates with the claim made by Garcia, Lamb, and Chapel (2022) that individuals require civic values to enable them to share beliefs among community members in order to guide their behaviour; these values also include the active participation and engagement of the community or society.

FGD1Y6 specified that;

“Some of us before we started participating in environmental initiatives, I use to focus more on the mistakes of my actions if I should engage in any civic activity” (FGD1Y6, Field Data, 2023).

This finding synchronizes with Tufte and Enghel (2009) claim that public participation in environmental initiatives influences people's views and actions. Additionally, Lawford and Ramey (2017) noted that civic engagement in environmental initiatives sets the tone for participation by increasing opportunities for people to reflect on their own capacity, care for future generations, and immediate and positive opportunities for youth to benefit their own community. According to Schill (2017), people can gain a deeper understanding of the intricate connections between society and the environment by incorporating social ecology principles into education and sensitization programmes. This can help people make more informed and sustainable decisions and actions. Furthermore, Kyburz-Graber et al. (1997) stated that socio-ecological approaches to environmental education recognise that education is a part of societal processes leading to a sustainable society. Also, Stojanovic (2016) clarified that social ecology promotes formation and advocacy efforts that are essential to addressing environmental challenges in an equitable and comprehensive way, resulting in significant change both within and outside of the community.

4.2.2 External or Physical Barriers/Factors

The data identified four key external themes that inhibit the participation, adoption and implementation of sustainable environmental initiatives. They include inadequate time, socioeconomic factors, inadequate information and inappropriate accountability.

4.2.2.1 Inadequate Time

Externally, all participants revealed that inadequate time did, in fact, influence their choice of participation, adoption and implementation of sustainable environmental initiatives. PT2, FGD2Y2 and FGD2Y5 asserted that people often find it difficult to allocate time for work, family, and personal commitments while also participating in

community environmental activities; as such, there are regulations that they comply with. All ten participants mentioned that allocating time for participation, adoption and implementation of civic engagement in environmental initiatives has been a difficult task. For example FGD1Y3 asserted that;

“Older, retired persons, disabled and women with children who are participating in welfare programs may simply be unable to commit time to civic engagement especially in situations where participants are required to meet at strategic location regularly” (FGD1Y3, Field Data, 2023).

Document analysis of the environmental health department showed that management of the department design their civic engagement in environmental initiative programmes and projects to suit the age dependency ratio, demographic characteristics, population size and distribution, resource allocation, water distribution situation and facilities of a specific number or group of people in a geographical area.

PT1 and FGD2Y1 noted that, work and family responsibilities, as well as the intensive nature of environmental activities, can deter individuals from participating. This correspond to the findings of Kanemura, McGarvey, and Farrow (2023) that time is the primary resource used in volunteering and service behaviours. Time is a finite, distinct commodity because it is limited and typically devoted to only one activity at a time; therefore, decisions about whether to engage in an activity or, in other cases, which activity to engage in suggest that time is not free. Individual scale of preferences or options for the use of their time; preferences frequently come into play when individuals are considering several options for how to spend their free time (Kanemura et al., 2023).

PT2 indicated that;

For people to participate in civic engagement in environmental initiatives they consider their knowledge, abilities and skills, if individuals' skill does not qualify to participate in certain activities, they will not be any effort to contribute (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

The PT2 further explained that civic engagement in environmental initiatives is time consuming because it takes a considerable amount of time and some environmental initiatives require certain essential skills, which could be a barrier for individuals to participate in civic engagement in environmental initiatives.

Bennett (2022) asserts that civic engagement provides a means for all members of the community to participate in decisions that impact their lives. In contrast with, Southby, South, and Bagnall (2019) assertion that insufficient skills can create a concern among potential volunteers that they will not be able to participate in environmental initiatives from the outset, which can pose significant barriers to civic engagement. Holley (2016) stated that civic engagement in environmental initiatives is more than just a set of practices; it also involves a set of conditions. Also, Som and Fredua (2015) supported Southby, South, and Bagnall (2019) assertion, by indicating that technical capacity at all levels, particularly in environmental sanitation; improve the creation of awareness and education on environmental health issues are diversity of policies, law practices, and initiatives that needs to be enhancement. Moreover, according to Biswas (2020), Bookchin's social ecology offers moral guidelines for substituting a society's inclination towards dominance and hierarchy with one of democracy and freedom. According to Bookchin (2006), social ecology theory addresses how people interact with the physical environment and how these interactions can be measured, as well as the conscious, moral, and logical nature of environmental care.

4.2.2.2 Socioeconomic barriers/Factors

The data again revealed that aside the above-mentioned external factor civic engagement in environmental initiatives was mostly influenced by socioeconomic factors. FGD2Y6 revealed that people with lower income levels may face financial barriers that limit their ability to engage in activities that require resources or take time

away from work. Additionally, people from underprivileged or marginalised communities might not have access to the education and opportunities necessary to know about opportunities for civic engagement (Bennett, 2022). Ngesu, Gakuru, Gunga, and Kahigi (2013) found that low morale, a high unemployment rate, and a high cost of living all had a negative impact on community participation. Limited funds may make it more difficult to plan events or create platforms for civic engagement. Limited resources can also affect community engagement initiatives. These resources can be human, financial or physical. Insufficient personnel or volunteers could restrict outreach initiatives, which would lower public participation (Hoang, 2013).

PT2 indicated that;

Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face numerous challenges when trying to participate in civic activities and engage in their communities. These barriers can limit their ability to take an active role in various aspects of civic life (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

This confirms the claim made by Schröder and Neumayr (2023) that individuals with lower incomes frequently have to work long hours or multiple jobs to make a living. As a result, they have less time to attend meetings, take part in community initiatives, or participate in civic engagement activities. Furthermore, participating in many civic engagement activities may come with costs, such as membership dues or volunteer-related expenses.

PT1 stated that;

People who receive lower-income have fewer connections to individuals or organizations involved in civic activities, making it harder to get involved. Also, Individuals with lower levels of education are less aware of civic engagement opportunities (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

FGD2Y6 asserted that;

“The cost of transportation to participate in civic engagement in environmental initiatives is also a limitation for the less privileged” (FGD2Y6, Field Data, 2023).

According to Ilona (2021) different socioeconomic backgrounds can lead to divergent needs and interests, complicating civic engagement strategies. People with lower income levels also face financial barriers, such as limited access to technology or transportation, which limits their ability to participate in activities that require resources or take time away from work.

FGD1Y3 stated that;

Individuals who do not speak the dominant language of their community struggle to participate effectively in civic activities (FGD1Y3, Field Data, 2023).

This is in accordance with the National Civic League's (2022) assertion that a failure to acknowledge and honour cultural norms would alienate certain segments of the community; in addition, De Gruyter (2017) stated that governments and civic organisations should work to establish an environment in which all community members, regardless of socioeconomic status, can actively participate in shaping their communities and influencing public policies; furthermore, De Gruyter (2017) made it clear that social values, political ideologies, religious beliefs, and attitudes can all have an impact on determining civic engagement.

4.2.2.3 Inappropriate Accountability

Apart from the above-mentioned external motivations, all participants asserted that inappropriate accountability has also been a barrier to civic engagement in environmental initiatives. Individuals who think that the system is corrupt or that their actions won't change anything are less likely to participate in civic affairs (Ilona, 2021).

FGD2Y1-6 and FGD2Y1-6 asserted that;

Early this year, the community elders collaborated with the youth associations through the creation of a committee to collect fines from miners within the community and these fines were to be used to maintain deplorable roads in town after undertaking such an activity the money was not properly accounted for, this has made most of the youth to desist from participating in any communal activity.

This result is consistent with the exchange relationship that exists between stakeholders and leaders. According to Akondeng (2022), accusations of gender bias, nepotism, corruption, and poor management have damaged civic engagement. Furthermore, according to Lejano and Stokols (2013), the evaluation of social ecology takes into account how well an individual, group, or organisation can respond to meet the needs and interests of its constituents. The youth environmental associations has in this finding provide support for the leaders to achieve their mandate.

FGD1Y1-6 declared that as members of Asankrangwa Youth Associations we have made several complains to the community elders and the office of the Municipal Chief Executive, yet all our effort were not yielding positive results, mining activities are still done within our neighborhoods and when we confront these miners, we were told it was order from above, we feel helpless.

This supports Thomas's (2018) claim that a lack of trust in leaders discourages people from engaging in civic affairs, as people feel their opinions won't be heard and they don't want to be involved because planning decisions are made behind closed doors to prevent public outcry. Trust is a fundamental component of community engagement, and inadequacy of it can be caused by a person's past misfortune, their perception of insincerity, or inadequacy of transparency. Bennett (2022) reiterated that a track record of unfulfilled expectations or broken promises can damage trust, and young people are

less likely to participate if they believe their opinions are not truly valued. According to Wildenberg's (2005) claim, at this level, social ecology refers to stakeholder actions that advance environmental well-being.

It's interesting to note that youth representatives voiced their discontent with the fact that the youth association's team members occasionally face attacks whenever they go to mining sites. This result is consistent with Towah's (2019) claim that fair, efficient, and active governance were necessary for citizen participation in environmental sustainability. Once more, Abubakar et al. (2018) clarified that the plan will remain on paper forever and that guided development for Ghana will remain an illusion until the necessary steps are taken. According to Sphera (2020), the sustainability component of social ecology aimed to guarantee support for welfare and health both now and in the future; cooperation is required to protect natural resources and global ecosystems.

4.2.2.4 Inadequate Information

Inadequate information is a significant barrier to effective civic engagement. For individuals to actively participate in civic activities, they need access to accurate, relevant, and timely information. Without this information, citizens struggle to make informed decisions, voice their concerns, or engage effectively in various aspects of civic life.

FGD1Y6 explained that;

When citizens are not informed about issues, opportunities, or events related to civic engagement, they become unaware of the possibilities for involvement (FGD1Y6, Field Data, 2023).

This is in accordance with Cooper's (2023) claim that insufficient information can be a major deterrent to civic engagement. Good communication is essential for community engagement, and that inadequacy of it can seriously impede civic engagement efforts. Once more, Cooper (2023) clarified that using communication channels that are

inaccessible or irrelevant to the intended audience can result in missed opportunities and that sending messages that are ambiguous or inconsistent can cause anger, frustration, and mistrust.

PT2 stated that;

People with limited access to the internet, local radio stations, information centers or reliable news sources are at a disadvantage when trying to stay informed about civic issues (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

It may be difficult for people without internet access or computer literacy to participate in civic engagement activities (Shandler, Gross, & Canetti, 2019). Tin and Bakari (2022) again suggested that a range of technological tools are used in a series of civic engagement activities to promote civic engagement initiatives.

PT1 indicated that misleading information can confuse and mislead citizens, without adequate information and resources, individuals feel disengaged.

FGD1Y1-6 asserted that they are unsure about how decisions are made or the impact of policies and this has hindered their motivation to participate in civic engagement.

This result endorses Mbaku's (2021) claim that national civic engagement initiatives in African languages should be launched by governments to help their people internalise intricate and significant relationships that can enhance civic engagement. Furthermore, Aggarwal (2023) pointed out that these social ecology interactions aimed to produce more environmental benefits.

In summary, while youth initiatives and the assembly play crucial roles in promoting environmental sustainability, they face significant barriers that hinder their potentials. These barriers include internal and external barriers such as low self-esteem, fear of consequences, power imbalances, socio-economic constraints. The theory of social

ecology helps to contextualize the barriers within broader social and economic structures, highlighting the need for systemic change to empower youth and community-led efforts effectively. Theory of social ecology argued that in order to build a society that is truly sustainable, issues of inequality, poverty, and discrimination must be addressed through provision of incentives such as gifts and support for the marginalized, training and collaboration with government and nongovernment organizations.

4.3 Civic Engagement and Sustainability of the Physical Environment in

Asankrangwa.

The third research question sought to investigate the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa. According to Miller (2018), there are two distinct types of physical environments: natural environments and human-made environments. According to Bruce (2019), since humans have surpassed other species as the dominant species on Earth, their effects on the environment have gotten progressively more significant. A number of national and international objectives and commitments, including those pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals, depend on efficient land-use management, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019). According to the author, cleverly structured environmental regulations can promote efficiency, creativity, and economically beneficial environmental use.

To answer the third research question, an analysis of the documents, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with the participants of the study was done. Themes were identified by exploring the responses of the participants. These themes corresponded with the effective dimensions of social ecology approach. The themes were community environmental education awareness, waste management and sanitation, food safety and

security, vector control and disease prevention, technology and social media, enforcement and compliance, sustainability programs, community engagement and participation and data collection. These themes provide information about how the Municipal Assembly uses civic engagement in environmental initiatives to achieve sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

4.3.1 Awareness and Education

All participants stated that community workshops and town hall meeting would inform citizens about the importance of sustainable practices and conservation efforts.

With Effect of environmental studies and research on the physical environment, PT1 and PT2 revealed that improved community environmental health education is one of the effects of promoting civic engagement in environmental initiatives that affect the physical environment in Asankrangwa.

PT1 indicated that;



Environmental education and research practices ensure people become more informed about environmental issues, and are likely to participate in environmental issues, to promote attitudinal change and decision making (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

FGD2Y1 explained that;

“Continues education and household sensitization as well as monthly sanitation exercises will create enough avenue for people to be conscientized or aware of the need to practices civic engagement in environmental initiatives” (FGD2Y1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 asserted that about 70 to 80 percent of their workforce during civic engagement in environmental initiatives were locally recruited from their communities. The data analyzed indicated that empowerment of the workforce during civic engagement in environmental initiatives was by means of giving participants training on some environmental initiatives and incentives to keep them abreast of with the current trends

in the environmental sector (Van & Baugh, 2016). The environmental health department took a step further to provide certificates for hardworking participants who contributed immensely during civic engagement in environmental initiatives programmes.

Again, PT2 indicated that;

community members are more likely to advocate for environmental policies and regulations that align with their values and interests, leading to greater influence on local decision making (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 detailed that;

“Environmental educational programmes on recycling have reduced the strain on landfills and decreases the environmental impact of waste disposal” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

Again, PT2 indicated that;

International union for the conservation of nature organized tree planting exercise and how planting of trees can reduce carbon emission in the environment (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

This is in line with the assertion made by Buckingham and Theobald (2003) that increased civic engagement on environmental sustainability requires interdisciplinary collaboration, including cooperation between civic engagement and environmental organisations, education, and research. Additionally, Shell (2015) clarified that research and education on the environment less pollution, which enhances air quality. Before choosing a different course of action, Yusuf, Bello, Owede, and Daniel (2017) claimed that environmental studies and research allow one to assess alternative responses to environmental issues. By studying environmental laws, rights, and regulations, environmentally literate citizens can make more informed decisions for the preservation and enhancement of the natural world. As per Lejano and Stokols (2013), social ecology delves into the ways in which human decisions and actions impact the natural environment, and how those changes can impact human well-being.

4.3.2 Appropriate Waste Management and Sanitation

In addition to the above, effect of waste management and sanitation on the physical environment. PT1 indicated that the use of proper waste management and sanitation systems are essential for generation, collection, storage, transportation and treatment of waste, it also promote pollution control. This promotes a healthy, clean, and sustainable physical environment in Asankrangwa. These practices not only improve the quality of life for residents but also support the long-term well-being of the community and its natural surroundings.

FGD2Y1 asserted that;

The municipality has only one waste collection and disposal track which we haven't seen in months because we were told it is faulty. Refuse can be in the community for months without been collected which can causes flies outbreak of contagious diseases and sicknesses to those within that vicinity (FGD2Y1, Field Data, 2023).

This affirms the claim made by Flanagan, Gallay, and Pykett (2021) that tackling environmental issues as a civic issue entails public-private partnerships, environmental justice, collaboration with nonprofits and NGOs, and education and awareness raising.

PT1 declared that;

“We have collaborated with zoomlion Ghana Limited to provide waste bins at a fee to various households, collection of household waste has drastically reduced indiscriminate disposal of solid waste” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

All participants revealed that sustainability of the physical environment under the social ecology theory is measured in terms of the effect of civic engagement in environmental initiatives. According to Jones (2016), civic engagement helps people become critical thinkers, social change advocates, and participants in an inclusive society.

PT1 stated that;

Monthly sanitation exercises with community members have resulted in distilment of drains which had reduced outbreak of diseases, pollution, flooding and drainage issues (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 also asserted that;

Collaborating with Global Community, Community led Total Sanitation and Digging use have improved latrine conditions and open defecation free in rural areas (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This assertion resonates with the claim made by Frank K. Nyame, Tigme J., Kutu M.J., Armah T.K. (2012) that an ineffective municipal waste management system can have detrimental effects on the environment, including the spread of infectious diseases, contamination of the land and water, clogging of drains, and a decline in biodiversity. Furthermore, according to Kabera and Nishimwe (2019), a more sustainable approach to waste management places an emphasis on methods that improve environmental health, such as reduced production, waste classifications, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery, rather than the more typical methods of landfilling and open dumps. According to Bookchin (2007), the concept of social ecological communities aims to enhance how sanitation and waste management affect the physical surroundings in which people coexist peacefully with nature. This entails adopting sustainable methods and appreciating nature's inherent worth.



Figure 2. Compacting of waste at the final disposal site in Asankrangwa

Source: retrieved from environmental health department

4.3.3 Promoting Food Safety and Hygiene

In relation to the effect of food safety and hygiene on the physical environment, PT1 indicated that improving food safety and hygiene is part of their efforts to maintain a healthy, clean, and sustainable physical environment in Asankrangwa. These practices not only improve the quality of life for residents but also support the long-term well-being of the community and its natural surroundings.

PT1 specified that;

We register and provide chits to food vendors after general screening of premises before allowing food vendors to sell to the public, we also inspect slaughter houses and slabs, ensured that food and meat is produced, processed and sold in a hygienic environment which has led to clean premises and prevent contamination and diseases (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 revealed that food safety and hygiene is an integral part of promoting sustainability of the physical environment such that the wellbeing of the people in the community affects the smooth operation of achieving environmental sustainability.

This strikes a chord with According to World Bank Group (2020), responsibly executed civic engagement in environmental initiatives with the participation of all stakeholders will result in positive effects on the physical environment and, consequently, will empower communities to take care of the environment. Again, Pal, Gerbaba, Abera, and Kumar (2015) claimed that a safe food supply lowers illness and infection. According to Raul et al. (2013), social ecology is concerned with how human and natural systems are interconnected and how they can support environmental sustainability.

4.3.4 Vector Control and Disease Prevention

Analysis of the data also brought to fore that vector control and disease prevention is another effect of sustainability of the physical environment, all participants specified

that vector and disease control prevent outbreak of diseases. PT1 asserted that a policy such as quarterly disinfection or fumigation of public places was put in place to train people on how to conduct disinfection or fumigation.

PT1 specified that;

“The effect of disinfection and fumigation of premises reduced outbreak of communicable disease and improves vector control” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This is consistent with Ecology letters (2021) assertion that crowded and unhygienic environmental conditions encourage the spread of disease, and that vector control helps prevent this. Furthermore, for more effective and long-lasting vector control, Anne, Courtenay, Kelly-Hope, Scott, Takken, Torr, and Lindsay (2020) noted that a variety of insecticide- and non-insecticide-based approaches must be used. According to Goldstein, Udiman, Canny, and Dwipartidrisa (2022), vector-borne diseases that arise from waste and are entangled in sophisticated socio-ecological systems are caused by human activities, interactions, decision-making, and social structures with the land they inhabit and alter. According to Lejano and Stokols (2013), social ecology places a strong emphasis on the need of environmental education and consciousness-raising to assist people in understanding ecological issues and taking appropriate action to address them on an individual and community level.



Figure 3: fumigation exercise in Asankrangwa market

Source: retrieved from environmental health department

4.3.5 Advocacy for Environmental Policies and Justice

FGD1Y5 explained that citizens advocated for effective environmental policies related to environmental protection, resource management and pollution control.

Moreover, PT1 asserted that another effect of promoting civic engagement on environmental sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa is improved compliance to law enforcement and fair treatment and equal protection under the law. The data revealed that community members are more conscious about their interactions with the environment especially pollution.

PT1 stated that;

“Enforcement of environmental laws had improved compliance to environmental issues, which has resulted in improvement in sanitation issues” (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 also specified that;

Resulted in improved drainage conditions and odor from drains, reduced indiscriminate disposal of waste and floods (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y4 asserted that;

We need to persist for regular visitations of community environmental officers “sama-sam” which will result in a positive change in attitude. Activities of “community tankers” should be promoted (FGD1Y4, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y6 also, elaborated that;

Concerning mining activities in town the environmental health department and the assembly can reclaim degraded lands to reduce accidents. (FGD1Y6, Field Data, 2023).

FGD2Y4 explained that;

With proper disposal of waste, water in drains and water bodies can flow freely (FGD2Y4, Field Data, 2023).

This confirms the claim made by Bhargava (2015) that environmental enforcement and compliance encourage best practices and can be leveraged to enhance national

environmental enforcement and compliance initiatives. According to Biswas (2020), the goal of social ecology is to achieve social and ecological justice by emphasising the nonviolent principle. Furthermore, Aggarwal (2023) clarified that the goal of social ecology is to change institutions and social systems to make them more equitable and sustainable. It opposes hierarchical structures and encourages more egalitarian and democratic modes of government.

This is resonated with the assertion made by Schusler and Krasny (2008) that more people can be inspired to engage in civic engagement by being given clear information about how they can make a difference and by seeing the real-world results of their actions. Aggarwal (2023) emphasised once more that individuals should concentrate on how their contributions to society will foster prosperity and advance skills via creative methods.

According to Raul et al. (2013), applying creative techniques improves both the environment's overall condition and its constituent parts. Similarly, Raul et al. (2013) said that young people who support their community's environmental sustainability will prosper in the future because they are improving the general environmental health of their community and support system.

FGD1Y1 explained that;

The policy on national sanitation day should be implemented to enhance clean and safe environment (FGD1Y1, Field Data, 2023).

These results are consistent with the World Economic and Social Survey's (2015) claim that the main actors in environmental agencies and civic engagement integrate sustainability into their operations and address environmental issues at every stage of the process, from planning and design to implementation of environmental activities and operations, in order to mitigate the negative effects of insufficient environmental

sustainability. Furthermore, Modeer and Noella (2022) claimed that the advancement of civic engagement on environmental activities increases when meaningful youth engagement is at its core.

Schill (2017) clarified that social ecology theory promotes the adoption of actions that do not deplete natural resources or cause harm to the environment. Once more, Biswas (2020) stated that social ecology encourages direct democracy as a way for citizens to embrace sustainability initiatives and take an active role in decision-making. It demands that community planning and environmental policies be directly influenced by the people.

4.3.6 Community Engagement and Participation

Civic engagement on environmental sustainability builds a sense of community and networking among citizens. Civic engagement in environmental initiatives empowers residents to work together to take an active role in environmental protection and contribute to the well-being of the community and the physical environment.

FGD1Y4 indicated that;

The rivers around the community have changed colour due to waste and mining activities in the river and town, this has affected living organisms in the rivers we cannot fish in the rivers any longer (FGD1Y4, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y6 indicated that;

The youth may have the perception to embark on civic engagement in environmental initiative to promote sustainability of the physical environment and avoid land degradation but the limitation has always been with the interference from the sub chiefs and leaders (FGD1Y6, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 detailed that;

Civic engagement on environmental sustainability promote unity by bring different groups of people together strengthen social bonds and

lead to increased participation in other community activities and improve the effectiveness of initiatives (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

This is in line with Abdela (2020) statement that environmental clubs are crucial for raising public awareness of environmental issues. Environmental clubs provide a forum for learning about the environment. They provide events and initiatives to motivate people to prevent pollution (Razak, Lokman, & Hamid, 2023).

FGD2Y2 also explained that;

“Civic engagement on environmental sustainability promote diversity, gives people a sense of purpose, motivation and a task to accomplish” (FGD2Y2, Field Data, 2023).

This is in accordance with Logan et al. (2021) assertion that there exist disparities in voluntary civic engagement. These disparities are related to a variety of factors, including politics, gender, age, education levels of the most and least educated, migration, upbringing and ethnicity, employment, marital status, religious affiliation, and voluntary civic engagement between individuals who have experienced high levels of poverty and those who have not.

Again, PT1 explained that;

Civic engagement on environmental sustainability nurture leadership skills among community members and those who are selected as leaders are likely to continue to engage in community initiatives (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

PT1 explained that civic engagement on environmental sustainability promote institutional trust when members input and efforts are valued.

FGD1Y3 also detailed that;

Considering community members ideas and implementing them would result in institutional trust. When community members identify that their efforts resulted in positive change, they are likely to participate in environmental initiatives (FGD1Y3, Field Data, 2023).

PT2 also detailed that;

Active community members serve as positive role models that inspire fellow community members (PT2, Field Data, 2023).

The results confirm the Irish Environmental Protection Agency's (1995) assumption that a well-executed civic and environmental project involving all relevant parties will enhance the standard of living for the local populace and further enable the communities to take responsibility for their own environments and means of subsistence. According to Raul et al. (2013), social ecology theory addresses how community involvement and engagement affect the physical environment by addressing social injustices and confronting oppressive structures.



Figure 4. Asankrangwa Youth Recreational programme

Source: retrieved from environmental health department



Figure 5. Global Communities citation to Amenfi West environmental health department

Source: retrieved from environmental health department Asankrangwa

4.3.7 Accountability, Monitoring and Data Collection

Again, all participants specified that civic engagement on environmental sustainability has improved accountability, monitoring and data collection on environmental initiatives.

PT1 stated that;

Civic engagement on environmental sustainability provided the foundation for collecting enough data for informed decision-making, community involvement, and evidence-based solutions, ultimately contributing to the preservation and improvement of the local environment (PT1, Field Data, 2023).

FGD1Y5 specified that;

Data should be collected on activities within the town, since implementation of policies is done by the assembly and chiefs to ensure that everyone involved in activities that degrade the land is held accountable for their actions so that it will help the youth to take a good decision that will improve the state of the environment (FGD1Y5, Field Data, 2023).

This affirms Cooper and Brew (2013) explanation that gathering data makes it possible to find any gaps in knowledge and to comprehend and interpret environmental initiatives, all of which lead to an improvement in the quality of the environment.

Aggarwal (2023) highlighted the significance of ecological ethics and the need for people to understand that taking care of the environment is their moral obligation. This understanding of ecological ethics is necessary to achieve sustainability.

4.3.8 Technology and Social Media

Also, PT1 and PT2 stated that civic engagement on environmental sustainability has improved the state of the physical environment due to the incorporation of social media, technology and other creative strategies on environmental initiatives. The use of technological devices and various media channels such as mobile phones, computers, printers and social media handles like whatsapp, facebook and tiktok enabled people to

gain access to information on activities undertaken by the assembly, also the assembly is able to collect, input, upload and promote data of environmental initiatives on various online platforms (Peter, 2021). It enhances policies and decision-making processes, it also helped the assembly to connect, inform, and mobilize individuals and communities to take active roles in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainability (Smith, 2020).

FGD1Y2 stated that;

The use of social media handles and websites such as google and face book as well as mobile phones, computers has improved entry of data, drafting environmental report and collection and disposal of waste resulting in clean environment (FGD1Y2, Field Data, 2023).

This supports Pamela's (2020) assertion that social media's explosive growth has facilitated user-to-user communication. The different platforms allow comments, videos, photos, and posts to be shared quickly and effortlessly. This is an affordable way to connect with a large number of people and alters behaviour as more people recognise the importance of living in a clean environment (Żerkowska-Balas & Wenzel, 2020). Furthermore, according to Pamela (2020), social media plays a significant role in increasing environmental awareness because of its greater potential to influence the environment. When used as a means, "technology" can refer to any technique, procedure, or tool that usually combines hardware and software for the benefit of people and the environment. Furthermore, technologies are based on human cognition, human knowledge, and human motivations (Ahlborg, Ruiz-Mercado, Molander, & Masera (2019). According to Ahlborg et al. (2019), social ecology promotes the creation and application of eco-friendly technologies.

In summary, the sustainability of the physical environment is closely linked to the principles of social ecology, which provides a comprehensive framework for

understanding and addressing ecological challenges. By integrating human societies with natural ecosystems, promoting decentralized and community-based approaches, and challenging hierarchical structures, social ecology offers a pathway to achieving true environmental sustainability. However, this requires a fundamental shift in how Asankrangwa as a society organizes itself, moving away from exploitative practices and towards more equitable, democratic, and ecologically sound systems. By aligning environmental sustainability efforts with the principles of social ecology, it is possible to create a more just and sustainable world where both people and the planet can thrive.

4.4 Chapter Summary

By offering responses to the research questions that aimed to explore civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa, Western Region, this chapter summarised the study's findings. The social ecology theory was applied to the analysis of the data gathered on the three research questions. The majority of civic engagement activities in Asankrangwa are philanthropic endeavours, according to the first research question, which examined the current state of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability. The second research question which pursued the barriers to initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa revealed that civic engagement had external and internal factors as barriers to civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa. The external factors were inadequate time, socioeconomic factors, inadequate information and inappropriate accountability. The internal factors were social norms and peer pressure, fear of consequences and low self-esteem. The third research question which sought to investigate the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment revealed that both the assembly and the youth contributed to sustainability of the physical environment

through; their improved community environmental education, improved waste management and sanitation, improved food safety and security, vector control and disease prevention, promote technology and social media, enforcement and compliance, sustainability programs, community engagement and participation and improved data collection.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations on civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the assembly and the youth in Asankrangwa, Western Region. The chapter also provides a discussion of the limitations of the study as well as areas for further studies. This study examined the experiences of civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the assembly and the youth. The outcome of the study provided information about three research questions. The first research question sought to explore the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa; the second research question pursued the barriers to initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa and the third research question sought to investigate the effects of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa. There was an extensive review of the literature, and that served as the foundations upon which the findings of this research were critically analyzed. The research approach for this study was qualitative (Creswell, 2014) and the design was a descriptive case study (Yin, 2009).

The researcher utilized three data collection methods, namely; interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. The data collected were thematically analyzed for easy organization and description.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Current State of Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in Asankrangwa

The study found that the current state of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability has dwindled even though the municipal assembly through the environmental health department of Amenfi West has been making efforts to promote civic engagement to ensure sustainability of the physical environment. However, the participants of the municipal assembly in their explanation, acknowledged the fact that civic engagement on environmental sustainability manifests through various initiatives. There is growing awareness of environmental issues but participation and sustainability efforts at the community level need to be improved. Also, all the participants indicated that civic engagement in environmental initiatives was more philanthropic in nature and skewed towards the physical and social environmental needs of the community.

5.1.2 Barriers to Initiatives of the Youth and the Assembly in Civic Engagement on Environmental Sustainability in Asankrangwa.

The study showed that the internal and external factors aided participants to understand the psychological and physical barriers to civic engagement on environmental sustainability with reference to social ecological processes. The findings of the study revealed that the internal barriers consisted of social norms and peer pressure, fear of consequences and low self-esteem and external barriers consisted of inadequate time, socioeconomic factors, inadequate information and inappropriate accountability.

5.1.3 Civic Engagement and Sustainability of the Physical Environment in Asankrangwa.

The findings of the study indicated that the assembly, was externally motivated by various forms of local laws, institutional regulations and policies to embark on their civic engagement in environmental initiatives. The study revealed that both assembly and the youth contributed to sustainability of the physical environment through their civic engagement in environmental initiatives which included clean up exercise, provision of waste bin to various households and fumigation exercise aside from the prior environmental initiatives the assembly, through environmental health department went further to construct latrines and annually planted trees.

5.2 Conclusions

This study provided an understanding of the current state of the youth and the assembly, in civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa in the Western Region. Also, this study provided an understanding of the barriers to initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability and effect of civic engagement on sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa. Therefore, most of the civic engagement in environmental initiatives of the assembly were geared towards solving physical and social environmental needs of the community. Insights from interviews were cross verified with focus group discussions and reports to improve participants' responses in order to improve steady, trustworthy, steadfast, faithful, and responsible data collection, analysis, triangulation and interpretation. An in-depth review of the literature and the social ecology theory suggested that the effectiveness of civic engagement in environmental sustainability is often limited by two major barriers to civic engagement on environmental sustainability

in Asankrangwa, internal and external factors. The findings of the study revealed that the internal barriers consisted of social norms and peer pressure, fear of consequences and low self-esteem and externally barriers consisted of inadequate time, socioeconomic factors, inadequate information and inappropriate accountability. In addition, the study indicated that aligning civic engagement initiatives with the principles of social ecology enhances the potential to achieve sustainable and socially just outcomes. Addressing the socio-economic barriers and power imbalances within civic engagement efforts is crucial for achieving long-term sustainability of the physical environment. Literature on civic engagement in environmental initiatives avowed that there are multiple dimensions to how civic engagement in environmental initiatives affect sustainability of the physical environment. They include, improved community environmental education, improved waste management and sanitation, improved food safety and security, vector control and disease prevention, promote technology and social media, enforcement and compliance, sustainability programs, community engagement and participation and improved data collection. Again, the study asserted that civic engagement in environmental initiatives is essential for fostering local-level ecological stewardship and raising public awareness about environmental issues. Nonetheless, the assembly came to the realization that their civic engagement in environmental initiatives had sustainable impacts on the society and environment. Therefore, this study would help other environmental agencies to understand the current contributions and effects of the youth and the assembly civic engagement in environmental initiatives on the physical environment. The findings may also aid environmental agencies to understand the implications of not conforming to environmental regulations.

In summary, this study contributes to knowledge by serving as a learning aid for environmental stakeholders such as Ministry of lands and natural resources, local government authority, environmental protection agency (EPA) and other environmental agencies to broaden their scope on civic engagement in environmental initiatives. Future researchers would be able to understand how environmental sustainability is promoted in Ghana through civic engagement in environmental initiatives thanks to the methodology employed in this work.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the discussions of the study, the following recommendations were made to enhance civic engagement in environmental practices in Asankrangwa.

One of the major findings of the study was that both assembly and the youth view civic engagement on environmental sustainability as voluntarily solving physical and social environmental needs of their community. Thereby limiting the concept of civic engagement on environmental sustainability to the physical and social dimension of the environment. It is recommended that the youth should engage the services of civic and environmental practitioners either as resource persons or consultant to aid the civic and environmental teams to incorporate all dimensions (philanthropy, legal and ethics) in their civic engagement in environmental initiatives.

The study also revealed that the environmental health inspectorate team depend on the community for tools or support whenever they go for inspections especially during clean up exercises. Hence, it is recommended that in a country where civic engagement on environmental sustainability is largely influenced by regulatory agencies, it would be prudent for the government to provide logistics to regulatory agencies to aid staff in discharging their duties. This intervention can lead to strict enforcement of regulations or policies with linkage to civic engagement on environmental principles such as

improve sanitation and also curbing cases of open defecation. Environmental protection and standard enforcement laws should be applicable without interference from any political and external forces. With this intervention, all concerns will be addressed before the policies or regulations are implemented. Secondly, stakeholders will own the policies and comply without any hindrances. In the bid to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030, the government should institute a national civic and environmental sustainability policy to encourage all institutions to embark on civic engagement in environmental initiatives.

Moreover, awareness creation on issues of civic engagement in environmental initiatives, will go a long way to help the community to be more aware of the importance of civic engagement in environmental initiatives and also help them measure the effect of civic engagement in environmental initiatives on communities and beneficiaries.

5.4 Limitations

This study set out to interpret and analyze experiences of civic and environmental teams on civic engagement in environmental initiatives in Asankrangwa. To mitigate issues of interview biases, a detailed interview guide with open ended questions was developed and used. Focus group discussion and document analysis were also used to investigate the issues and find out the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa, the barriers to initiatives of the youth and the assembly in civic engagement on environmental sustainability in Asankrangwa, and how civic engagement affect sustainability of the physical environment in Asankrangwa. Since this is a qualitative study, the findings are not generalizable; I provided indepth description of the study context and participants to enhance transferability. Also, meeting up with participants for the focus group discussion was a

challenge due to their busy schedules. Despite this limitation, this study has credible results that can serve as a basis for further studies.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions were made for future studies to increase the knowledge of civic engagement on environmental sustainability in the Ghana and also serve as a repository for researchers. A comparative study can be conducted to investigate civic engagement on environmental sustainability performance of environmental agencies and stakeholders in different regions. The study can employ a quantitative study as mine employed qualitative. Future studies can explore the perspectives, perceptions of local populace on civic engagement in environmental sustainability practices. The study can also probe into the impact of civic engagement in environmental initiatives of environmental stakeholders.

Also, discuss why women participate in civic engagement on environmental sustainability and the benefits associated with civic engagement on environmental sustainability. Last but not least, content analysis can be conducted on civic engagement on environmental sustainability reporting among Ghanaian environmental stakeholders. The study may analyze civic engagement on environmental sustainability reports of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to examine how (EPA) incorporate civic engagement on environmental sustainability in their operations.

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APPENDIX

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



Our Ref: SSE/SM.1/VOL.1/250

Date: 28th July, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: **MR. DRAMANI MOHAMMED SAAKA**

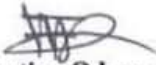
We write to introduce **Dramani Mohammed Saaka** to your outfit. He is an undergraduate Social Studies student with registration number: 220014446 from the above named Department.

As part of the requirement for the award of M.Phil degree, he is undertaking a research on the topic "*Civic and Environmental Sustainability in Ghana, A Case Study in Asankrangua in the Western Region*". We will be most grateful if you could grant him permission to undertake the study including data collection and videos.

We wish to assure you that any information provided would be treated confidential.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,


Faustina Oduro Amissah (Mrs.)
For: Ag. Head of Department

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

PARTICIPANTS FROM MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

My name is Dramani Mohammed Saaka, a master's student from University of Education, Winneba. I would like to interview you about how your organisation practices Civic Engagement. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared in my academic institution and produced as part of a final master's thesis. Please remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you can end the interview at any time.

Kindly, introduce yourself and your portfolio.

1. Please, I would like to know what the assembly wish to achieve with regard to the sustainability of the physical environment?
2. Please, will you share with me some information on projects in Asankrangwa that work to promote environmental sustainability?
3. What are the environmental problems being experienced by the community here in Asankrangwa now?
4. How do you believe we may better raise awareness of the critical need for sustainability in this regard?
5. So how do you think you can get younger people into protecting the environmental and environmental conservation in Asankrangwa?
6. Any interesting partnerships or collaborations you have created to implement these environmental sustainability projects in the community?
7. How are you thinking about setting priorities in terms of addressing environment issues that may be relevant over there at Asankrangwa?

8. What best practices, tools and methods do you believe can help evaluate the success and impact of environmental sustainability initiatives in Asankrangwa?
9. While working in the Asankrangwa, according to you what are the need for long term sustainability and smooth functioning of projects?
10. In your opinion, do you think there is a need for policy reform on environmental sustainability in the Asankrangwa area? If so, what changes would you propose?
11. Please tell us a related success story or example of the work you are doing to promote sustainability in Asankrangwa?



INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

My name is Dramani Mohammed Saaka, a master's student from University of Education, Winneba. I would like to interview you about your participation in Civic Engagement in relation to environmental initiatives. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared in my academic institution and produced as part of a final master's thesis. Please remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you can end the interview at any time.

1. In your view, what is the current state of civic engagement on environmental sustainability initiatives in Asankrangwa?
2. According to your own understanding, what can be some of the core reasons causing impact on the engagement of individuals in environmental sustainability activities in this locality?
3. What are the major barriers or problems that confers why there is less citizen involvement in environmental sustainability endeavors in Asankrangwa?
4. How do you see the municipal assembly and youth taking part in encouraging more civic participation in sustainability initiatives?
5. In your opinion, how important is civic engagement to the success of environmental sustainability initiatives?