

**CEMETERIES CRISIS, BURIAL
ALTERNATIVES AND AFRICAN URBAN
COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF
ETHEKWINI UNICITY**

By

Nomathemba Ngcongo

**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of MA in Social Policy in the School of
Social Science and Development Studies in the faculty
of Humanities at the
University of KwaZulu-Natal.**

Supervisor: Professor E. Mantzaris

2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

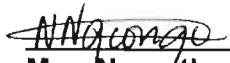
I would like to thank the following people, whose interest and encouragement enabled me to complete this study:

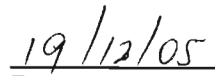
- My husband, **Mxolisi**, for his help, encouragement and support throughout my study.
- My daughter, **Ayanda**, for allowing me time to do my work.
- **Prof. E. Mantzaris**, for his time and supervision throughout this study.
- EThekweni Municipality (**Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria**) and all participants in this research.
- My **mom**, my **two brothers** and my **sister** for their support and believing in me throughout my studies. Thank you.
- **Mr. Sakhile Zondi**, for his assistance in typing this dissertation.

Last but not least, to **God Almighty**. Thank you for giving me strength, courage, wisdom, guidance and love.

DECLARATION

I, **Nomathemba Ngcongo**, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It has not been submitted before, for examination at any other University.


Mrs. Nomathemba Ngcongo


Date

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore burial alternatives, cemeteries crisis and perceptions of African urban communities around the issue of cremation as an alternative to burial. The researcher felt that it is important to do this research since there have been so many debates about cremation.

The sample used, comprised of males and females from different townships around eThekweni Municipality. The researcher used both qualitative (focus group) and quantitative (self-administered questionnaires) methods. The researcher manually analysed the data that was obtained during the study. The results of the study are presented in the form of quotes together with the discussion of the result by the researcher.

The findings show that culture and religion play a very important role in the lives of African people. Although there are other burial alternatives, many African people still see traditional burial as the best way of decomposing the body. At the end of the study the researcher presented the conclusions and recommendations. The findings and recommendations made in the present study are of great help not only to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria within the eThekweni Municipality but also to other municipalities in South Africa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
CHAPTER ONE: The field of the study	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Motivation of the study	3
1.3 Assumption and Hypothesis	6
1.4 Definition of concepts	7
1.5 The scope of the study	10
1.6 Background studies on cremation	11
1.7 Research approach and methodology	11
1.8 Limitations of the present study	12
1.9 Research audience	12
1.10 Some preliminary considerations	14
1.11 The structure of the present study	14
1.12 Summary	15
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review	18
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Culture and family	25
2.3 Theories and models	26
2.3.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action	27

2.3.2 Dissonance Theory	28
2.4 Culture and beliefs of the African people	29
2.5 Problems facing the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria	31
2.5.1 Scarcity of land	32
2.5.1.1 Possible solutions	33
2.5.2 Behavioural problems	34
2.5.2.1 Possible solutions	35
2.5.2 Tariffs	36
2.6 Different religions' views on cremation	36
2.6.1 Islam	37
2.6.2 Christianity	38
2.6.2.1 The church and cremation	38
2.6.3 Hinduism and cremation	39
2.7 Research on cremation in other African countries	41
2.7.1 Zimbabwe	41
2.7.2 Kenya	43
2.7.3 Zambia	43
2.7.4 Botswana	44
2.8 Summary	45
 CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology	 47
3.1 Introduction	47
3.2 Method of data collection	47
3.3 Qualitative versus quantitative studies	48
3.4 Data analysis	60
3.5 Strengths of the methods used	60

CHAPTER FOUR: Analysis of Data and Discussion	62
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 The responses of the African sample	62
4.3 The religious leaders and municipal officials responses	91
4.4 The focus group discussion	103
CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions and Recommendations	109
5.1 Introduction	109
References	117
Appendix 1	125
Appendix 2	133
Appendix 3	135

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIELD OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The eastern port city of Durban, the busiest harbour in Africa and the heart of the KwaZulu-Natal economic development is struggling to find space to bury its dead. Latest reports have indicated that only two out of twenty two cemeteries have vacant plots left and they are supposed to accommodate burials for another 10 years (<http://www.health.news.designerz.com>).

Demographers have been traditionally a type of social scientists that border on the pessimistic in their predictions of the future of humanity. Since the period of Thomas Malthus demographers have been worried that if the world population continues to grow at its present rate, the world will become overcrowded, the environment will be all but destroyed through pollution and degradation and there will be insufficient food to feed the billions of people. According to many demographers the problem is that people produce too many children and the

solution lies in processes of family planning, education, and the provision of health facilities. They speak of a population explosion. This is not quite the end of the world but it looks rather serious if a scientific examination of present realities is undertaken on a global scale. There are issues such as Aids, legal and illegal mass immigration, urban congestion, government revenue and taxation, the availability of schools and social amenities, economic growth and underdevelopment in the Third and the Fourth worlds, famine, starvation and death (Ziehl: 2000,1). Demography, then, becomes almost the ultimate social science.

Social realities throughout the world, from the industrial Europe to war-torn Sudan have shown almost conclusively that the majority of every society's population is moving to the urban areas. This means that the urban land becomes scarcer and most congested, especially when it comes to cemeteries. It seems cemeteries have become a topic of serious conversation amongst urban planners, local government officials, religious leaders and various other social groups with keen interest in the utilization of their spaces.

The newspapers and media and communication have for the last 10 years at least continuous coverage relating to the number of Aids deaths in South Africa and the African continent in general as well as the number of people who have

contracted HIV. For the South Africans HIV-Aids has never been just another disease, it has become an important and controversial issue in all sorts of areas such as business, social welfare, sexual behaviour, policies, legal matters and especially politics (Ziehl, 2000:420). It has become common cause that there have been many and diverse debates regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but even a cursory view on the topic will in fact undermine the effect of the present topic and discussion. The reality is that the thousands deaths through AIDS have created a serious problems in regard to the existence and future of cemeteries in South Africa, and especially the eThekweni municipality, (Durban) which is the topic and location of the present thesis.

1.2 Motivation to the study

Over the past seven years the researcher of the present study stayed in the rural area of Ndwedwe a place, which is under the leadership of Amakhosi (traditional leaders). During this period of residence in this part of the KwaZulu-Natal Province, the researcher discovered that people in the area buried their dead on their premises. Thus they do not pay even a cent for the burial as the place belongs to them. They do not even pay the people who dig the grave. They do it out of respect for the deceased, as it is an ancient Zulu culture and tradition. Neighbours, friends and/or relatives dig the grave voluntarily.

The researcher has also lived for approximately ten years in the urban area called Ntuzuma, a township near KwaMashu, which falls under the auspices of the eThekweni Municipality. While at Ntuzuma, the researcher realised that people of this area experience the problem of the scarcity of land, in all senses of the word. Unlike in the rural areas where there is land, the people in urban areas cannot bury the dead in their premises, as there is no space. On the contrary, they are obligated to bury their dead in places called cemeteries where they are expected to pay for the grave, the ceremony and the coffin. In many ways it has become inevitable that a burial, which for a real African person is a matter of great historical, traditional, cultural significance becomes a serious financial burden, it becomes simply too expensive.

After identifying this problem the researcher realised its magnitude and significance as a real human and social policy issue. Thus she visited the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria in the eThekweni Municipality with a series of questions relating to the formulation of a research topic. They agreed that they are facing the problem of the scarcity of land and that many cemeteries in KwaZulu-Natal are closed because there is no space. It was envisaged that the situation would be beyond control before 2008, not even two years before the

2010 World Cup that is to take place in South Africa, and Durban will be one of the key cities where important games will be played.

Various factors prompted the researcher to conduct this research. It was discovered through investigations that there are other options instead of burying the dead in the cemetery. People can now cremate the body. The researcher's investigation indicated that cremation is cheaper than traditional burials, which are a very common tradition in African communities and society. Large numbers of people are not aware that graves can be recycled. This is whereby they utilize one family grave for burial of more than one family. The more the research became serious the more intriguing the realities became, and the curiosity became greater in many respects.

Another factor is the unsafely burials at the cemeteries which are referred by the department of cemeteries and crematoria as unbecoming behaviour at funerals and ceremonies throughout the city. Burials in some cemeteries in Durban are no longer safe. Criminals, who hijack vehicles, rob the mourners, and use firearms control cemeteries. Vehicles have been burnt at cemeteries, while vandalism has become another serious problem. Tombstones are vandalized or stolen almost everyday despite the fact that most cemeteries have guards. Overcrowding at

cemeteries during burials has become another serious factor, which have prompted the researcher to conduct this study.

The key questions to one's mind are:

- Can cremation be a solution to all these problems?
- Are there other alternatives to traditional funerals in cemeteries?

1.3 Assumptions and Hypotheses

The present study bases its assumptions on the fact that community should be aware of such realities. In 2000 there was a cemeteries and cremation campaign document released and it was supposed to become distributed to communities so that they become familiar with these realities (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

It is assumed that people will in the future choose different methods of burials:

- Recycling of graves
- Cremation
- New freeze – drying process

A number of hypotheses were created in relation to this study. These were as follows:

- There is a serious lack of awareness amongst the majority of African people regarding the crisis of burial spaces in the eThekweni Municipality.
- There is a lack of knowledge and awareness amongst the majority of people in the eThekweni Municipality regarding new ways of solving the crisis facing the burial of the dead.
- Culture, traditional values and religious beliefs are impediments to new and innovative ways of addressing the serious problem of space in the burying of the dead in the eThekweni Municipality.

1.4 Definition of concepts

According to Frankfort-Nachmias (1992:28) one of the most significant symbols of language, especially as it relates to research is the concept.

Science begins by forming concepts to describe the empirical world. A concept is an abstraction representing an object, a property of an object or a certain phenomenon. Concepts serve a number of important functions in social sciences. Without a set of agreed-on concepts, intersubjective communication is impossible.

According to Creswell (1994:112) researchers need to define concepts that they may not be understood outside the field of study. These terms should be defined in the first instance as they appear in the research plan. It is on this basis that the researcher of the present study will now define the concepts that will be used in this study.

1.4.1 A Pauper

This is a person who dies and has no relatives to bury him or her. In most (if not all) cases, this person is destitute.

1.4.2 Government Pauper

This person dies at the hospital and his or her relatives are not known.

1.4.3 Municipality Pauper

This person dies at home and has no relatives to bury him or her. In the case of the eThekweni Municipality the person is buried at the Red Hill cemetery.

1.4.4 Recycling of graves

This is when people utilize one family grave to bury more than one family member.

1.4.5 Cemetery

This is a piece of land reserved by the municipality to bury the dead.

1.4.6 Crematorium

Any building or structure in respect of which authority has been granted for human remains to be cremated therein or thereon is therefore referred to as a crematorium.

1.4.7 Grave

Excavations in which human remains have been intentionally placed for the purposes of burial after death and that place is referred to as grave.

1.4.8 Cremation

It is the process in which human remains are reduced to ashes.

1.4.9 Unbecoming behaviour

New criminal culture in the cemeteries whereby the criminals do wheel spins, hijack vehicles, rob mourners, use firearms and burn stolen vehicles.

1.4.10 Vandalism

It is whereby tombstones get destroyed or stolen by criminals.

1.4.11 Tariffs

The cost that is covered by municipality, for example, fencing the cemeteries and hardening of the roads, upgrading drainage systems, rehabilitation of building initial clearance of bushes and landscaping

1.4.12 New Freeze-drying process

This is whereby some chemicals are put on the dead body to let it dry; it leaves the body as odorless powder.

1.5 The scope of the study

A literature study is undertaken in order to establish a theoretical basis upon which the research will be founded. This involves an examination of fundamental concepts such as recycling of graves, cremation and freeze-drying process which will be investigated in detail. Additionally the current status of the people in urban areas will be assessed in terms of the level of knowledge that they have acquired from the community awareness campaigns regarding several important aspects of burial realities, cemeteries and cremation.

The source of data is mainly from people who live in urban areas who have used cemeteries, cremation, recycled graves and the large community that lives in the eThekweni municipality.

1.6 Background studies on cremation

A literature study on the subject under investigation was undertaken in South Africa and the results indicate that no study of this nature has been undertaken in South Africa and elsewhere. There have been various documents released by the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, which have been used as a reference in the present study. Other sources of information used in the present study are books on cremation, academic and research articles, the Internet and relevant newspaper articles.

1.7 Research approach and methodology

The researcher is aware that since there is no research undertaken in South Africa regarding this important topic, the data collection plan and its empirical application become very important elements of the present project. Various research procedures and methodologies will be used during the process of data collection. These methods include the following:

- a) The use of questionnaires to collect data.

- b) Interview schedules will be used for the majority of communities because they might have a problem of understanding the questionnaire.

Data collected from the majority of community members was then systematically processed and analysed accordingly in order to establish the effectiveness and significances of cremation as an option in urban areas.

1.8 Limitations of the present study

Like any other research the present study has limitations. The sample of people interviewed in the communities was limited as there are limited financial resources at the researcher's disposal. Financial constraints have not allowed the researcher to interview experts and municipal officials throughout the country so that comparisons could be made regarding the situation nationally. However the present study is not without its academic and research validity and can be used as a foundation for future research endeavours in this area of study.

1.9 Research audience

According to Monle (as quoted in Cohen and Manion 1994, 40), research is best concerned as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems

through the planned and systematic collection of data. It is a most important tool of advancing knowledge for promoting process and for enabling a person to relate more effectively to his/her environment, to accomplish his/her purposes and to resolve conflicts. This statement implies that researchers do not work in a vacuum. They have obligations to study a specific phenomenon, record data and communicate their findings to groups or individual members of society who have an interest in the issue under investigation.

The possible audience for the present study is as follows:

- The eThekweni Cemeteries and Crematoria Department;
- Communities living under the eThekweni Municipality;
- The Departments of Land Affairs and Home Affairs;
- Various religious groupings; and
- Researchers with an interest on this field as well as Policy makers on this field.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this study is about cremation and urban communities. This study has a special significance to the department of land affairs. The findings in chapter four and recommendations in chapter five may create an awareness and understanding of the present state around cremation.

1.10 Some preliminary considerations

This study can be described as one of a sensitive nature since different people have strong and differing cultural, and traditional beliefs on cremations as well as burials. The researcher met several religious leaders within the Hindu and Muslim communities, as well as White Christians and Blacks or Coloreds communities. All these groups have different opinions on cremation. In black communities it is only 2% who do cremation because they believe that their forefathers knew nothing about it. They only knew grave burials (Interview with Mr. Ntombela 12/6/2004).

Some people raised their concern regarding this study. They had a fear that cremation is going to take away the land, which belongs to them, while others were confused as to how they are going to celebrate unveiling ceremonies.

1.11 The structure of the present study

The study comprises of five chapters, which are as follows:

Chapter one sets the structure of the study, - motivation, assumptions, scope of the study, availability of the literature to undertake the study, anticipated and restrictions and some preliminary considerations.

Chapter two of the study deals with the literature review.

Chapter three examines the research methodological process that is used in the present study. The researcher in the present study used the combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. As indicated earlier on, the present study used focus groups, interview and questionnaire.

Chapter four comprises a presentation of data analysis and interpretations. All data collected from different respondents is systematically presented in this chapter.

Chapter five contains the major conclusions drawn from the study. Based on the conclusions, substantive recommendations have been made regarding cremation as an alternative means to decompose the dead person's body in South Africa and elsewhere in the World.

1.12 Summary

The study on burial, cemeteries and cremation can be seen as significant in the communities of urban areas, the local management leadership and land affairs officials. The shortage of land has serious repercussions for all those involved,

and it is important that stakeholders, role players, communities and people in general become more aware of the options available as well as existing and future solutions. Such a process can minimize the problem facing the eThekweni municipality and urban communities, not only in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, but also on a national scale.

The researcher began by addressing the field of study, followed by the goals of the study. The structure upon which the present study is based is provided in this chapter. The next significant step that has been provided is the research approach and methodology. The researcher highlighted that the focus groups, questionnaire and interviews was used to collect data from the community. Following that process, the data collected was systematically analysed and interpreted, then used as a basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

The audience for this study has been identified as the community under eThekweni municipality, Departments of Land Affairs and Home Affairs, Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, various religious groupings, Researchers on the field of population studies (Cemeteries and Crematoria) and as well as Policy makers on this field will benefit immensely from the findings and recommendations for the present study. Certain key concepts used in this study

have been defined in this chapter, in order to enable the reader to understand their usage in the present study.

The researcher, while acknowledging the possibility on limitations on the generalized ability of findings due to research design and research procedure, believes that the triangulation of data contributed to make this study worthwhile. Finally the researcher provided a general structure of this study and also indicated its methodological process.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Poverty and degradation in most areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the emigration to the urban centers that offer better job opportunities for the unemployed has led to serious overcrowding of urban areas. Additionally, the scourge of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has led to serious congestion and overcrowding of crematoria and cemeteries in the Greater Durban area which is known as the eThekweni Unicity (throughout the present study the eThekweni Unicity has been referred either as Durban or as eThekweni Municipality).

The department of cemeteries and crematoria is faced with the problem of the shortage of land. As HIV/Aids ravages the population of the country, South Africa is running out of space to bury its dead (Sunday Tribune, 24 February 2002).

Although data on the extent of HIV/Aids and its impact on the South African economy vary, there has been for several years now a general agreement between serious analysts, medical and research practitioners, life insurance

personnel and many others that government and businesses need to take urgent action to combat the virus. In this call it seems inevitable that business seems to be taking a more active role despite the governments distribution of anti-retroviral in the last five months of 2004 (www.mg.co.za/TAC/antiretrovirals/htl).

Latest research by the Health Economics Research Unit at the University of KwaZulu- Natal indicates that HIV/Aids is estimated to be reducing South Africa's growth rate by a minimum of 0,3 to 0,4% per annum (HEARD, 2004). Forecasts of future growth show large discrepancies, however, as financial experts have created different mathematic models to calculate the consequences.

Analysts at Apt Associates drew an extremely pessimistic future of the country in terms of AIDS by pointing out that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) will be 17% lower by 2010 than it would have been without Aids, wiping \$22-billion off the country's economy (quoted in HEARD, 2004). HEARD has indicated that it is very difficult to quantify the impact of HIV/Aids on the South African economy, but the evidence shows that it will be impacted (HEARD, 2004).

The supply of human capital is not everlasting in South Africa and our country could face progressive economic decline over several generations, unless it

combats its Aids epidemic more urgently. Additionally it has been estimated that the high death rate due to the disease will have serious consequences for space to bury the dead.

South Africa, where more than 20% of people aged 15 to 49 are infected, could lose half its per capita income in the next few generations, or within 90 years, the World Bank has calculated in its last available report (World Bank, 2003). HIV/Aids causes great long-term damage to most national economies, because the disease in almost all cases robs children of a proper education through the death of one or both parents. There are a series of ripple effect from the individual to households, businesses and communities and in the end society in general.

Apart from the macroeconomic impact, Aids will create significant costs to Old Mutual Healthcare, for example, estimated that additional healthcare costs as a result of HIV/Aids could reach \$3,8-billion per year by 2009 (Old Mutual Health Care, 2004).

According to the South African Bureau of Economic Research (BER), Aids deaths will reduce the number of consumers, which would have an effect on total consumption expenditure. Companies will have to raise prices to cover higher

costs. The economic consequences of Aids will be devastating. By 2010 life expectancy will be 43 years, 17 years less than it would have been without Aids. Analysts estimate the South African labour force will shrink accordingly, by up to 23,5% by 2015 (South African Bureau of Economic Research, 2004).

To what degree enterprises are affected varies between business sectors. The mining sector has been worst hit by the pandemic, with an Aids prevalence rate among its workforce of 25%, closely followed by manufacturing with a prevalence rate of up to 19%. Construction, retail and wholesale, count as medium- to low-risk sectors.

HIV/Aids is a risk of doing business in South Africa, right next to asset security, crime and exchange rate volatility, besides political and infrastructural risk. Despite gloomy predictions, South African companies have reacted slowly to the pandemic. Only about a quarter of the country's businesses -- mainly large corporations -- have workplace policies in place. Small and medium-sized firms often lack human and financial resources to implement an Aids plan.

"South Africa" said one of the key participants in the National Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria in 2004 "is a young, dying nation, and running out of burial spaces" (Williamson, 2004).

The mere fact that the leadership of one of the largest municipalities in the country (Durban) called for a National Conference on crematoria and cemeteries indicates that cemetery space in the city of Durban is fast running out after the number of funerals quadrupled in the last six years, mainly due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Thus while six years ago 150 people were dying in the city, in 2004 the figure stands at 600 dying people. The worst part of the number is that at least 400 of them are younger than 35 years of age (Interview with Mr. T. Ngcobo, Director, eThekweni Department of Parks, Leisure and Culture, Durban 15/6/2004). These are very worrying statistics, indeed and it is a fact that Durban's two new cemeteries are expected to be filled to capacity as early as 2006, an indication that their life expectancy was shortened by fifteen years (Mlaba, 2004).

This is a situation that needs to be rectified as the city of Durban, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal as well as the whole country concentrates at building up a developmental non-racial democratic society. The question is how these developmental efforts can bear fruit when it is a fact that at present our country today has more deaths than births (Mlaba, 2004).

In order to rectify the situation created by the lack of spaces to bury the dead, the eThekweni municipality has purchased a 100 hectares of land in the township of Umlazi at a price of R800 million in order to build a new expanded regional cemetery, but the city under the present circumstances needs 12,1 acres per year for graves (Mlaba, 2004). It needs to be added that it costs the city R37 million per year to maintain its cemeteries, while it generates R12 million from them, a hefty deficit of R25 million (Interview with Mr. Ntombela).

People with different beliefs, religions, customs and customs have a variety of ways of honouring their dead. The large majority of African people for example used to believe that the only way of honouring their dead was by burying the dead underground. However, nowadays people have various options. They can cremate and they can go for freeze-drying process.

Urban areas face many problems created by rapid and rampant urbanization. One of the most serious of them is that of illegal immigrants who find their way to the inner cities, people moving from rural to urban areas hoping for better job prospects, street children, and people living in the squatter camps or informal settlements (Geyevu, 2001). The city of Durban has lot of street kids and homeless people.

A study undertaken in the early 1980's which still has relevance for the present situation as it exists today (Sosin, 1986) pinpoints that there are three factors that differentiate the homeless from the poor in general:

- Extreme poverty,
- Fewer years of schooling; and
- Less family support.

These are sociological observations of importance that still hold true today, even with the rapid changes of urbanization and urban renewal that is one of the expressed wishes of the government as outlined by the President of the country in his State of the Nation Address in 2003 and 2004 (Mbeki, 2003; Mbeki, 2004).

Advocates for the homeless often assert that these people are on the street because of they lost their jobs, they get a very low minimum wages and/or there is a lack of affordable housing – all things are outside the control of the homeless (Tischler, 1996:543). The effects of unemployment and financial problems, facing poor people, are not only felt in South Africa but throughout the world.

When these categories of people die the eThekweni Municipality bears the responsibility of burying them since their relatives or family members are not known. They are officially called “paupers”. It has been said that since there is no space in the cemeteries, cremation can be the solution, especially in such cases (Interview with Mr. Ntombela, op.cit).

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Knowledge and attitudes about cremation

2.3 Culture and beliefs

2.4 Problems facing the department of cemeteries and crematoria

2.5 Summary

2.2. Culture and family

African communities strongly believe in culture and family. Tischler (1996:70) defines culture as something that all human beings learn to do, to use, to produce, to know and to believe as they grow to maturity and live out their lives in the social groups to which they belong.

Gelderblom (2003:12) differentiates between family and kinship. He wrote that kinship refers to social ties between people that are established in one or two ways, i.e. through birth or marriage. A family is a relatively small group directly linked by their relationship in which adults take responsibility for the care of children (Giddens, 1979:140).

2.3 Theories and Models

Theories and models help a person to understand how a particular problem is developed or formed and how it affects other phenomena that are linked to it. Both the theory of Reasoned Action and the Dissonance theory attempt to explain how attitudes are formed, and how they affect a person's actions.

The theory of Reasoned Action explains the relationship between attitudes and behaviour while the Dissonance theory explains why people do not internalise certain information that is available to them. The researcher therefore felt that it was important to discuss these two theories because it enables one to understand better why it is important to change some attitudes that some people have toward cremation.

2.3.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action

Fishbein and Ajzen (as cited in Scott and Spencer, 1998: 440-447) developed the theory of Reasoned Action having as a basis the expectancy value model. According to Fishbein and Ajzen a person's attitude is derived from their belief about an entity and values associated with those beliefs. They further stated that beliefs are a person's opinion, knowledge or thought regarding a particular entity or belief that may refer to a person's expectations (as cited by Scott and Spencer, 1998: 440-447).

Some African people do not believe in cremation because in the past their ancestors did not do it, it is something strange and foreign to their historical traditions and customs. They also believe that after a loved one's death they can visit the grave and communicate with the dead. Thus if the dead is cremated they think that it will not be possible to communicate with that person.

The theory of Reasoned Action has been successfully applied in providing explanations for a variety of behavioural trends and patterns (Scott and Spencer, 1998:448).

2.3.2 Dissonance Theory

According to Festinger's dissonance theory (as cited by Scott and Spencer 1998:444), people prefer information that is consistent with their current attitudes and beliefs rather than information that is dissonant. It is understood that a person always wants to believe that his /her attitude is correct. Thus, inconsistent information is perceived as undermining the person's attitudes and intentions, and such a process ultimately produces tension. The person will therefore try and reduce the tension experienced by avoiding dissonant information, and seek out information that is consistent with their attitudes.

Both the Theory of Reasoned action and the Dissonance theory maintain that a person's attitude influences a person's behaviour. However, while the theory or Reasoned Action takes into account existing social influences, the Dissonance Theory focuses on what a person believes to be right or wrong.

Scott and Spencer (1998:444) state that:

"Accumulative evidence suggests that people try to maintain or protect their attitude and that attitude consequently serves a variety of cognitive or information processing functions".

According to Vidamar and Rokean (as cited by Scott and Spencer, 1998:445) people protect their attitudes by interpreting information in a matter that is consistent to these attitudes.

2.4 Culture and beliefs of the African people

The way the black indigenous community buried their dead has changed historically. During the old days Xhosa people did not bury their dead. It was only in 1818 that a prophet by the name of Makana, who built a considerable reputation for his magical / supernatural powers, decreed that from time forth the dead should be buried. Those who obeyed this law, he said, would incur the wrath of the spirits. The custom caught quickly and soon became general practice amongst the indigenous population. Before this, those who were dying were taken to the open fields and deserted, while those who died in their huts were dragged away with rawhide thongs to some isolated place and discarded. Additionally their hut was burned (Elliot, 1970: 129).

Later, people began to change, they buried their dead. The tribal way of burial in the African Communities was for the corpse to be wrapped in a blanket and placed in a recessed shelf at the side in the bottom of a grave about four feet deep. Then stakes and stones were placed across the opening of the recess to

stop the earth from filling it in. As the grave was filled, thorns were thrown in to prevent wild animals from digging and witches from tampering with the body for nefarious purposes (Elliot, 1970: 129).

Through the passing of time the old ways and customs of burials were replaced by new ways. Thus, instead of covering the corpse with a blanket, people started to use coffins or caskets. This shows that culture, customs and traditions do change. Over time cultures adjust to the demands of the present and the environment. Although the belief that the environment dictates cultural patterns is no longer accepted, there must be some degree of synergy between environment and culture. Whereas other species adapt to their environment through the long, slow process of evolution and natural selection, culture has allowed humans to adapt relatively quickly to many different habitats and become the most flexible species on earth (Tischler, 1996: 81-82).

There is a feeling amongst several students and researchers of the phenomenon of the burial that since the traditional African way of burying the dead has changed significantly, African people can now start considering cremation as an alternative to the burial. Times are changing; will culture and tradition remain forever? This is a key question given the dire consequences of land squeeze in many urban areas.

According to Tischler (1996: 82), there is a specialization of culture. This process involves developing ways of doing things that work extremely well in a particular environment or set circumstances. South Africa is facing the problem of shortage of burial land and this creates a number of additional social, financial, and administrative problems. It is imperative, then, that people need to come up with solutions; one of them is to adopt cremation to their culture.

Every social group has its own specific culture, tradition, customs and historical experiences. They have their own way of seeing, doing, internalizing, externalizing and doing things. At present cremation is a taboo to most Africans; this is what sociologists define as cultural shock (Interview with Mr. Ntombela, op.cit).

Cultural shock is the difficulty people have adjusting to a new culture that differs markedly and radically from their own (Tischler, 1996: 72).

2.5 Problems facing the Department of cemeteries and crematoria.

There are several problems facing the Department of cemeteries and crematoria in the eThekweni municipality that will be examined next. These are:

2.5.1 Scarcity of land

Land is a scarce resource. According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, cemeteries are always placed at the bottom of a priority listing for land allocation (eThekweni Municipality, 2000). This is a serious problem associated with the legacy of apartheid as well as its land and urban policies that were openly discriminatory against the African majority (Mlaba, 2004). The land suitable for burial purposes is also suitable for housing, industrial development, agriculture etc. According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, these realities poses a serious threat to cemeteries as they are seen as an unfair competition against sectors such as housing and industrial development and infrastructure, which are placed at the top of the list. On the contrary, cemeteries are always put on the bottom of the list (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

There are several practical examples that identify the magnitude of the problem: It has become common knowledge that the municipal leadership has experienced a difficulty in identifying land for a new cemetery at KwaMashu, an area that could accommodate the dead from townships such as Inanda, Ntuzuma, Newlands East and West and the predominantly Indian township of Phoenix (Ntombela, 2004; Mlaba, 2004).

The problem of space is really of serious concern. Out of 22 cemeteries under the eThekwini municipality, 19 are full, which means only 3 are available (eThekwini Municipality, 2000).

2.5.1.1 Possible solutions

There are alternatives to traditional burials. According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria these may not be readily acceptable to all communities with different cultural backgrounds.

One of the alternatives is cremation. There are some advantages of cremation that need to be evaluated against the existing usual practice. It is cheaper, decomposition is fast tracked. This can be culturally unacceptable amongst African people but it can prove to be an alternative in view of the present reality regarding among other things the scarcity of land. This is dealt with in details in Chapter 4 of the present study.

Looking at the statistics on cremation, Hindu community, the majority of them believe in cremation. About 99% cremates, 75% of the whites also cremates and only 20% of Black and Coloured communities who do cremation (eThekwini Municipality, 2000).

A second alternative is the recycling of graves. According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, this practice is already favourable to a number of families who prefer to utilise one family grave for the burial of more than one family member. People are not allowed to use concrete to the grave since this makes it difficult to do the recycling process (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

A third alternative is Freeze-drying process. According to the Daily News (1, November, 2002) The Muslim community has rejected outright a new environmentally friendly freeze-drying method of disposing of corpse proposed to replace burial and cremation. The Hindu community has adopted a cautionary 'wait and see' attitude.

2.5.2 Behavioral problems

This problem has been raising serious concern from the law-abiding community members whose respect for the cemetery is borne from the fact that this is a place of final resting in peace for the loved ones.

Problems experienced are the following: wheel spins, hijackings, robbing of other mourners, burning of vehicles and release of firearms. The problem of vandalism also occurs where they destroy sentimental and expensive tombstones.

Criminals also steal tombstones. Criminals are using some cemeteries to hide from the police and other law enforcement authorities.

2.5.2.1 Possible solutions

According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, the working relationship with law enforcement agencies, such as the South African Police, City Police and Protection Services are proving to be successful. The working relationships with Funeral Undertakers, Ward Councilors, Community leaders, etc. in terms of screening burial have been being looked at and could produce promising and encouraging outcomes (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, upgrading security systems or installation of surveillance cameras if funds are available can be a solution to the violence and vandalism-taking place at present. Provision of security lights around and within cemeteries, adhere to booked times for burial. Promotion of burying during weekdays and proposal to limit number of mourners proceeding to the cemeteries can also be a solution (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

2.5.3 Tariffs

According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, the council has injected about R10 million for the upgrading of 293 cemeteries within the eThekweni municipality. The following were done in these cemeteries fencing, upgrading and hardening of internal access roads, upgrading drainage systems, rehabilitation of buildings, initial clearance of bushes and landscaping. The council now also ensures that regular maintenance is carried out in these cemeteries by providing the following: Staff to do the job, equipment, vehicles, offices, etc (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

There are some alternative options for cost recovery and they are: Stokvels, burial societies and trusts. There needs to be further mobilization of such traditional institutions amongst the African people so that cost recovery can become a tangible reality.

2.6 Different religions' view on cremation

South Africa is a multi-religious society and all these different religious groups have their different views on the issue of cremation.

2.6.1 Islam

The Muslim community does not believe in cremation. According to Isah Chakaranje, in Islam they believe in two lives and if they use coffin or cremate, the deceased will not resurrect. The Holy Koran does not allow Cremation because only Allah can punish by burning and not any one can do that ([Http://: www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html](http://www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html)).

All Muslims do not believe in cremation because they believe that cremating a person means you are punishing that person. Muslims believe that the wisdom is that Allah has forbidden them to use fire on his creation. As the rest of his orders and prohibition, he does not need to explain himself. They believe that the body continues to feel and does exist after the soul has left it, which is after death ([Http://:www.sunnah.org\msaec\articles\cremation.htm](http://www.sunnah.org\msaec\articles\cremation.htm)).

As a general rule Muslims bury their dead person as soon as possible after the death of that person. On several occasions there might be an autopsy, although in most cases it is not permitted for religious reasons. The body is prepared meticulously and the family, friends and relatives all proceed to the cemetery. The Quran talks about the bathing of the corpse as a very important part of the

burial process. The cemetery is considered a “sacred space” in the Muslim religion (Dangor, 2004).

2.6.2 Christianity

Christianity is not against cremation. “The bible does not say anything about cremation, but I do not think it is wrong to cremate because the soul is more important than the remains”, says Rev. Luke Mbuwayesango of the Anglican Church in Harare ([Http: www.mthopbgr.com/cremation.html](http://www.mthopbgr.com/cremation.html))

2.6.2.1 The church and cremation

Christianity allows cremation. In May 1963, the Vatican Holy Office (now the Congregation of Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised code of Canon law of 1983 (canon # 1172), as well as into the order of Christian funeral. It became a standard practice to celebrate the funeral liturgies with the body and then take the body to the crematorium ([Http\cemeteries.la-arcdiocese.org .8cfc.html](http://cemeteries.la-arcdiocese.org.8cfc.html)).

The church prefers cremation to take place after the full funeral liturgy with the body. Sometimes, however it is not possible for a body to be present for the

funeral Mass. When extraordinary circumstances make cremation of a body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by all who minister the family of the deceased. (Order of Christian Funerals, Appendix 1)

When cremation follows the funeral liturgy, embalming is usually necessary. When cremation follows soon after death, embalming is not necessary. Each state has its own regulation.

Appropriate containers such as a classic urn are proper for the cremated remains. At the present time the U.S. Bishop's committee on the liturgy has determined only what is not proper container ([http:// cemeteries.a-Archdiocese.org/8cfc.html](http://cemeteries.a-Archdiocese.org/8cfc.html)).

2.6.3 Hinduism and cremation

The Hindu community is not against cremation; in fact this is the commonest practice amongst Hindus. The statistics show that about 99% of the Hindu community in South Africa do cremate. It is ancient custom among Hindus to cremate their dead. After a person has died it is understandable that the eldest son of the deceased will lead lighting of the funeral pyre. Traditionally, whenever there was a death in the community, a male person belonging to each household

– irrespective of the caste, would attend the funeral to pay respect to the dead. Moreover, everyone going to crematorium on such occasion would carry some wood with him to add to the pyre. This was to assist in gathering the necessary fuel for cremation. Hindus originally started the practice of cremating their dead bodies for several reasons. They did not want to leave the dead bodies around to be consumed by the vultures; such sight could be very traumatic. Cremation was also preferable to burying the dead. A grave or burial site would require a piece of land, which has to be accessible, and also had to be in a good, safe and secure location (<http://www.geocities.com/lamberdar/cremation.html>).

During the early days of civilization, digging a grave would be more difficult, laborious and time consuming because of the lack of proper tools. In comparison, cremation was easier and cheaper, because everyone going to the crematorium to pay respect to the dead would simply carry some wood with him to add to the fire. In case of a burial, fresh graves would also need to be guarded against attacks by prowlers (cannibals). Danger from these savages seeking food and flesh used to be more imminent during special rituals ([http:// geocities.com/lamberdar/ cremation.html](http://geocities.com/lamberdar/cremation.html)).

In Hindu the cremation of the body is important for three main reasons:

- It controls the pollution created by death.
- It allows the family to be brought back into society because death causes separation.
- It releases the soul of the deceased properly so that it can continue to the next life.

It is important to remember that Hinduism is not only a religion, but also a cultural way of life. Some practices and beliefs may not be common to all Hindus as religion differences occur in our society among different groupings (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religions/hinduism/features/death>).

2.7 Research on cremation in other African countries

2.7.1 Zimbabwe

Africa as a whole is faced with the problem of HIV/AIDS. It is threatening to wipe out the population of the continent. The devastating effects of HIV/AIDS in the continent of Africa and especially Southern Africa has been raised once again in the latest International Labour Organisation report, which discovered that over 70 percent of the workforce that lives with HIV/AIDS is to be found in Africa with

South Africa at 3.7 million, Zimbabwe 1.3 million and Mozambique at 1.1 (ILO, 2004)

Between 1999 and 2001 City Authorities in Zimbabwe called on residents to consider cremating their dead. To date, the number of people opting for cremation is still low (Http: www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html).

"We conduct up to eight cremations everyday. These are mostly white people who believe it as more hygienic way of disposal, while culture says It is taboo for a black person to be cremated", says Michael Galiao of Mushfords Funeral House in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Like in South Africa the statistics show that the majority of white Christians do cremate, while it is only 2% of the black and Coloured community that cremate. Most of them say it is culture that does not allow them to be cremated ([http:// www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html](http://www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html)).

In Harare, there are only 2 crematoria. They are situated in Bulawayo and Harare (<http://www.srgw.demon.co.uk\cre soc5\ stats\ inter\2000\ country\ zimbabwe.html>).

2.7.2 Kenya

According to the Minister of Health in Nairobi, up to 3000 Kenyans die of Aids-related disease every week, but people still believe the traditional burial. "We bury our dead six deep in the grave and that's how it's going to be", says Julia Odhiambo, a clerk in Nairobi ([Http\\ www.mthopbgr.com\cremation.html](http://www.mthopbgr.com/cremation.html)).

Following one of the famous former Anglican bishop's wife's cremation, a debate was initiated within church circles about the practice of cremation and its possible future use. Many Kenyans still have strong objection to cremation, which they do not believe is in accordance with African tradition. The issue is now to be taken up by the synod of the Anglican Church in Kenya. At least there is a healthy debate occurring within these institutions ([http\\www.episcopalchurch-org\20486-ENG.HTM](http://www.episcopalchurch-org/20486-ENG.HTM)).

2.7.3 Zambia

Aids in African countries is changing the way people live and now changing the way they are buried. As the AIDS toll rises, Zambia's local government authorities complain that burial ground is being filled up almost as soon as it is designated, and predict a serious shortage soon. Zambians are being

encouraged to look at cremation as a burial option. This has elicited serious debate in the country and amongst the various churches.

given the HIV\ AIDS epidemic in which people are dying at increased rates.

([http:// gov.bww\cgi-bin\news.cgi?=20000911](http://gov.bww/cgi-bin/news.cgi?20000911))

2.8 Summary

In this chapter the researcher has revealed problems that the communities of the unicity of Durban and the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria experience. The researcher has revealed some possible solutions to the problems and the researcher has also revealed alternatives that people can follow for burials.

The three alternatives for the people are recycling of graves, freeze drying process and cremation.

The study shows that people who recycle graves go to the cemeteries; they experience the problem of criminal activities that have been mentioned before.

The second alternative, which is freeze-drying process, has many disadvantages since different religious groups oppose it. "A body be it alive or dead should be respected it cannot be disfigured at any stage" (Daily News, 1 November, 2002).

As the researcher has mentioned before, cremation has more advantages, it is cheaper, saves land, no maintenance of gravesites is required, but however it is perceived by other cultural groups to be culturally unfriendly. Therefore way of addressing these cultural differences must be looked at as a matter of urgency.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher examine the steps and procedures followed in the process of data collection from a carefully selected research sampled population. These include the methods of data collection mainly questionnaires, interviews and observations which consisted of both qualitative and quantitative components. The sampling method is also examined as is its size and components. Finally the process of data analysis, which features both qualitative and quantitative methods, is outlined.

3.2 Method of data collection

The first step in the data collection was the literature review, whereby the researcher scrutinized existing books, academic and popular articles in journals, newspapers, academic and research journals as well as official, unofficial and confidential and other reports. A thorough literature review is of importance as it

gives serious guidance to the researcher in pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the topic under investigation.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic the researcher had to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data.

3.3 Qualitative versus Quantitative studies

According to Creswell (1994:1) a qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding of social or human problems, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. He defines a quantitative study as an inquiry into a social or human problem based on the testing of a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedure in order to determine whether the predictive generation of the theory hold true.

According to Filstead (as cited in Chadwick, 1984:206) qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies such as participant observation, in depth Interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, fieldwork etc. These methods allow the researcher to obtain first hand knowledge and information about the empirical social phenomenon in question.

According to Mouton and Marais, (1988:155), the quantitative approach may be described in general terms as that approach to research in the social sciences that is more highly formalized as well as more controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and which in terms of the methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences. The qualitative approaches on the other hand are those approaches in which the procedures are not as strictly as formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted.

One of the main purposes of this research is to gain information on the attitudes and knowledge of the African communities towards cremation. The researcher therefore decided that the best research approach to be used in this study was the exploratory design, as this will enable her to gain new insights into the topic and the phenomenon under investigation. This study is thus exploratory in nature as the researcher sought new information and insights into to the sensitivity of the topic.

The researcher has also chosen these two methods of data collection because the quantitative approach allows the comparison of data as the researcher has sought the opinion of people from religions other than Christian.

The researcher also feels that it is important to explore why African people have these attitudes and how it affects their way of burial, and therefore used the qualitative approach, which enables the researcher to explore and obtain detailed information from the African communities on cremation.

The researcher constructed questionnaires for collecting information. The researcher also used focus group interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The following groups of people were interviewed:

- The African black community in urban areas only, due to serious limitations of financial resources;
- The Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria;
- Representatives of the Hindu community;
- Representatives of the Muslim community;
- Representatives of the Christian Community; and
- Undertakers

The researcher chooses these two methods because they were thought to be appropriate and convenient for this study. The reason the researcher to choose the self-administered questionnaires instead of personally administered

questionnaires is because the researcher feels that the respondents would feel more comfortable answering the questionnaires on their own, which would ensure anonymity rather than responding to questions in an interview on a one to one basis.

In order to provide greater depth of understanding of the present study, it was necessary that various techniques be utilized in the collection of data. As a result both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods known in social science literature as triangulation. Babbie and Mouton (1998:275) convincingly explained that by combining such methods in the same study could be of help to the researcher in overcoming possible deficiencies that result from the use of one method alone. This combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods in collecting and analyzing data is a thorough pattern of approaching research as it enables the researcher to counteract the weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative components (Dawson, 2002:20).

Dawson (2002:14) has pinpointed that qualitative methods explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. In other words a method such as these attempts to get in depth opinion from the

participants. Quantitative research methods of data collection on the other hand generates statistics through the use of *Preliminary /pilot survey*.

Before the commencement of the main study the researcher conducted a preliminary survey amongst a small number of African household heads in an urban setting in Durban, who were selected in such a way as to represent the people who were to be interviewed during the period of the main study. The pilot study was planned in such a way as to test the questionnaire schedule, the time of the interview, possible weaknesses in the research process and the like. It proved to be successful and paved the way for the main study to commence.

Self-administered questionnaires

In the self-administered questionnaires the respondents fill and give responses or comments on the questionnaire in cases where there are serious problems with understanding for example when the interviewee is illiterate, then the interviewer records the responses. There are various methods of interviews, but the schedule structured and semi-structured interviews and focus groups (also known as group interviews) were used to gather data for this study.

Scheduled /Structured Interviews

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:106) wrote that:

“...the most structured way of getting information directly from the respondents is by means of scheduled structured interviews. This method is based on the establishment of questionnaire, which is a set of questions with fixed wording and sequence of presentation, as well as more precise indications of how to answer each question.”

This was how the researcher approached the first important collection technique related to the present project, and it proved to be successful in the process of the preliminary part of the study. However, it was later supplemented by several open-ended, unstructured questions that were complimentary to the structured ones.

The advantages of using these kinds of questionnaires as a method of data collection can be summarized as follows, especially when personal contact is established between interviewee and interviewer:

- Such a collection data technique especially when respondents and researcher have direct personal make the researcher have a clear and

broad understanding of the attitudes and thinking of the research participants.

- The researcher has the opportunity to ask follow-up questions in case the respondent did not answer the question accordingly.
- The researcher does not need to wait for questionnaires when it is time for data analysis.
- The researcher will most likely have a high response rates as compared to the other techniques.

According to Bailey (1994:174), one of the advantages of this method is its flexibility. Interviewers can probe for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the response indicates that the respondents misunderstood the question.

Furthermore it becomes important when the interviewer is present to observe the non-verbal behaviour and to assess the validity of the respondent's answer. The interviewer also has control over the question order and can ensure that respondents do not answer the questions out of their real context or in any ways

alter the structure of the questionnaire. The interviewer can record spontaneous answers. The interviews can also ensure that all answers are complete (Bailey, 1994:174).

In addition, Rubin and Babbie (1997:354) show that this kind of data collection technique typically attains high response rate than other methods. If respondents clearly misunderstand the intent of a question or indicate that he or she does not understand the question, the interviewer will clarify matters thereby obtaining relevant responses.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires that were administered during the interviews schedules have both open ended and closed questions. Each questionnaire consisted of 25 questions. Wysocki (2004: 202) has written that a questionnaire involves the written questions that are given to the respondent through the mail, email or in person. The self-administered questionnaire is where the respondents receive the questionnaire, fill them on their own and return them back to the investigator (Wysocki, 2004:177).

The researcher was present when the questionnaires were filled as it was made clear to the respondents that their anonymity was guaranteed and thus they felt at ease in answering.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have also been called discussion groups or group interviews and have been utilised as a data collection technique for many years, especially in the context of market research. Recently, however, they have been utilised as an integral part of serious social and investigative research projects.

It basically consists of a number of people who are put together in a group to discuss a certain issue. A moderator leads the open discussion or facilitator, who introduces the topic, asks various specific questions, controls the discussion and digressions, and does not permit breaking away conversations. The facilitator ensures that there is no participant who dominates the discussions whilst trying to ensure that all the participants contribute in the discussion. The moderator is a very crucial part of the focus group as he/she is the leader that dictates the smooth operation of the group.

According to the De Vos (1998:314) a focus group can be described as a purposive discussion of a specific or a number of related topics that consists of between eight and twelve people, with similar background and common interests. The group interaction consists of verbal and non-verbal communication, and interplay of the perceptions and opinions that stimulate the discussion without modifying or changing the ideas and opinions of participating individuals. This is a pertinent point for the success or failure of the focus group.

The researcher used a tape recorder during this interview. This enabled the researcher to conduct the interview on her own. According to Patton (1987:137), a tape recorder is part of the indispensable equipment of evaluators using qualitative methods, as tape recorders do not tune out conversations, change what has been said because of interpretation. As the researcher mentioned before, there are hopes that the participants will agree because confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed.

Sampling procedure

The sample of a study can be described as a subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by the researcher, and whose characteristics will be generalized in relation to the entire population (Bless and Higson-Smith,

1995:86). Mouton (1996:134) and Mouton and Marais (1990:75-76) has described the population of the study as the collection of the elements, either known or unknown from which a sample is drawn. Sampling is the procedure whereby a specified number of elements are drawn from the sampling frame that represents the entire population.

There are two main sampling procedures in social sciences, namely, the probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is the one that gives all the members of the population under study equal chances of being selected.

Shaughnessy et al (2000:154) state that:

"The distinguishing characteristic of probability sampling is that the researcher can specify for each element of the population that it will be included in the sample."

This has been confirmed by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:88) who identified two main types of sampling designs namely the probability and the non-probability sampling. Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of population can be determined, while non-probability

sampling occurs when the probability to each element of the population in the sample is unknown.

In our case due to financial limitations the only choice was the use of a non-probability sampling frame, the judgmental sample. In this case the researcher uses his/her own knowledge of the community and judgment in order to select the sample. The researcher selected 30 African interviewees from Ntuzuma, which is an urban community in Durban, which is close to KwaMashu. Ntuzuma, KwaMashu and Inanda are integral parts of an Urban Renewal Presidential Scheme, under the auspices of the eThekweni Municipality, called INK (Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu) (eThekweni Unicity, 2004).

This project hopes to provide economic opportunities for development to the residents of these three large townships through the building of infrastructure, roads, and job creation etc. Ntuzuma was chosen firstly because the researcher is familiar with the township while the area has most characteristics of a typical African Durban location, such as unemployment, crime, gang culture, HIV/AIDS and many deaths and funerals.

The people chosen were African adults over 20 years of age, both men and women. They were chosen from three different sections of the township through

a systematic sampling frame, where every 12th house was selected. It was felt that the combination of systematic and judgmental sampling frames would make the sampling selection more scientific as the systematic sampling is considered a probability-sampling frame.

3.4 Data Analysis

There was transcription of the tapes during the focus groups. The analysis of the interviews and questionnaires were done manually due to the small sample size. The final analysis and interpretation of data followed both qualitative and quantitative ways as explored earlier.

3.5 Strengths of the methods used

The focus group method yields insights on why people feel as they do in regard to particular products, issues, events or behaviour (Frankfort-Nachmias, 1992:92). Such a method enables the researcher to obtain information from all people including those who are illiterate.

In this chapter the researcher has examined the methodological steps undertaken in order to make this project worthwhile. It was decided after the

literature review that self-administered questionnaires, which were semi-structured, would be utilised for the sample of African adults and face-to-face interviews will be utilised for the representatives of the different religious faiths and the Crematoria and Cemeteries staff. Focus groups were also utilised as a data collection technique.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the reader with the analysis of data collected in three different ways, the first being the analysis of the responses, opinions and attitudes of the 30 African interviewees in Ntuzuma township, the second one concentrated on data collected through face to face interviews with the religious experts and the officials of the eThekweni Municipality's Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria and the final one concentrated on the data that was collected through the focus group discussions.

4.2 The responses of the African sample

In the methodological examination it was written that the main sampled group to be examined in the context of this thesis is 30 African adults from the township of Ntuzuma. These were to be asked a variety of questions pertaining to their knowledge of the cemetery crisis facing the city of Durban as well as their

opinions and attitudes regarding cremation and other ways of burial that could save space for the city.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were as follows:

- In terms of age 16 were between 21 and 29 years of age, 8 were between 31 to 39, 3 between 51 and 60 and 3 were over 61 years of age.
- In terms of education, 6 were illiterate, five had gone up to the fifth grade, 6 had completed grade 8, 5 had completed the matriculation board examinations, three had some technikon education (but not completed), two had a university degree and three had a diploma.
- In terms of religion all were Christian, 22 in mainstream churches (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican etc) and the rest in African – based, traditionalist churches (four Shembe Church and four Zionists).
- In terms of occupation:
 - Nine were unemployed.
 - Three were educators.
 - Eight were involved in the informal sector.
 - Two were policemen.
 - Two were artisans.

- The rest did not wish to reveal their occupation.

It can be seen then, that the sample basically includes all demographic elements evident in Ntuzuma and most townships in the country, where poverty and unemployment are rife.

Q1 asked whether the interviewee had faced a death of a family member, friend or relative lately. The word “lately” was left open purposely so interviewees could interpret it in their own mind and own understanding. Seventeen respondents answered in the affirmative, more than half of the sample.

The following up question was: If YES did you have a problem in finding a place/cemetery to bury him /her?

Nine people answered that they indeed had problems when inquiring from their churches for burial space, while the rest did not encounter problems. Following up the next question (If YES can you elaborate on the problem?), three of the interviewees said that the situation in the relevant communities was difficult to understand as the fate of the diseased was left in the hands of the burial society and the funeral organiser/parlour. There were obvious problems in the communication channels between these institutions, but in the process it became

obvious that the Wentworth Cemetery in which one of the diseased supposed to be buried had no space for him. The relative revealed the following:

"The funeral parlour said they could not really do their job as some Cemetery officials wanted money to give a space, and this was not accepted by the burial society and the funeral parlour. In the end we went to this official and we had to talk with him strongly, and in the end he gave us the space. But it is who went there to fight for this right to have a good funeral, others need to pay bribes for the space"

No other respondent made claims of bribes by cemetery officials, but it is obvious that there is a serious lack of space in cemeteries in Durban.

The knowledge of the sampled population regarding the crisis in the lack of space in cemeteries in Durban was tested in Q4 ("Are you aware that there is a crisis of lack of space in cemeteries in Durban?").

Twenty respondents answered in the affirmative in terms of Q4, in other words two thirds of the sample. This can be considered a high number of people knowing about a phenomenon that has not really received very wide publicity.

In response to the follow-up question ("If YES, where have you heard?") the following responses were received:

- Seven had heard this on the radio, especially UKHOZI FM (previously RADIO ZULU), which is the most popular radio station in the country. Two respondents said that there were several points made about the crisis in cemetery space in a few talk shows. One respondent said that there were several news items on the problem in the popular radio station P4, which is also based in Durban.
- Three interviewees said that they were aware of the crisis through reading newspapers, especially ILANGA.
- Four respondents said that they were aware of the problem through their own personal experiences in dealing with work, friends, relatives and colleagues at work.

The responses to this question show that the first hypothesis as stated in the first chapter of the thesis has been rejected, as it was hypothesized that there is serious lack of awareness amongst the people of Durban regarding the crisis in burial space in the City.

The next question ("Do you know that the council authorities consider cremating the dead because of the crisis in the cemeteries?") showed that the vast majority of respondents (N=25) were not aware of the possible plans of the unicity authorities to introduce possible cremation in the future in order to ease the burden of the space crisis.

The five respondents who knew about this consideration have heard it from the media, including newspapers and radio. One of them knew, but did not remember the source of his information.

Q 8 ("Do you agree with cremation?") elicited 23 NOs, 4 YES and 3 DON'T KNOW. The YES answers came from the better educated section of the sample who possibly felt that the process would in the long run be good as the burial space seems to be exhausted.

It is difficult for Africans who have lived all their lives steeped in history culture and tradition to accept something that is new to them and perceived to be against these traditions and customs. This is particularly true of the Zulu people who through a long historical tradition of Kings and Kingdom see themselves as the epitome of African ness.

This becomes clearer in the responses to the next question (Q9. Can you give me the reasons for your answer in No 8?.)

It is the traditions, culture and historical roots of the African people and especially the Zulu people that were given as the main reasons by 17 people, while religious beliefs were give as a reason by 6 respondents. One elder (65 year old woman) basically epitomized the general feelings of the majority of respondents as follows"

"For us Zulu people, the most important part of lives in life and death is our contact and bond with our ancestors. We know where the bones of our ancestors are, we can go and perform our ceremonies and duties. Tomorrow I will be an ancestor, as I will die. I want my children, grand children and great grand children to communicate with me, get my guidance and wisdom. They must know where I am buried".

While one needs to respect the historical traditions and culture of the Zulu people a few present realities need to be realised in order to put things in perspective and context. According to the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, the price of an average grave was over R4000 and cremation was R350. When this is compared to 1993 prices, cremation was R350 while a grave cost R1350.

These figures show conclusively that cremation has been cheaper historically and at present than the traditional burial. This is precisely because the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria in the eThekweni Municipality has released an awareness campaign brochure.

Where it is advocated that cremation also saves space and has more advantages than the traditional burial (eThekweni Municipality, 2000). Thus there are a number of advantages of cremation that has made it a possible alternative to a traditional funeral:

- It saves space
- It can be more economical, because a simple container can be used in place of an expensive casket.
- There is no cost associated with the purchase and perpetual care of a gravesite or tomb.
- It allows scattering of the remains in a place of significance to the deceased.

- Some people would rather have their body disposed of quickly by heat rather than allowing decay in a grave.
- More control for the family.
- Simplicity and dignity

In South Africa, the number of crematoriums at present is 31. KwaZulu Natal has more crematoria than other provinces as the province has the second highest number of Indians living outside India (Interview with Prof. R.Sitaram, Professor of Indian Languages, UDW, Authority on Hindu religion).

In Durban there are crematoria in the following places: Chatsworth, Mobeni, Claire Estate, and Stellawood. In Pietermaritzburg there is one in Cremon and another in Mountain Rise; there is also one in each of the following places in eShowe, New Castle, Ladysmith, Port Shepstone, Tongaat and Verulam (http://www.srqw.demon.co.uk\cremo_Soc5\stats\interntl\2000V_country_as.html).

These are area where large of Indian population resides. In most cases the Indian community themselves have met the costs of building these crematoria (Interview with Prof. R. Rambilass, Leader of Hindu Youth Movement).

It can be said that that many people, especially African people do not wish to cremate their dead because they lack information about it.

According to an expert the word cremation is rooted in the Latin word *cremo*, which means to 'burn'- particularly the burning of the body. Cremation generally involves the application of high temperature typically about 1400 degrees (760 to 1150 degrees c) to a wooden box or casket, which contains a dead body. The entire process takes about 3 to 5 hours. Most archeologists believe that cremation was invented during the Stone Age, approximately before 3000 B C. It was most likely first used in Europe or the Near East. It became the most common method used of decomposing the human body by 800 BC. (<http://www.religioustolerance-org/crematio.htm>).

According to The Cremation Association of North America, before cremation takes place, any scheduled ceremonies, rite of passages or viewing has been completed, all authorized forms and permits must be completed. The cremation provider should be made aware if the deceased has pacemakers, prosthesis, or any other mechanical or radioactive devices or implants, as may have to be removed and if were not then the person authorizing the cremation will be responsible for any damages caused to crematory or crematory personnel by such devices or implants. Due to the nature of cremation process, any materials

not removed, from the casket or container prior to cremation will be destroyed or will be disposed by the crematory in a non- recoverable manner in accordance with applicable laws. Depending on the state or provincial and local laws there may be a waiting period up to 48 hours from time of death before the human remains may be cremated ([http\\www.funeralplan.com](http://www.funeralplan.com)).

After the cremation has been completed, the container containing the cremated remains will be returned to the family members. If the family members have not already decided on the final resting place for the cremated remains there are some options they can make.

- Placement of the container containing the cremated remains in an indoor or outdoor mausoleum or columbarium.
- Interment of the container in a family burial plot or in a special urn garden that many cemeteries provide for cremated remains.
- Scattering of the remains at sea or on land in accordance with state or provincial or local laws.
- The urn may of course also be taken to the home of loved ones, but plans should be made for an eventual permanent resting place.

- If scattering is done, you may wish to choose a site for a permanent memorial, such as placing the name of the deceased in a Book of Remembrance. (<http://www.funeralplan.com>).

It can be seen then that the cremation process is not a complicated, economical and practical alternative to burial that has its historical roots millennia ago.

Grave recycling has been an alternative to a burial space crisis that has taken place at different parts of the world, and such an alternative has been seen as a viable and economic solution to space as well as environmental problems. There have been several recycling methods that have been examined in considerable detail:

- The “lift and deepen” model has been used extensively in Australia.
- The “remove remains and relocate separately” model has been utilised extensively in South America.
- The “remove remains and co-mingle” project has been predominant in the European settings (Molyneux, 2004).

In fact recycling of graves has been expanded in many societies and has been proven to be a serious alternative to traditional burial arrangements. However there have been time limitations regarding its implementation as well as organizational and administrative obstacles to its thorough application (Molyneux, 2004:5).

The next question revolved around the recycling of graves as an alternative to traditional burials (10. Do you know that the Council is considering recycling the graves?). Only three people were aware of such plans on the part of the municipality and all of them have heard the news at UKHOZI FM's talk show.

However only six out of the 30 people interviewed were aware of what recycling is (Questions No 13 and 14) and only two were able to describe the process. This was a fundamental problem as explained by one of the most highly educated person interviewed, a Deputy School Principal, who said:

"If the Council and all these people who run the Cemeteries departments have ideas to introduce other ways to African people, they must educate the communities. These officials are part of the communities, as most of them now are Africans and they are aware of the traditions and groups within the communities, i.e. the church groups, the burial societies and the funeral offices.

The African community is very proud of its traditions and cremation could be seen as something against the ancestors, but recycling, if it is explained well is an idea that can work in the African communities, people will not have problems. But for this to happen people must know what the leaders have to offer, people can only agree to things they know about”.

After a short explanation of the recycling process in very simple terms on the part of the researcher the following question was asked: Q14. “Do you agree with the recycling of graves?”. Sixteen respondents answered negatively, four answered YES and 10 answered DON'T KNOW.

Of the 16 people who answered negatively ten still maintained that recycling as explained to them briefly was against African culture and traditions as it was thought that the *Amadlozi* (ancestors) were still not acknowledged in this model of burial. However there was an obvious lack of knowledge and awareness on such alternatives that was widely acknowledged by a senior leader of the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria who confessed that:

“There is the reality of the land shortage and the truth that large numbers of African people will not accept cremation as an alternative to burial as they know and understand it from the time they were born and socialized in their families,

schools etc. however, we must understand that life and circumstances change all the time and we in the council must make informed decisions, while at the same time we expect our people especially the African majority to make the correct decisions too. Land is scarce and economic priorities might dictate that the land must be used for industrial development instead of cemeteries. We need to convince the communities of alternatives, educate them and create awareness. Local government are service providers, and we are obligated to follow the principles of Batho Pele, we need to canvass our customers on the benefits of grave recycling, if we don't do it, no one will, it is our job, and we will do it, we have no other choice"(Interview with Mr. Ntombela).

Question No 16 ("Do you feel that Durban needs more cemeteries to look after the dead instead of cremating them?"), elicited 25 YES, 3 Nos. and 2 DON'T KNOWs as the respondents felt strongly on the matter of building new cemeteries in the city and its surroundings. Such a strong wish and demand is obviously based on land availability, governmental priorities, community requirements and affordability, as well as the existing of financial resources and revenues that will sustain these establishments in the future.

There were several responses to the follow-up question (Q17 "If YES, where do you suggest these cemeteries are to be built?"). There were suggestions for the cemeteries to be built in:

- Seven respondents felt that there was enough available land in Umlazi for cemeteries to be built there. Two respondents said that two and not one cemetery could be built in uMlazi.
- Eleven respondents felt that there could be new cemeteries built in and around Durban without really pinpointing exact locations for the building, while the rest, even those who advocated the building of cemeteries were not able to name possible locations.

Such responses and attitudes as expressed in the last two mentioned questions indicate the lack of understanding and awareness on the part of the people interviewed regarding the characteristics, intricacies and details involved with the building, maintenance and function of cemeteries, especially those associated with environmental, infrastructural, resource and human issues.

The next question (Q18 "Have you any suggestions for alternative to burials given the crisis of space in the cemeteries?") elicited the following answers:

Twenty respondents answered NO and seven answered YES. Of those who answered in the affirmative six suggested recycling and only one cremation. The explanation provided by the researcher to the interviewees earlier regarding the nature of recycling seems to have hit a chord with this number of interviewees. This assumption indicates that it could make a real difference to attitudes and understanding of such important dynamics if the council and its relevant departments made a concerted effort in community education regarding the existing and future alternatives. As one of the previous interviewees very wisely commented, the council authorities and bureaucrats are very well aware of the institutions of the African communities, both traditional and modern. A mobilization and education campaign on alternatives can go a long way.

The next questions deal specifically with the issue of the paupers, who are also very well known within the African community as in the vast majority of cases these diseased are Africans.

The continuous migration from the rural and semi-rural areas to the cities in search for work has created a number of serious problems of social and economic dislocation and exclusion. A large number of male potential breadwinners leave their families for almost a year while migrating to the urban areas. Given long periods of separation, many of these males feel that this

justifies taking on additional wives and girlfriends in their places of work. The migrant labour system that has created in the last few decades new strata of working class men and (lately) women has played a significant role in the legitimization of the insidious practice of multiple sexual partners, thereby assisting in the spread of HIV/AIDS (Ziehl, 2002:66, 67). Many of these men due to harsh economic and financial circumstances lose their jobs and thus join the ever expanding army of unemployed reserve labour in the urban areas (Mantzaris and Ngcongo, 2004). They have no financial resources to return to their families in the rural areas. Many of them die lonely and desperate death as unemployed, poor, indigent paupers.

When they die in the cities no one will know. They end up being buried by the municipality. The Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria has identified two types of Paupers:

- The Government Pauper, and
- The Municipality Pauper

The Government Pauper is the person who dies in a hospital and his/her family members are not known. Following the death, the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria buries him/her at Molweni cemetery. Some people who die in such a way are those who are abandoned by their families.

The Municipality Pauper is a person who dies alone at home and he/she does not have any relatives to bury him\ her. In most such cases neighbours phone the municipality, and the deceased becomes the municipality's duty to bury him/her. This type of pauper is buried at the Red Hill Cemetery. These people die from different diseases including Aids (eThekweni Municipality, 2000).

The next question (Q20. "Do you have suggestions for the paupers?, Where must they be buried? What must happen to their bodies after death?") was set to examine the opinions, ideas and attitudes of the interviewees towards the paupers.

It needs to be stated here that despite the economic or social positions of the paupers, the laws, rules and regulations of the South African society that emerged after 1994 have installed in them a serious essence of human rights principles that need to be respected by the municipal and state functionaries in all cases, especially within the context of Batho Pele. Thus irrespective of their individual position, paupers are to be treated with respect and dignity as all human beings and citizens of the country (Interview with Mr. Ngcobo, op.cit).

However, financial constraints have enforced municipalities to find alternatives to burials in order to economise on existing and future financial resources. Thus by the end of 2003c (the time of the last count) the eThekweni municipality had buried 1836 in central cemeteries alone (Interview with Mr. Ntombela, op.cit). In the uMgungundlovu Municipality and the City of Cape Town over 700 indigents and paupers are buried per year, and as time passes by the rates, tariffs and expenses increase significantly.

In this situation several municipalities such as those in Cape Town, the Nelson Mandela Municipality and Tshwane (Pretoria) have introduced the cremation method as a most economical and “sensitive” measure (Dass, 2004). These decisions have not been taken lightly, as the laws and human rights principles enshrined in the country's constitution need to examine and take into account the cultural and religious sensitivities of the dead. It is very clear in our world-renowned Bill of Rights that

“Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. Inherent in this right is the dignified treatment of the individual, even in death” (South African Bill of Rights, 1996).

The social policy issues related to pauper's burials or cremation are to be found in a series of legislative guidelines, which are of a general nature and not specific enough. Thus the Constitution of the Country (South African Constitution, 1996, Schedule 5, Part B) (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states that cemeteries, crematoria and funeral parlours are a function of local government. This means that the elected local government authorities are responsible for the organizational, administrative, financial and social responsibilities of the crematoria and cemeteries.

To supplement these measures, there is the KwaZulu-Natal Cemeteries and Crematoria Act of 1996 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 1996), *which is mute on the paupers' funerals as well as the indigent bodies, that they are covered in an apartheid law, the South African Health Act of 1977 (Health Act, 1997)*. While this law is in the process of been repealed for several years now, the fact remains that pauper's and indigents burial rights are not included. Most likely this is the result of the widespread belief that such measures could better fit in the Welfare portfolios and legislation.

The reality as regards paupers and indigents is that common human decency dictate that no civilized society

“...can treat human bodies as garbage, because the corpse is closely associated with persons. As a vessel that once held something as valuable and precious as human life, the corpse is in and of itself something to be respected. In recalling the person who once lived- the identity and qualities of the individual- the corpse is accorded the later value. Our respect for that person and for the memory of that person remains, a link that is not readily broken” (Enscanlar, no date).

It is important thus, to establish the opinions, ideas and attitudes of African people towards the paupers and indigent burials.

Twenty-one interviewees indicated that it was the “African way” that all people should have a proper funeral and burial as they were on their way to meet their ancestors. This meant that paupers and indigent people should have a good burial and should be buried in the cemeteries where all people are buried. This was explained as follows by one of the respondents who strongly supported such a position:

“The African philosophy of ubuntu needs to be the guiding principle for all aspect of our peoples live, including death, because death is a part of life. Ubuntu means that we are all humans because of the other humans, and it is understood that paupers and indigents were not born this way; they were possibly father,

uncles, and grandmothers. The fact that they died alone and people don't know who they are possibly was their own fault, possibly not, only God know. This is why I feel all Africans will support a good burial for all these people, this is our history and we must respect our ancestors".

There were five respondents who believed that alternative burial ways could apply to paupers and indigents. All of those who believed that were in the younger and better-educated category. They believed that cremation if was accepted by the council authorities as a more economical way could be seen as an alternative. There were some other reasons advances as one of the supporters of this position explained:

"It is true that the African traditions are of importance to all of us, but one needs to look at the situation with very clear mind. Why one African man who buries his mother must pay over R10000 to offer her a very basic funeral because this is dictated by our beliefs and history, while a person who offers nothing to society must have a free burial at the ratepayers expense? We must talk about these things the same way we must question the expenses of our leaders in local government, how they spend our money from the rates and taxes. The paupers and indigents deserves respect like all human beings, but cremation is a very respectful way of looking after the death"

Cremation has been a serious and contentious issues amongst well educated and middle and upper class amaZulu, and in the early 1990's there was an important debate amongst the indigenous intellectuals when one of the most brilliant Zulu intellectuals, K.E. Masinga decided to be cremated after his death. Masinga was no average intellectual, but a cultural activist of importance, the founder of RADIO ZULU (at present known as UKHOZI FM), a dramatist, poet and chronicler, and a translator into isiZulu of W. Shakespeare's major works. Masinga insisted of been cremated and this decision and subsequent implementation created not only debate but also a great degree of consternation in the isiZulu speaking community at the time (Omar, 2004: 4).

This is one of the key reasons why the next question was set (Q21. *"Do you think that African communities will accept cremation instead of burial if they realise how great the problem is"?*).

This is a key question as the choice between burials in cemeteries and cremation in crematoria underlies a number of significant questions that face not only the Durban unicity, but also the whole society at large:

- The cost of setting aside fertile land for graveyards.

- The land scarcity factor.
- The environmental impacts of such decisions.
- The cost of grave maintenance.
- The costs of funerals and religious practices and beliefs.
- The overcrowding of cemeteries.

There were nineteen respondents who answered in the affirmative in regard to this question, while eight answered No, and the rest refused to answer or did not know. The number of respondents who answered YES in this question represents more than fifty percent, and close to two thirds of the selected sample. This can be seen as a significant change of attitude that possibly signifies a realization of the tough times facing the municipalities, their leadership and the people who will die.

Thus in Johannesburg only seven cemeteries out of 34 have space to accommodate the forthcoming dead (who are increasing by the day as indicated earlier). This is sufficient up to 2010 (Radebe, 2004). For this reason the City of Johannesburg is in the process of developing three new sites for cemeteries for 2030, in Diepsloot, Waterval and Eikenhop. Such plans were essential as it has been reported that in the Avalon Cemetery alone there were 10 335 total burial

for the year 2003/2004 as compared with 18 227 burials over the last five years (Interview with J. Moodley, 14/6/2004).

The attitudes of the nineteen respondents on cremation in the context of the present project perhaps signify a shift in attitude towards cremation amongst younger and better-educated strata within the African population. Incidentally, one of the most influential managers in one of the largest municipalities had this to say in the recent National Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria that took place in Durban in 2004:

"During 1996 or 1997, a study was undertaken in the EGSC region to ascertain whether cremations could be promoted in the region as another preferred option for disposal. The findings showed that the younger generation and your more affluent Africans had no major objections towards cremations. The problem was that in the African culture when there is a death in the family, the elderly, who did not believe that cremation was an African thing, unless specifically asked for by the deceased, makes decisions"(Radebe, 2004: 5)

There has been a new trend in and around Johannesburg that has become quite prominent, where numbers of African and other Black people look at cremation as an alternative to burial. Nationally, however, there is only a 6 % increase in

cremation. This has become more noticeable amongst people in the younger generations, as one would expect. The City Parks division in Johannesburg has encouraged people to also look at secondary burials as an option in family-held graves (Interview with J. Moodley).

In relation to the follow-up question (Q22. *“Can you give me reasons for your previous answer?”*), of those who answered in the affirmative, ten said that the existing poor conditions of large numbers of African people, as well as unemployment would lead African families to accept cremation, which was much cheaper. Three said that African people were very aware of the HIV/AIDS situation that had very serious negative effects on African families who had many dead. Thus it was basically financial constraints, which forced them to accept cremation as a solution instead of a proper burial according to the African customs and traditions.

Such sentiments and feelings in fact pinpoint a serious understanding of prevailing economic and social conditions, not only in the eThekweni municipality, but also throughout the country. It has been reported extensively for example that in one of the largest municipalities in the country, the Ekurhuleni (East Rand) the burial sites available would not be enough in the next five years. This will create a serious problem for the future generations. To tackle such problems, the

municipality has started a debate on the subject of cremation and other alternatives. This was imperative as the municipality was running out of space (Radebe, 2004:3).

There have been signs that a good number of African people, but not in high numbers, were beginning to look at various options such as cremation. It was estimated that more or less 2 percent of African people see cremation as a viable alternative to burials (Saturday Star, 6/11/2004)

This was the result of the escalating costs of funerals that led to huge debt for families since many burial societies were on the brink of collapse due to the AIDS pandemic. In such circumstances, cremation that costs between R300-500 seems a much cheaper way of having a humane departure of the dead family member (Interview with Radebe, 16/6/2004).

A similar situation regarding cremation is to be found in Zimbabwe in the last two to three years. As the HIV/Aids pandemic kills over 3000 per week and paupers dead bodies overfill the mortuaries, the burial space is in a desperate situation as the Zimbabwe Association of Funeral Assures has indicated. The lack of burial space throughout the country and especially the urban centers of Harare and Bulawayo has led the Harare newspaper THE HERALD to advertise for people to

go and claim the bodies there. In such a situation and given the harsh economic realities for most families in Zimbabwe, cremation has become a popular alternative. Funeral parlours have reported that over 100 bodies are cremated in Harare per week (STAR, 26/7/2004 "Zimbabweans unable to bury their dead ")

Question 23 (*"Do you feel that African communities will accept family plots instead of a burial?"*) was set in order to determine the interviewees' attitudes and opinions towards that alternative.

Twenty-six of the respondents answered in the affirmative, two did not know and two did not accept the alternative. The vast majority who answered in the affirmative felt that family plots were as good as a simple grave burial, if not better, as it was felt the unity of the family could be preserved even after death and there will be continuous communication and connection with the ancestors.

Following the responses of community members regarding key aspects of burial space, cremation and other alternatives, as well as their knowledge and awareness of such realities, the findings and analysis of the interviews with municipal officials and religious leaders will follow. The interview schedule upon which the following analysis is based is produced in APPENDIX 2 of this thesis.

4.3 The Religious Leaders and Municipal Officers Responses

There were five fundamental questions that covered basically the whole spectrum of the topic, and it was sincerely hoped that the approach and knowledge of this group of interviewees would be of value to the analysis of data as well the conclusions and recommendations that will follow.

The first question (*Q1 there is a general knowledge that the space for cemeteries in Durban has been limited due to the many deaths in the city and the Province of KwaZulu Natal. What do you see as the alternatives to traditional burial? An alternative to this crisis?*”), elicited an interesting array of responses:

- The responses of the Unicity officials in charge of Crematoria and Cemeteries (Mr. R. Ntombela and Mr. T. Ngcobo) basically concentrated on a few fundamental realities that indicated a deep knowledge of the situation as well as a serious commitment to solve the problem with a well planned and implemented initiative:
- There needs to be a thorough and continuous education campaign amongst all communities explaining that land is a scarce commodity and land needs to be utilised in a very wide variety of ways, such as economic development, agriculture, re-distribution to communities and

the like. In this context the population needs to become aware of the shortage for land in order to build cemeteries, despite the purchase of the land in the township of uMlazi.

- Within all layers of government international experiences need to be studied in relation to burial and cemetery practices, so that future plans can be well thought, evaluated and implemented.
- All sections of the population need to begin considering culturally and religiously sensitive burial practices such as cremation and recycling of graves that have been serious and inexpensive alternatives throughout the world.
- Above all. It is imperative that all initiatives, education campaigns and future decisions need to be the product of widespread communication and consultation with communities, as described in the spirit of the Batho Pele (*PEOPLE FIRST*) principles.
- It has been acknowledged that all citizens in the city of Durban as well as throughout the country expect efficient, effective and consultative service delivery in this field.
- The delivery of plans and implementation in terms of cemeteries, crematoria, cremations and grave recycling need to encapsulate the spirit of the Integrated Development Planning initiatives as stipulated in the various seminal municipal acts.

In terms of the religious leaders interviewed there were also several diversified viewpoints. While the Hindu religious and spiritual leaders and experts interviewed were adamant that the material social and economic circumstances dictated alternative solutions such as cremation, Omar (2004:2) indicates a serious disagreement between senior leaders of the Jewish faith in regard to cremation. Thus she quotes Rabbi P.Zekry of the United Hebrew Congregation (in other words the voice of "Orthodox Judaism") who has categorically stated that in-ground burial is the only acceptable manner for the dignified interment of the dead according to the Jewish law. This according to the leading rabbi is derived directly from the Torah, the Mosaic Law that is the legal basis of Judaism. On the other hand, however, the Rabbi of the Durban Reform Synagogue, Michael Stanfield contradicts such assertions by saying that there are different ways dealing with the question of providing a dignified disposal of a human body. Cremation in its modern form is one of these. Whilst burial in the ground remains the norm, we have no ideological conflict with the custom that is now popularly by many as clean and appropriate conditions. There is a small but sizeable Jewish community in Durban, with its own specific historical, traditional and religious beliefs and customs, and it is well known that at least three cemeteries in Durban have Jewish sections, but the question of cremation, is basically an alternative for the majority of the people in the province. The

disagreement, however, between these two senior religious leaders of the Jewish faith was mentioned in order for many people to understand the dynamics and particularities of this vital and complicated debate, as it exists at present.

The Muslim leaders interviewed were clear that there were several solutions to the chronic problem of the lack of space, the most viable being cremations. However they were clear that cremation was out of the question for Muslims themselves as it was against the religious dictates of the Quran. However there was the solution of the recycling of the graves, which was thought to be a very important means of maximizing space (Interview with S.Dangor, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of KwaZulu Natal).

There were several positions regarding the solutions according to Christian leaders. For the Anglican Church cremation was certainly a solution for those who could not afford a proper burial, while the recycling of graves could be thought as a good idea in economizing space. However there was also the idea and solution of the mausoleums which also came to the fore from this representative. Mausoleums has been an alternative solution used in Europe and North and South America, as cremation tends to be sensitive to a number of religions as already indicated.

A mausoleum is a stone, above ground tomb, which has been in existence for millennia, especially in Africa and South America. The new millennium mausoleums are built in pressure-tested high technology concrete, clad with durable granite for the tomb end-covers. Such a design will (according to one of the presenters at the National Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria) will deliver 1008 burial chambers on the ground space normally required for 80 in-ground conventional graves. The space utilization is therefore 12 times better than for in-ground graves (Coates, 2004:1).

There have been representatives of the Christian faith, however, especially intellectuals who combine the teachings of Christianity with the rejuvenation and perpetuation of the Zulu culture that have expressed publicly very strong views on the solutions proposed by both religious and municipal leaders. Thus one of the pioneer exponents of the Zulu Christian culture and traditions called cremation “an insult to the beliefs of Christians”, as all people were created in the image of God and the idea of cremating human bodies meant that one “was cremating God”. Additionally in Zulu culture cremation was perceived as a curse and therefore everyone who was cremated would bring misfortune, which might result “in the extinction of one's family members” (Ngubane 2004:3).

Thus amazingly and Christian beliefs are clear as dying is going back where the dead belongs. The isiZulu word *goduka* means that when one dies he/she rejoins old relatives, friends and above all the ancestors. When one dies he/she goes home, hence there is a need for a “proper burial”, full of dignity and respect for the dead and the living (Ngubane, 2004:2).

There are certainly different religious views on a variety of aspects in one’s life and death, and all need to be respected, as the constitution of South Africa is very accommodating of the wide variety of the cultural, historical and religious traits of our people. However as one of the most enlightened religious experts interviewed, a deeply knowledgeable authority on African Christian and traditional religion said:

“There is no religion that can negate the realities of life in this new country, because the suffering and injustices of apartheid need to be rectified. One of the major problems facing the country is the HIV/Aids situation and there have been calls from various political leaders, including the Vice President for the religious leaders to become the pioneers of the moral regeneration of our people. For this reason all religious leaders need to participate in the alleviation of the suffering of the majority of the people. The Holy Scriptures are sacred, but the suffering and humiliation of hundreds of thousands of people is more important in the eyes of

Our God. There are solutions to the problem of the dead and the crisis of the cemeteries, if people wish to be cremated then there must not be stopping, if people want to recycle the family graves on their own, no one can stop them .The fundamentalism of various religions must also take account of the social problems of our society, such as hunger, deprivation, and death. The solution to the cemeteries crisis is in the minds and hearts of all people, not only in the scriptures”.

(Interview with Prof, CGJ Osthuizen, Emeritus Professor and Senior researcher of Religions, University of Durban Westville, 2/7/2004)

The second question (Q2 How can the council leadership educate people about existing viable and culturally sensitive alternatives?”) was met with serious skepticism on the part of the religious experts and interviewees . This was basically a result of what seems a deeply rooted lack of belief in the ability of the Durban Council and its officials to articulate plan and implement a series of tasks that they are an integral part of their duties and responsibilities in the first place.

As one of the religious leaders who for this question and answer preferred to remain anonymous said:

“To tackle such an issue will be impossible for the city council for a number of reasons. Firstly if you cannot convince the African ratepayers in places like Umlazi and Lamontville to pay their rates, how can you debate cremation with them? Cremation and recycling are anathema for amaZulu; it is completely against their culture. If the council is serious about cremation and recycling of graves they must commence meetings with religious leaders, with institutions of African communities, like the burial societies, to see how they feel, to talk to them to convince them of the necessity of new approaches and alternatives. However the council leaders and all the staff in the relevant departments are scared to talk to these churches, there is a very powerful lobby of funeral offices that are close to Christian amaZulu churches, cremation will be economically bad for them. These are very serious economic interests at stake; religion is just a good cover. Everyone knows that cremation is cheaper than a proper funeral, why then the city leadership has done almost nothing to educate the people?”

There is the opposing view, however, as presented by the council representative, whom is fact in charge of whatever education campaign has occurred in the city:

“The education campaign has started in fact since 1997, when our Cemeteries and Crematoria Department started urging all citizens of the municipality to make informed choices about how they wished to depart from this world. We could not

be prescriptive and tell people do this and do that because it is cheaper cleaner and better and because we are running out of space. In 2000 we released a brochure where we set the various options we need to make people think about the realities, the realities of the city, the province, the country, but above all their realities. People who are critical of us do not understand the importance of human resource utilization, our staff situation and how the system works. The city council has set priorities in our department we need to follow these priorities. In time we will be in the forefront of education and awareness as we have set the foundations already” (Ntombela, 2004).

Question No 3 (“Can cremation or recycling of graves be seen as a viable, culturally and religiously sensitive alternatives? Why? How?”), elicited a similar array of responses as it became evident that while the Hindu interviewees were eager and accommodating towards recycling of graves and cremation, Christian and Muslim religious leaders had reservations as they saw these practical alternatives as against their deeply held beliefs and historical traditions as emanating from their respective holy scriptures.

The municipal leaders and officials, however, were adamant, as they have been in the quotations produced in the context of this thesis as been in complete agreement with these alternatives.

One needs to look beyond religion in this type of a question and reality as cultural and historical traits amongst large numbers of people are considered even stronger and more significant than staunch religious beliefs as an amaZulu intellectual has shown.

Ngubane (2004: 5) thus wrote poignantly:

“The practice of recycling graves shows disrespect to the ancestors and the dead. It is very sad that in this juncture of our liberation struggle we open a debate that is taboo in Zulu culture. The commercialization of funerals is unethical and should be discouraged by granting people access to God-given resources such as land instead of placing funerals in the hands of private companies which exploit the poor by charging high rates. What can stop the people from burying their dead in their yards from protection rather than being evicted to cemeteries?”.

This is indeed the clarion call of amaZulu culture mixed with the Christian ethic that has become the cry of the new revivalist and charismatic churches that in the end can become a formidable impediment to any council plans to solve the cemeteries crisis. The ascendancy of these churches, especially in the African communities in the urban areas has been one of the most remarkable transformations in the South African landscape, but it is a social and ideological

issue that has not been treated with the seriousness it deserves by academics and researchers.

Thus the 2001 Census (www.statssa.gov.za/ Census 2001/ Religions/ Christian Denominations) indicates that over 40% of the Christians in the country belong to charismatic, rather than mainstream Christian Churches, including the over 10 million Afro-centric independent churches such as the Zionists, Shembe, Universal, Apostolic and the like. Researchers on African religion believe that such churches, especially in the African community can only grow without signs of stagnating (Osthuizen, 2004). There are researchers on religion who believe that the numbers of such churches have moved to above half of the country's population (Cohrane, 2004:5). The explosion in popularity and funding of these churches is accompanied by a new zest for the "deeper meaning" of the various Christian scriptures and their "purity of purpose", which makes innovative and cheaper alternatives for burial such as cremation a non-starter.

This despite the fact that the Pentecostal stream of these churches seem to be technologically and spiritually connected, the best example been the Rhema Church with various branches throughout the country, its own TV show that aspires to address peoples real needs in a modern world. The question of cremation, the crisis of the cemeteries, the recycled grave possibilities could be a

serious test not only for the flock of the new pastors and bishops, but for the city officials in their race against time.

Question 4 (“Could we see alternatives such as mausoleums viable and culturally and religiously sensitive to the majority of our people?”) elicited a positive response from the Christian, and Hindu leaders as well as the council officials. This is because a mausoleum can be built on any unusable ground and its cost is not expensive. A granite clad modular mausoleum consists of a main internal construction that is devoted to sealed individual burial chambers that are cast in reinforced concrete.

It has been calculated that the standard mausoleum offers interment facilities for 1008 bodies on the space normally reserved for 80 standard graves. This means that this could be seen as very cost effective alternative (Grafritalia, 2004). There have been confirmed reports that a number of municipalities in the Mpumalanga province have expressed serious interest in the implementation of the mausoleum burial alternative, while the municipalities of Ekurhuleni and Msukalingwa have already accepted similar proposals (Grafritalia, 2004:1-2). It has also been reported that at the city of Ermelo the first 100-chamber system was sold out to the community before construction has even started (Grafritalia, 2004:6). After all it might become a key aspect in the alternative burial debate.

The final question in this interview schedule (Q5 what is the most humane and religiously and culturally sensitive way to bury indigent and unidentified paupers?)

4.4 The Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion took place also in the township of Ntuzuma and lasted for four hours. It consisted of 10 people chosen from the community by the researcher and represented a wide variety of age, religious, social and economic groups. All of them were isiZulu speakers and there were 5 males and five females. None of these interviewees was represented in the sampled number of 30 Ntuzuma residents whose responses, opinions and attitudes were examined earlier under section 4.2 of the same chapter.

The discussion was guided and directed by a moderator who was trained for such an intervention by the internationally recognised organisation of conflict resolution ACCORD, which was based at the University of Durban Westville. The researcher kept notes meticulously and strict anonymity was guaranteed to all participants to make them feel at ease and be open in the deliberation. It was for this reason that no tape recorder or such other device was used. Snacks, meat

and cold drinks were offered to the participants during and after the group discussion. The general findings of the focus group were the following:

- Knowledge of the burial space crisis and awareness of the lack of space for cemeteries:
- There was a general knowledge on the part of the people regarding the crisis, but when the existing details of the situation were mentioned to them there was a complete disbelief on their part.
- There was an acceptance that HIV/AIDS was a great problem in the community that devastated many families.
- Two members of the Episcopal Church group mentioned that their burial society could not keep up with the expenses of the funeral of the principal members (i.e. the persons that paid the subscriptions), while no other members' funeral costs were covered. This was felt would be the final death of the burial society that operated for 15 years in the area and has 450-500 members.
- It was felt that if the situation was so bad and in a crisis all civil leaders from the area, such as the councilors should come to the community to hear their opinions of how this problem can be solved.
- It was agreed that the Council and councilors were doing "their own thing" without consulting the people and it was a "top down approach".

- The majority of people did not accept this approach, because things were done behind their backs. This should come to an end.
- The majority of participants justified their lack of knowledge and awareness to the lack of communication between the council officials and communities.
- They also blamed local authorities for their lack of knowledge of the INK Presidential Project.
- However, these claims took a knock when the youngest member of the discussion group, a 26 year old unemployed person challenged the older members of the focus group when he asked them how much had they done in trying to find out about the cemeteries crisis or the INK project.
- There was a general agreement after some silence, as it was said openly that the participation of the community on many fronts was not as active as it should be.
- There was an agreement that there should be serious debate between various stakeholders and especially the community regarding the crisis of the cemeteries, as death was of great significance for all people and especially amaZulu.
- The group was asked to debate the alternatives without first having the opportunity to be briefed on some of them by the moderator.

- The immediate reaction of the people regarding alternatives to cemeteries was that people should be able to bury their dead in their houses or in the vicinity of their houses. It was believed that this was historically one of the most important parts of Zulu culture, and it was still the norm in rural communities.
- It was the historical tradition of the Zulu people to bury their people in their homes as their ancestors called upon them all the time.
- There were questions regarding the hygienic and environmental problems arising from such burial practices, both by the moderator and another two members of the group.
- The answer to these concerns was that there would be close cooperation between the community, individuals and the council authorities so that such problems could be overcome.
- After the moderator made the group aware of some of the alternatives examined in the thesis, the following debate ensued.
- Cremation was unacceptable to all people participating in the group with exception of its youngest member.
- It was stated time and again that the burning of the body was against the teachings of Christianity and against the culture and beliefs of the Zulu nation.

- Only when the crisis has reached completely unacceptable limits and there is no other solution there could be cremation.
- All accepted it that it was the prerogative of young or old people to decide whether they want to be cremated at any stage of their lives.
- There was no agreement on the recycling of the graves, as there was serious confusion on the status of such a burial practice in relation to the Christian scriptures.
- There was a general agreement in terms of mausoleums as an alternative, mostly because of their cost effectiveness for the individual.

In terms of the relations between the councilors/council and community the same feelings were expressed as earlier. The main thrust of the participants' belief was that the council and the councilors as well as all politicians do not communicate and debate key issues with individuals and communities and this was an issue that needed to be addressed by both the community, their leadership and the local government representatives themselves.

Regarding the question of the pauper's funerals and or/burials there was a complete agreement that there should be a humane and culturally sensitive burial given the present circumstances.

When the group was told that other municipalities were in fact cremating the paupers and unidentified indigent there was a strong resentment towards these municipalities. However, these feelings were softened considerably when the costs and burden facing municipalities were mentioned to them. The general feeling regarding the paupers was that the spirit of ubuntu should guide the functions and actions of the authorities in regard to them.

The fourth chapter was the analysis and interpretation of data. The three sets of questionnaires and interviews were examined and interpreted separately, but in an interconnected way as all of them were basically parts of the same body of empirical evidence. There were many opinions, ideas, attitudes and contradictions regarding the cemeteries and crematoria, cremation and religion cultural traits and history. The hypotheses set earlier in the study were tested and will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, where the conclusions and recommendations are the key issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

There was not much uproar amongst the African communities throughout South Africa when one of the most popular African singers of all time, Brenda Fassie decided that she wished to be cremated after her death. Possibly this was because she was always a controversial person that was in love with publicity and surprises, living the life of a pop queen. No one really thought that Brenda perhaps was aware of the problems facing the country regarding burial space, but this could be sheer speculation.

The reality is that the eThekweni Municipality and most, if not, municipalities in South Africa face a crisis of burial space for a number of sociological, anthropological and economic reasons that have been touched upon in this thesis : migration of large numbers of rural dwellers to the urban areas because of unemployment and better job prospects, the HIV/AIDS pandemic , economic and financial competition amongst different sectors of the economy and a host of other reasons are important in this reality.

In the context of such a project a number of issues of great

- Land availability
- Land scarcity
- Developmental /growth /economic imperatives
- Cost effectiveness for municipality and customers
- Environmental impact
- Cultural and religious sensitivities

The cemeteries have been historically and at present public spaces of major importance for all cultural, religious and social groups as they are places of worship, gathering and social expression that need to be restructured in order to function according to the dictates of the new conditions and circumstances.

In this context there needs to be a re-assessment of the design, location and re-positioning that will address urgently their utilization, requirements, maintenance, efficiency and will be in accordance with the country's religious, cultural, ethnic and social diversity.

The present project examined these problems by utilizing an array of methodological weapons that were utilised in rejecting or confirming the following hypotheses:

- There is a serious lack of awareness amongst the majority of African people regarding the crisis of burial spaces in the eThekweni Municipality.
- There is a lack of knowledge and awareness amongst the majority of people in the eThekweni Municipality regarding new ways of solving the crisis facing the burial of the dead.
- Culture, traditional values and religious beliefs are impediments to new and innovative ways of addressing the serious problem of space in the burying of the dead in the eThekweni municipality.

The first hypothesis was rejected, as there was a knowledge and awareness of the crisis facing the unicity in terms of cemeteries.

The second hypothesis was confirmed as the empirical evidence showed that the knowledge and awareness of the respondents regarding new ways of solving the crisis was indeed limited.

The third hypothesis was confirmed, as it became clear in the analysis and interpretation of data that culture, traditional values and religious beliefs were impediments to new and innovative ways of addressing the serious problem of space in the burying of the dead in the eThekweni municipality.

The present project has pinpointed a number of unquestionable realities that need to be always in the minds of municipal leaders and major stakeholders and role players in the context of death, society at large, cemeteries and crematoria:

- There cannot be solutions to such problems without the consultation, cooperation and coordination amongst communities and their leaders and the various layers of local government.
- The policy of local governments towards the poor, the unidentified, the paupers and the indigent people will in the end characterize it as caring, humane or not.
- The burial process, function and undertaking should be a sustainable, community-oriented service that unites instead of dividing people.

- There is an urgent need for a nationally - based body that will undertake research, coordinate efforts and develop coordinated guidelines for cemeteries and crematoria services.
- This body will ensure the gradual standardization of service delivery on a national scale, minimum requirements, recognition of the cultural, religious and social diversity of our country as well as the uniqueness of all regions and provinces.
- Such a body will identify and maintain the key areas of productivity and efficiency, such as maintenance, security, utilization of human resources and security at all levels and all regions.
- There cannot be a coordinated and implemented policy on crematoria and cemeteries outside the parameters and dictates of the Integrated Development Planning principles and guidelines.

Within these parameters and well coordinated processes a communication awareness and education strategy needs to be adopted that will encompass the following ingredients:

- Website
- Plays

- Meetings with African institutions, such as burial societies and other traditional financial and social institutions
- Meetings with churches and church groups
- Utilisation of radio, through interviews, talks shows
- Community shows
- School talks

In these communication initiatives the key issues that relate the leadership of the local government with the organs of civic society and communities will be communicated to the wider public so that the information flow is a key community-based reality.

In terms of alternatives to a traditional burial, the mausoleum concept seems to be a cheap, affordable burial opportunity with developmental potential. This for several reasons:

- It is environmentally friendly as there is no ground water pollution.
- It saves space
- It is cost effective for the municipality and the dead as there is efficient use of burial space and savings on individual coffins
- There is low maintenance costs because of the granite component

- New employment opportunities open for local communities that can be empowered through cooperative efforts and initiatives.
- Skills transfer and capacity building will be utilised for other possibilities existing with the granite.

In terms of unidentified paupers' burials, the national or provincial government needs to subsidise the service as part of their humanitarian, welfare function, while the role of the local government is to perform the burials.

It is of vital importance that all stakeholders and role players need to develop a clear short, medium and long term strategy that will take into account all particularities sensitivities and historical traditions of all people in the Durban municipality and the KwaZulu-Natal Province, especially the social and demographic groups that will be the target

The desired outcomes of such plans need to be laid out, discussed and decided upon based on the principles of Batho Pele and thus ensure the widest choices and options available for the dead, their families and their communities. Tolerance, understanding, compromises and thoroughly founded research and international comparisons are of vital importance in this long and possibly tedious process.

There cannot be solid planning and implementation without assessments, evaluations and concrete evidence of existing or potential alternatives. This can only start the debates between stakeholders such as the business community, NGOs, CBOs, community leaders, civic leaders, religious and cultural leaders and lay people from all walks of life. This might sound very common or too idealistic, as most decisions at present are taken through the top-down approach, because it is more direct and decisive.

However, without the undertaking of such an encompassing process the decisions taken in the final analysis will not satisfy the majority of the citizens, and could be completely off the mark, as the awareness and consciousness of all societal stakeholders will be at a low point.

A re-evaluation of funeral practices and the discovery of alternatives that could prove a solution to the deepening crisis of land shortage in the eThekweni municipality needs to be based on the rising awareness of people, and their deeply acquired knowledge devoid possibly of restrictive scriptural truths that are not in synergy with the needs of the majority of our people.

REFERENCES

Babbie Earl and Mouton Johann, 1988: The Practice of Social Research. Oxford,
Oxford University Press

Baily Kenneth, 1994: Methods of Social Research. Free Press

Bless Clair and Higson-Smith Graig, 1995: Fundamentals of Social Research
Methods, An African Perspective. Cape Town, Juta

Bless and Higson-Smith, G. 1995. Fundamentals of Social Research Perspective
(2nd edition), Juta and Co. LTD, Cape Town

Bureau of Economic Research. 2004. The Consequences of the AIDS pandemic
on the South African Economy, Stellenbosch

Coates I 2004 Mausoleums: An Alternative, paper presented at the National

Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14-16/6/2004

Cochrane, J. 2004. Independent Revivalist Churches, Research Institute of Christianity, University of Cape Town

Creswell, J. 1994, Research design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches, SAGE Publication, Inc, Thousand Oaks, California

Dass, P. 2004. Disposal of Indigent and Unidentified Paupers: A Proposed Model, Paper presented at the National Conference of Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC Durban, 14-16/6/2004

De Vos, A. S. (editor) 2003. Research at Grassroots: A primer for caring Profession. Pretoria, JL Van Schaik Publishers.

Enscondlar V, no date Ethics in the treatment of Dead people, cited in Dass 2004 Disposal of Indigent and Unidentified paupers: a Proposed Model. Paper presented in the National Conference of Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14-16/6/2004

Elliot, A. 1970. The Magic World of the Xhosa, ABC Press (PTY) LTD. Cape Town

eThekweni Municipality, 2000. Community Awareness Campaign on Cemeteries and Crematoria, Durban

eThekweni Municipality, 2004. Integrated Development Planning, Inanda/Ntuzuma /KwaMashu, Durban, June

Gelderblom, D. 2003. Social Institution, Oxford University Press Southern Africa. Cape Town

Geyevu, S. 2001. Migrant Life in South Africa: A case study in KwaZulu-Natal unpublished PhD thesis, SPP, University of Durban Westville

Grafritalia, J. 2004, Presentation on Mausoleums, at the National Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoriums, ICC, Durban, 14/16-6- 2004

Health Act, 1997. National Health Act, No 63, Government Printers, Pretoria

HEARD (Health, Economic and AIDS Research), 2004. AIDS Fact sheet, UKZN, Durban

ILO (International Labour Organisation) 2004 AIDS and the Labour Market,
Geneva

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 1996. KwaZulu-Natal Cemeteries and Crematoria
Act, Pietermaritzburg

Mbeki, T. 2003. State of the Nation Address, Cape Town, Supplement to the
SOWETAN

Mbeki, T. 2004. State of the Nation Address, Cape Town, Supplement to the
MERCURY, Durban

Mlaba, O. 2004. Opening speech at the National Conference on Cemeteries and
Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14/16/2004

Molyneau, C. 2004. Proposed Model for Grave Recycling, paper presented at the
National Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14-16
June

Mouton, J. and Marais, H.C. 1988, Basic Concepts in the Methodology of the
Social Sciences, HSRC Press. Pretoria

Ngubane, S. 2004. Traditional African Practice with regard to burial practices,
with special reference to the Zulu People of South Africa, paper presented
at the National conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban,
14-16/6/2004

Ntombela, R. 2004. The Reality of Burial Space Storage and Cremation as an
economically viable alternative, paper presented at the National
Conference on Cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14/16-6-2004

Old Mutual Health Care, 2004. A fact sheet, Cape Town (A booklet distributed to
company's client)

Patton, M.Q. 1987. How to use Qualitative Method in Evaluation, SAGE
Publication, Newbury Park, California, USA

Radebe, P. 2004. Cemeteries: Liability or Essential Services? Paper presented in
the national conference on cemeteries and Crematoria, ICC, Durban, 14-
16/6/2004

Reader's Digest 1989. Illustrated History of South Africa, United State of
America

Republic of South Africa, 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 198, Government Printers, Pretoria

Scott, P. and Spencer, C. 1998. Psychology – A Comprehensive Introduction, Blackwell Publishers Inc. Oxford. UK

South African Bill of Rights, 1996. Section 10 (B and D)

The Provincial Gazette of KwaZulu Natal: 12 February 1997

The Sunday Tribune: 24 February 2002

The Daily News: 1 October 2002

Tischler, H.L. 1996, Introduction to Sociology (5th edition), Harcourt Brace College Publishers. Orlando. Florida

Trochim, M. K. 2002. Research Methods Knowledge Base. Internet Journal

Williamson, L. 2004. General Manager of Johannesburg Park Department in

World Bank, 2003. World Development Index, New York

Ziehl, S.C. 2002. Population Studies, Oxford University Southern Africa. Cape Town.

Internet sites

[Http://www.religioustolerance - org / crematio.htm](http://www.religioustolerance-org/crematio.htm)

[Http://www.funeralplan.com](http://www.funeralplan.com)

[Http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?Report ID=41609](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=41609)

[Http://www.cemetories. /a- archdiocese.org.8cfc.html](http://www.cemetories.a-archdiocese.org.8cfc.html)

[Http://www.episcopalchurch. Org/ 3577-200/486 ENG.HTM htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577-200/486ENG.HTM)

[Http://www.aegis-com. /news /ips/2002/IP020403.html](http://www.aegis-com/news/ips/2002/IP020403.html)

[Http://www.geocities-com /lamberdar / cremation-html](http://www.geocities-com/lamberdar/cremation-html)

[Http://www.bbc.co.uk /religions/hinduisim/features/death](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religions/hinduisim/features/death)

[Http://www.sunnah.org /msaec/articles/cremation.htm](http://www.sunnah.org/msaec/articles/cremation.htm)

[www.news 24.com/News 24/SA/News 02-7-1422 html](http://www.news24.com/News24/SA/News02-7-1422.html)

Personal Interviews

Moulana E. Mohamed, Muslim Theologian

Ms J. Moodley, City Parks of Johannesburg

Mr. I Ngcobo, Director, eThekweni Department of Parks, Leisure and Culture

Mr. R. Ntombela, Project Executive, eThekweni Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Prof CJ Osthuizen retired Professor of Christianity and world authority on African
traditional religions, UDW

Dr. S. Rambilass, Hindu Youth Leader, expert on Hindu culture and religion,
Principal of Hindu School, Westville

Prof. R.Sitaram, Professor of Hindu Languages and world expert on Hindu
Religion, UDW

Rev. S. White, Christian theologian, non denominational

APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

I AM A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL AND I DO RESEARCH ON CEMETERIES IN DURBAN. YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS ONE OF MY INTERVIEWEES. PLEASE ANSWER ALL THESE QUESTIONS OPENLY AND HONESTLY.

YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS WILL APPEAR NOWHERE IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

THANKING YOU

Mrs. NOMATHEMBA NGCONGO

RESEARCH MA STUDENT

SOCIAL POLICY

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

QUESTIONNAIRE

AGE: _____

GENDER: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: _____

EDUCATIONAL STATUS: _____

RELIGION: _____

HOME LANGUAGE _____

1. Did you have a family /relative/ friend death lately?

YES	
NO	

2. If YES did you have a problem in finding a place in the cemetery to bury him/her?

YES	
NO	

3. If YES, can you elaborate on the problem?

5. If YES, where have you heard?

6. Do you know that the council authorities consider cremation for our dead because of the crisis of space in the cemeteries?

YES	
NO	

7. If YES, where have you heard about this?

8. Do you agree with cremation?

YES	
NO	
DON'T KNOW	

9. Can you give me the reasons for your answer in No 8?

10. Do you know that the Council is considering recycling the graves?

YES	
NO	

11. If YES, where have you heard?

12. Do you know what recycling is?

YES	
NO	

13. If YES, can you describe it?

14. Do you agree with the recycling of Graves?

YES	
NO	
DON'T KNOW	

15. Please give reasons for your answer.

16. Do you feel that Durban needs more cemeteries to look after the dead instead of cremating them?

YES	
NO	
DON'T KNOW	

17. If YES, where do you suggest these cemeteries are to be built?

18. Have you suggestions for alternative to burials given the crisis of space in the cemeteries?

YES	
NO	

19. If YES what are your alternatives?

20. Do you have suggestions for the paupers? Where must they be buried? What must happen to their bodies after death?

21. Do you think that African communities will accept cremation instead of burial if they realise how great the problem is?

YES	
NO	
DON'T KNOW	

22. Can you give me reasons for your previous answer?

23. Do you feel that African communities will accept family plots instead of a burial?

YES	
NO	
DON'T KNOW	

24 Can you give me the reason for your answer in the previous question?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS FAITHS AND OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA (DURBAN)

Q1 There is a general knowledge that the space for cemeteries in Durban has been limited due to the many deaths in the city and the Province of KwaZulu Natal. What do you see as the alternatives to traditional burial, an alternative to this crisis?

Q2 How can the council leadership educate people about existing viable and culturally sensitive alternatives?

Q3 Can cremation or recycling of graves be seen a viable, culturally and religiously sensitive alternatives? Why? How?

Q4 Could we see alternatives such as mausoleums viable and culturally and religiously sensitive to the majority of our people?

Q5 What is the most humane and religiously and culturally sensitive way to bury indigent and unidentified paupers?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX THREE

GUIDE TO FOCUS GROUP

- Knowledge /Awareness of the land and cemeteries crisis facing the eThekweni Municipality.
- What are the alternatives to the crisis (Initially the moderator allowed the group participants to talk on the matter without guidance? Later the moderator presented several alternatives to the group and allowed them to debate these alternatives).
- What the City Council and councilors can do to solve the problem.
- What must be the relations between the community and the councilors /council/ local government?
- How should the paupers/unidentified people be buried?

The end!!!