

A SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF MEREBANK WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ACCESS AND AMENITIES

*by*

RAMCHANDRA APPAL NAIDU

Submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Geography  
in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Durban-Westville.

*Supervisor :* Professor M.A.H. Smout

*Durban 1983*

## DEDICATION

*To my Guru, Sree Sathya Sai Baba for always  
keeping my path in life well illuminated.*

C O N T E N T S

	<i>Page</i>
CONTENTS	<i>iii-v</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	<i>vi</i>
ABSTRACT	<i>vii</i>
LIST OF TABLES	<i>viii</i>
LIST OF FIGURES	<i>ix</i>
LIST OF PLATES	<i>x-xi</i>

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1-3
1.2	Choice of study area	4-5
1.3	Aims and scope of study	6
1.4	Presentation	6-8

CHAPTER TWO : THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	Introduction	9-11
2.2	The geography of social well being	11-14
2.3	Basic needs and levels of satisfaction	15-16
2.4	The social indicators approach	17-19
2.5	Accessibility and amenities	19-23
2.6	The approach to the Merebank study	24-26
2.7	Conclusion	27

### CHAPTER THREE : LAND USE IN MEREBANK

3.1	Introduction	27-29
3.2	Survey methodology	29
3.3	The land use classification	29-30
3.4	The distribution of land uses in Merebank	31
3.5	Conclusion	54-55

### CHAPTER FOUR : THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1	Introduction	56-58
4.2	Methodology	58-59
4.3	Types of dwellings and their distribution	59-82
4.4	Conclusion	83-84

### CHAPTER FIVE : SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MEREBANK

5.1	Introduction	85-87
5.2	Levels of post-school education	87-90
5.3	Occupational structure	90-92
5.4	Levels of income	92-99
5.5	Conclusion	99-100

### CHAPTER SIX : ACCESS TO AMENITIES

6.1	Introduction	101-102
6.2	Components of accessibility	103-109
6.3	Factors affecting access to amenities in Merebank	109-114
6.4	Conclusion	114-117

CHAPTER SEVEN : ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEREBANK

7.1	Introduction	118-120
7.2	Methodology	120-122
7.3	Attitudes towards Merebank	123-129
7.4	Positive and negative features of Merebank	129-134
7.5	Priorities for change	134-136
7.6	Conclusion	136

CHAPTER EIGHT : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1	Introduction	137-138
8.2	Summary of findings	138-143
8.3	Recommendations	144-145
8.4	Conclusion	145

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	146-150
-----------------------	---------

APPENDIX 1 : QUESTIONNAIRE	151-161
----------------------------	---------

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to the Department of Geography, University of Durban-Westville for all the assistance given in the preparation of this dissertation. In particular, I would like to thank Prof. Smout for supervising this project and giving me so much of his time; Mr R. Sookraj for all the cartographic work; Mr Moodley for the photographic material; Mr B. Maharaj for his criticisms, perceptive insight into the problems of residents in Merebank and proofreading; Dr D.S. Rajah and Mr D.V. Soni for their useful comments and encouragement; Mr S. Lutchmiah for his moral support and last, but certainly not least, Ms S.D. Kissoon for the many hours she spent typing and retyping the many draft chapters.

To those residents of Merebank who cooperated by responding to the questionnaire, officials and members of various organisations in Merebank and to many others who assisted in some way - thank you.

I also wish to thank my family for their moral support, and especially my parents for taking a keen interest throughout my studies, and my wife and daughter for their patience and understanding since the inception of this study.

A B S T R A C T

The main aim of this study is to provide a social geography of one of the less privileged communities in South Africa. The township of Merebank, about 15 km west of Durban was chosen as the study area.

In order to assess social well being of residents conventional social indicators relating primarily to economic well being were used. Furthermore, access to opportunities was evaluated to determine social well being in a broader context. All aspects of quality of life cannot be measured in monetary terms alone and the degree of access a person may have to an amenity or service may often be a far more meaningful measure of social well being.

The study also provides useful information about socio-economic conditions in Merebank, attitudes of residents, and positive and negative features of the residential environment. A number of recommendations are suggested which if implemented by planners, can help ameliorate problems and improve the quality of life in Merebank.

## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Tables</i>	<i>Page</i>
3.1 Categories of land-uses used for the Merebank study	30
3.2 Land uses in Merebank	31
5.1 Levels of post-school education of wage-earners	89
5.2 Occupational structure of wage-earners	90
5.3 Number of wage-earners per family	96
5.4 Checklist for assessing material well being	97
5.5 Levels of material well being	98
6.1 Hierarchy of factors affecting access to four types of amenities	110



## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figures</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.1 The location of Merebank in relation to Greater Durban	5
2.1 Criteria by which to assess social well being	13
2.2 Hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1954)	15
3.1 Spatial distribution of land uses in Merebank	32
3.2 The four sections of Merebank as demarcated for the study	33
3.3 The layout of the largest shopping centres in Merebank	44
4.1 Proportion of housetypes in Merebank	60
4.2 Layout of an economic and sub-economic dwelling unit	61
4.3 Spatial distribution of municipal dwellings (unimproved)	64
4.4 Spatial distribution of owner improved (municipal) dwellings	69
4.5 Spatial distribution of privately built dwellings	72
4.6 Layout of sub-economic renting unit	75
4.7 Spatial distribution of outbuildings	82
5.1 Income of households	95
6.1 Model of accessibility	104
7.1 The semantic differential technique as originally applied	121
7.2 The semantic differential technique as modified for use in the Merebank study	122
7.3 Attitudes towards eight attributes in Merebank	127
7.4 Negative features of the Merebank environment	130
7.5 Positive features of the Merebank environment	132
7.6 Priorities for change	135

# LIST OF PLATES

<i>Plates</i>	<i>Page</i>
3.1 A playlot adjoining an open railway line	35
3.2 A playlot unguarded from passing traffic	35
3.3 A public park that has become a dumping ground	37
3.4 A playlot strewn with rubbish	37
3.5 Untarred roads within 'Minitown'	38
3.6 Many roads do not have pavements	38
3.7 The major road that children from the 'Navy' area cross daily to get to school	40
3.8 One of the schools in Merebank	40
3.9 Market gardening in Merebank	42
3.10 A view of the largest shopping complex in Merebank- 'Bombay Walk'	45
3.11 An inside view of the Bombay Walk shopping complex	45
3.12 One of the 'mobile' shops in Merebank	47
3.13 Informal shop catering mainly for school children	47
3.14 One of the two soccer grounds in Merebank	48
3.15 An improvised tennis court marked out on a road in Merebank	49
3.16 The only road leading to the beach	51
3.17 A barren shoreline with no facilities of any kind	51
3.18 The only hotel in Merebank	53
3.19 The cinema in Merebank	53

<i>Plates</i>	<i>Page</i>
4.1 A municipally built dwelling (four rooms)	62
4.2 A municipally built dwelling (two rooms)	62
4.3 Owners of adjacent plots make joint improvements	66
4.4 An economic dwelling that has had a complete 'face-lift'	66
4.5 An original economically built dwelling and an improved structure	67
4.6 A privately erected dwelling	70
4.7 One of the superlative dwellings in Merebank	70
4.8 The only block of flats that is properly maintained	73
4.9 A drab 'dormitory-type' flat	73
4.10 Communal washing facilities	76
4.11 Communal toilets	76
4.12 Sub-economic dwelling units	78
4.13 The poor condition of sub-economic living environment	78
4.14 Attempts to get more privacy in sub-economic units	79
4.15 An open canal carrying industrial effluent	79
4.16 A view of some of the outbuildings in Merebank	81
4.17 A closer look at one of the higher quality buildings	81

## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

*'Geography should, by definition, be concerned with inequalities since inequalities represent differences and the focus of geography is surely spatial differentiation. Thus the incidence of poor people or hungry children provides as conceptually sound a topic for the geographer as the incidence of raised beaches or place names..... '* (Coates, Johnston, et al. 1977).

	<i>Page</i>
1.1 Introduction	1-3
1.2 Choice of study area	4-5
1.3 Aims and scope of study	6
1.4 Presentation	6-8

## 1.1 Introduction

The basic tenet of social geography revolves around the issue of who gets what, and where. Until about a decade ago geographers gave little attention to the spatial dimensions of social problems, leaving such issues to the sociologists and other social scientists. This non-involvement in important social issues was well summed up by Smith who suggested that 'the long neglect of social problems by geographers has been rooted in academic inertia and a reluctance to become involved in issues which were both politically and morally sensitive' (Smith, 1973).

In the late 1960's interest in social geography grew rapidly. This interest was triggered by social unrest such as the Harlem riots in the United States which exposed violently the spatial inequalities in that country, particularly with regard to differences between the White and Negro populations. Studies on the geography of poverty (Morrill and Wohlenburg, 1971) and the geography of health care (Shannon and Dever, 1972) are examples of some of the research that emerged as a result of this new social awareness amongst geographers.

Studies of the nature of those mentioned above have given rise to what has become known as the 'geography of social well being'. This field of social geography endeavours to assess the quality of life of individuals and thereby arriving at relative levels of social well being.

Many studies in the field of social geography have assessed socio-economic characteristics of individuals and communities in order to ascertain relative levels of social well being and to demonstrate how these levels vary spatially. Although socio-economic characteristics provide valuable information on the state of well being of a community or an individual, these characteristics are normally measured in monetary terms alone and all facets of social well being cannot be assessed in this way. Socio-economic data needs to be supplemented by other information such as the availability of amenities and the levels of access to these amenities; issues which have generally been ignored.

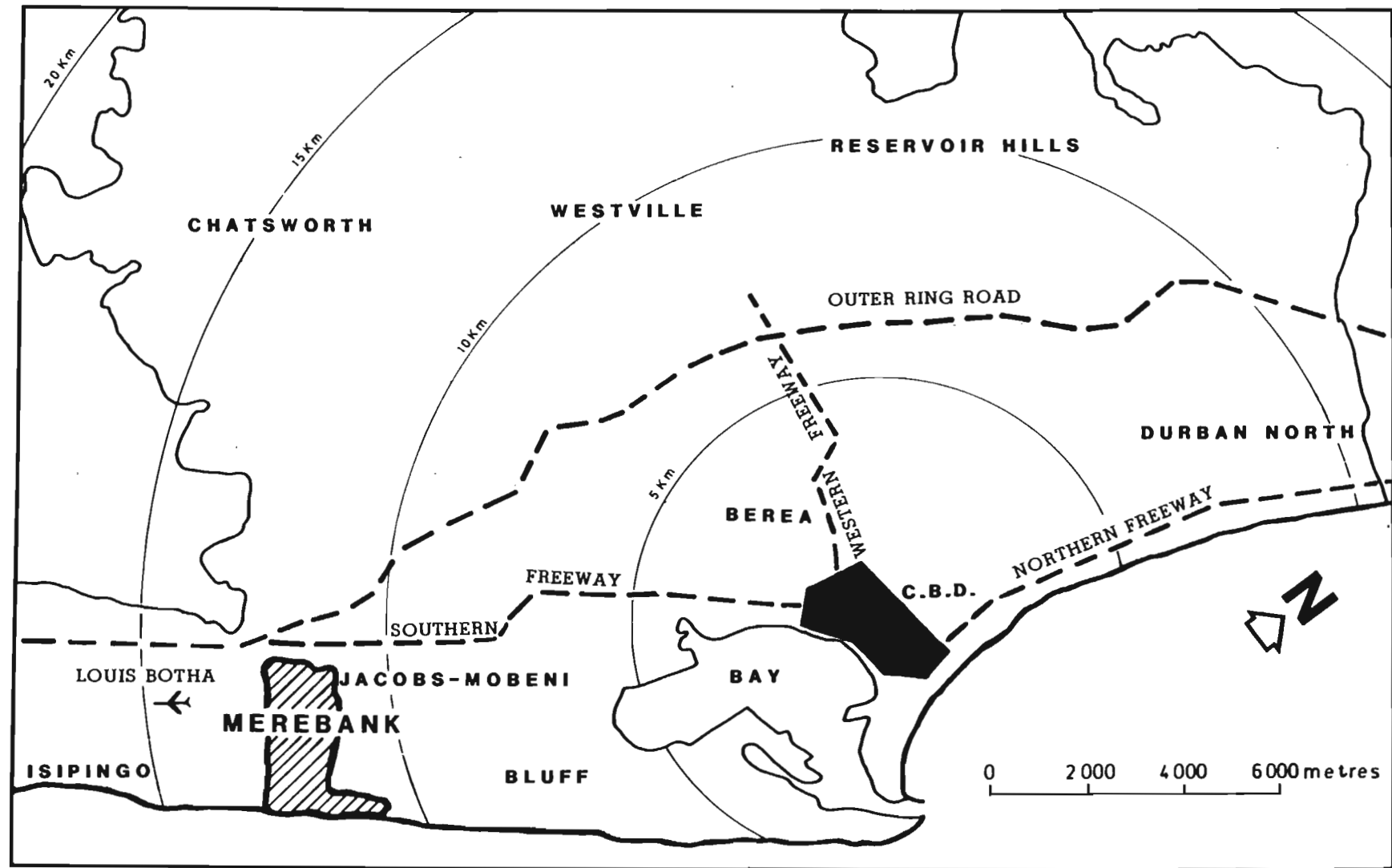
Considering the above issues *the aim of this study is to examine the social geography of a South African Indian community.* In South Africa little comprehensive research has been conducted on levels of social well being amongst the non-white groups. It is one of the basic postulates of this thesis that traditional social indicators alone do not adequately reflect levels of social well being and often may not be entirely appropriate, and that other measures, such as access to amenities, and attitudes towards the total living environment also form important components of any socio-geographic study. Consequently, this study, conducted in Merebank, employs most of the conventional measures of social well being, but focuses particularly on the availability of amenities and on those factors which promote or inhibit access to them.

## 1.2 Choice of study area

Merebank, which is an Indian residential area approximately fifteen kilometres south of Durban (Fig. 1.1) was chosen as a study area for the following reasons :

- (i) Merebank is one of the oldest established residential areas in Natal and sufficient time has elapsed for the development of a mature community and for the full implementation of any original development plans for the area;
- (ii) The area is sufficiently diverse to demonstrate variations of socio-economic conditions necessary for a study of this nature;
- (iii) Merebank is a clearly defined unit of manageable size, and is conveniently located in relation to the University of Durban-Westville where the researcher was based;
- (iv) The researcher (an Indian himself) has a special interest in the affairs and well being of the Indian community and wished to work in an area where he could communicate easily with residents. It is doubtful if anyone of any other racial group could have gained the co-operation that was obtained in Merebank, and the information necessary for a study of this nature.

Figure 1.1 : The location of Merebank in relation to Greater Durban





### 1.3 Aims and scope of the study

Within the broad framework of a social geography of Merebank the study aims more specifically to :

- (i) Provide an assessment of social well being in Merebank;
- (ii) Provide an assessment of the range and spatial distribution of amenities that are accessible to residents;
- (iii) Identify the parameters which limit or promote access to these amenities;
- (iv) Establish priorities for the provision of amenities within Merebank in terms of people's needs and desires, in order to raise the levels of social well being, especially for those most in need;
- (v) Suggest how present limits to access may be minimised or removed for the greatest possible proportion of the population of Merebank.

### 1.4 Presentation

With the above aims in mind this study sets out in chapter two to provide a definition of working terms and a conceptual framework within which the research is placed. Many of the terms used in social geography are very loosely defined and have been given different connotations by various authors, particularly those from non-geographical disciplines. There is a need therefore for these terms to be clearly defined in the context of the Merebank study.

Chapter three presents the results of a detailed land use study within Merebank. This information is essential to identify the spatial characteristics of the area and is a useful starting point in assessing amenity levels and factors relevant to access.

The residential environment, which represents an important amenity to all families, is considered in detail in chapter four. The home represents the immediate environment of all families and the quality of life of any family is reflected in the quality of the home environment.

The socio-economic characteristics of the residents of Merebank, indispensable in a study of this nature, are presented in chapter five. Such characteristics affect the ease of access to amenities and also determine the amount of 'surplus' income available for uses other than the day to day running of the household. This 'surplus' income is a critical determinant of the quality of life of individuals.

Accessibility to amenities is the subject of chapter six, in which the parameters limiting and promoting access to amenities are identified and evaluated. As noted earlier, access is considered as an important aspect of social well being, particularly within the context of underprivileged non-white societies in South Africa where it may provide a more accurate reflection of quality of life than would the traditional social indicators.

People's perception of their own state of well being is an important and often neglected aspect of social geography, and in chapter seven, attitudes of Merebank residents towards their living environment are analysed. In spite of what statistics might indicate in terms of levels of well being, it is the individual's perception of his social condition that matters most.

In chapter eight recommendations are made for the establishment of priorities for the provision of amenities within Merebank and suggestions are made with respect to the minimisation or removal of present limits of access to amenities. These recommendations are made on two levels; firstly in respect to Merebank residents and secondly, with respect to the wider Indian society in South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO : THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*'One of the most exasperating features of the social sciences to date has been the absence of any agreed upon set of measures of social conditions.....interest groups are relatively free to employ measures which support interpretations of social change designed to serve their own interests rather than depict change accurately. There is no question that social indicators are needed, the problem lies in agreeing on which social indicators would be most effective, and for what purpose' (Smith, 1973).*

	<i>Page</i>
2.1 Introduction	9-11
2.2 The geography of social well being	11-14
2.3 Basic needs and levels of satisfaction	15-16
2.4 The social indicators approach	17-19
2.5 Accessibility and amenities	19-23
2.6 The approach to the Merebank study	24-26
2.6.1 The nature and number of amenities in Merebank	24
2.6.2 The quality of the residential environment	24
2.6.3 The socio-economic condition of household	25
2.6.4 <u>Levels</u> of access to amenities	25
2.6.5 Attitudes and priorities of Merebank residents	26
2.7 Conclusion	26

## 2.1 Introduction

Social well being is a major component of social geography and is concerned specifically with spatial variations in the relative levels of social well being amongst the different segments of any society. This well being has often been measured in terms of socio-economic levels. Over the past two decades new approaches to the measurement of social well being have been established and these form the basis of the present chapter.

The social geographer is concerned with the manner in which the spatial structure of the economy advantages some groups whilst disadvantaging others. Although the perspective is primarily a spatial one, it would be naive to believe that people are disadvantaged by virtue of their location alone. Such an approach would be treating surface manifestations rather than root causes. There is an entire 'socio-econo-political' milieu within which the spatial perspective must be placed.

Social geographers have not been able to formulate any comprehensive theory of social well-being not only because it encompasses such a diverse field, but also because it deals with people and society, and people's behaviour cannot be easily placed within theoretical frameworks. Although no single comprehensive theory has been formulated, the experience of previous research has led to the evolution of a body of ideas and concepts that have helped provide invaluable insight into issues regarding social well being. Thus the study of past research in this field provides the basis for many present day studies. In the light of this statement the aims of the present chapter are as follows :

- (i) *To critically examine the nature of studies done to date;*
- (ii) *To present the conceptual framework on which the present study is based;*
- (iii) *To outline the approach to the Merebank study.*

## 2.2 The geography of social well being

'Social well being' and 'quality of life' both refer very broadly to the extent to which the common needs of any society are satisfied. The well being of individuals within a community is relative to their needs and aspirations, and their use of, and need for resources differs to a greater or lesser extent. Social well being is a relative rather than an absolute term, and is often regarded as the general level of satisfaction expressed about a particular environment. The geographer's concern with social well being revolves around two basic issues. On the one hand he is concerned with an equitable distribution of resources and on the other he is concerned with an absolute level of provision in terms of certain minimum standards.

At this juncture it is important to note that 'equal' and 'equitable' do not have the same meaning, though they are often used interchangeably. Taking the distribution of wealth as an example, an equal distribution would imply that each individual, irrespective of his effort would be granted the same benefits as anyone else. On the other hand an equitable distribution would be one where the benefits of labour are distributed according to the effort of each individual. Both terms imply ideal states and in reality it would be difficult to implement either.

However, equitable is often equated with a fair and just distribution of resources and is used in that context in this thesis.

In order to measure social well being or quality of life it is necessary to isolate those needs that are common to most people, and thereafter to use these common needs as a basis for evaluating levels of social well being. Information on common needs must however be supplemented by other data reflecting the special characteristics and needs of the particular community under study. These 'special characteristics' must include such facets as socio-economic differences as well as cultural and religious differences.

As early as 1954 the United Nations Organisation compiled what they called an 'acceptable international catalogue' (Smith, 1973) by which to assess relative states of well being among its member states. This catalogue was developed further by Drenowski in 1974 when he devised a 'level of living' index (as quoted in Smith, 1973). There were many similarities between the earlier work carried out by the United Nations and Drenowski, but Drenowski attempted to refine the work done by the United Nations (Fig. 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1 : Criteria by which to assess social well being

Acceptable international catalogue (United Nations)	Level of Living index (Drenowski)
Health, including demographic conditions	nutrition
education, including literacy and skills	clothing
conditions of work	shelter
employment situations	health
aggregate consumption and savings	education
transportation	leisure
housing	security
clothing	social environment
recreation	physical environment
social security	
human freedom	

Both lists of components are detailed and cover the primary areas of social concern. However many of these components are difficult to measure in any scientifically acceptable manner. How does one measure 'human freedom' for example? The problem lies essentially in choosing the most appropriate statistic for the measurement of a specific component affecting social well being. Further, the required statistics may not be available or may be aggregated for large spatial units. Much of the information provided both by the United Nations and Drenowski concerns the state of nations as complete units, often disregarding differences within nations. Such information, therefore, does not adequately present a picture of the state of people within a nation.



Knox (1977) using information gathered in previous studies, including those carried out by Drenowski and the United Nations, attempted to identify broad areas of social concern covering all the primary issues of well being rather than studying specific issues. These broad areas of social concern are listed below :

Nutrition

health

education

leisure

security

social security

physical environment

surplus income.

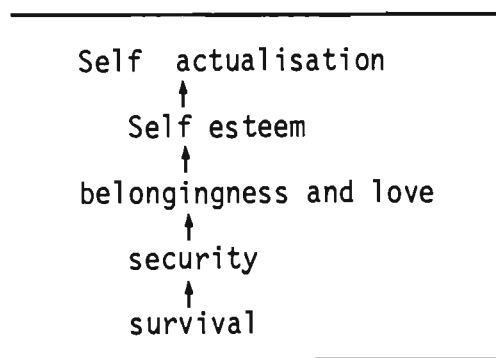
Studies such as these discussed above provide information on what should be measured in order to ascertain states of well being, but little consensus has been arrived at regarding their measurement and function. Numerous studies (Kincaid, 1973; Drenowski, 1974; Harvey, 1966; Smith, 1973b) have concentrated on social well being at the national and international scales and little attention has been paid to the intra-urban level. One of the major problems of assessing social well being is that the information gathered is usually at such a high level of abstraction that local differences amongst communities within a country are masked and measures such as gross domestic product (GDP), gross national product (GNP) and per capita income are entirely inappropriate to the identification of local differences in levels of well being.

### 2.3 Basic needs and levels of satisfaction

The approach to measuring social well being discussed in 2.2 above has inherent weaknesses and has been subject to criticism, especially from the field of psychology. The psychological approach stresses the principle of need satisfaction as a basis for measuring social well being.

The most often quoted categorisation of human needs is that devised by Maslow, who divided needs into five basic groups (Maslow, 1954). These five categories are shown below : (Fig. 2.2)

FIGURE 2.2 : Hierarchy of human needs



Maslow argued that as basic needs such as food and shelter are satisfied, higher needs take command and impel man towards new goals. Stagner (1970), building on the ideas of Maslow suggested that the level of satisfaction expressed about an environment reflected the state of social well being of that particular community. He advocated the use of levels of need satisfaction as an indicator of social well being. Gross (1972) regards such an approach as dangerous, since need satisfaction cannot be directly observed, and subsequently, that any assessment would have to rely on surrogate measures. Such measures could easily lead to a misinterpretation of the expressed needs of the community.

However, in spite of the criticism by Gross, a number of researchers (Allardt, 1973; Atkinson, 1970; Eyles et al, 1971) have used levels of need satisfaction as an indicator of social well being.

Needs can be divided into four broad types - absolute or normative need, comparative need, expressed need and relative need. Firstly, there is the absolute or normative need, such as a housing standard or a minimum wage level. The second type of need is termed comparative need, where the provision in one area is compared with that of another in order to ascertain the gap between them. Thirdly, needs can also be defined in terms of market forces using demand as a measure of expressed need. Need can also be interpreted as feelings of relative deprivation which arise when some good or service is desired by a group, but unattainable, even though it is available to others. This is termed relative need (Runciman, 1966).

The use of need satisfaction as a means of assessing social well being has a major weakness in that in order to determine levels of satisfaction value judgements have to be made to cater for differing norms and values for different cultural and socio-economic groups. Extreme care has to be taken in order to ensure that these value judgements are not biased. Thus both approaches (need satisfaction and areas of social concern) have advantages and disadvantages which must be considered when conducting research in the field of social geography.

## 2.4 The social indicators approach

No attempt at measuring social well being would be complete without encompassing both the 'areas of social concern' and the 'basic needs' approach, as both these approaches provide important perspectives on the study of social well being. Having ascertained the two broad approaches to studies of social well being, the next step is to determine a method of making these ideas operational.

The 'social indicators' movement which has been highlighted by academics such as Harvey (1973); Smith (1971) and Knox (1977) provides one of the possible ways in which to assess social well being. Social indicators are best described as 'yardsticks' by which to evaluate degrees of well being amongst different communities, and includes information from both the approaches mentioned above. The social indicators approach has been able to blend both subjective (those measures used to assess levels of need satisfaction) and objective (those measures that are easily quantifiable) aspects of social well being.

Knox (1977) suggests a system of social indicators based on a weighting of the different components of social well being. This weighting would reflect the relative importance attached to the components by the population under study, but he adds, there is no easy way of discovering these priorities. One way suggested of assessing priorities would be to use 'revealed preferences' of consumer behaviour. Such an approach examines the end product of the decision making process and does not attempt to explain the underlying processes giving rise to the decision and also ignores those consumers who do not use a particular amenity or service.

Hagerstrand (1974) points out the danger of Knox's approach which he contends is concerned with the *effective* demand and consequently omits the greater proportion of the population who could not satisfy their needs by using a particular service or amenity. Hagerstrand goes on to argue that evaluation of social well being should rest on measuring *access* to opportunities rather than market demand for travel. Measurement should rest on what people are able to do and not on what they are likely to do.

The problem of 'weighting' different components of social well being, as proposed by Knox could also be left to the realm of 'expert opinion'. One of the weakness of adopting such an approach would be the fact that 'experts' often tend to be paternalistic and feel that with their knowledge they ought to know what the people require. What occurs as a result are plans that reflect the 'experts' opinion, based on his norms and values and not the priorities of the people being planned for.

Another strategy for overcoming the 'weighting' problem would be to use national or local governments aims and goals to determine priorities, but even here, the aims and goals of such bodies may not be perceived by the people to be in their own interest.

From the above discussion it becomes obvious that the use of social indicators in studies of social well being is fraught with dangers, especially with regard to value judgements and inadequate statistics. Traditional social indicators have used the economic indices of production and consumption, supplemented by income levels, rates of employment, and industrial growth.

The use of such measures has some serious defects, since they are still measuring a state of a nation, rather than the state of the individuals within a nation. These inadequacies have led to a search for more appropriate yardsticks of progress and social well being.

## 2.5 Accessibility and amenities \*

The measurement of *accessibility* to amenities is one such 'yardstick' of social well being that is often overlooked. Access measures the degree of opportunity open to any member of society, and as such, provides a measure of the extent to which amenities and services possess any utility value. The mere provision of amenities has no utility value to a community unless the amenities are accessible in terms of such criteria as cost, time, distance and socio-cultural factors. *It is the basic contention of this thesis that accessibility to amenities is fundamental to any meaningful social geography.* Consequently, a discussion of 'access' and 'amenities' is necessary.

*Accessibility* refers to the extent to which something is 'get-at-able' (Mosely, 1979). According to Hagerstrand (1974) accessibility has at least two components. The first is the legal/social aspect. An individual may very often have to fulfill certain requirements such as age, ethnic or religious affiliations before he gains access to the supply point he wants to reach. The second component is a physical one. An individual must have the necessary resources for reaching a supply point whenever he desires to do so. Furthermore, given the necessary resources, the distance/discomfort equation may limit or bar access to an amenity. Hagerstrand's definition emphasizes the two main types of barriers of access to amenities.

Ingram (1971) regards accessibility as the inherent characteristics or advantage of a place with respect to overcoming some form of spatially operating source of friction, for example, time and/or distance. Although Ingram's definition is partly true, the sources of friction that he mentions are not necessarily only spatial, but also involve other legal/social barriers, as suggested earlier.

Most definitions of accessibility emphasize the ability to overcome some obstacle, whether it be legal, social, spatial, or financial, in order to reach an amenity or any other supply point desired. Accessibility in the context of this study refers to the right and ability of any individual to approach any amenity or service facility.

Access to amenities may be rated on a scale ranging from 'full' to 'zero'. In recent years an increasing number of studies have emphasized the importance of accessibility to assessing social well being (Brumwell, 1979; Breheny, 1974, 1978; Cox, 1979; Doling, 1979; Harvey, 1973; Smith, 1973a, 1973b). Planning amenities without bearing in mind the barriers which limit accessibility is very much like building a golf course for people who cannot afford golf clubs. There are a number of factors which singly or in conjunction limit access and these may be classified under the following broad headings :

1. Distance
2. Time
3. Cost
4. Socio cultural factors (these include religious and cultural barriers)
5. Racial factors, which are especially important in the South African context where racial discrimination is embodied in legislation;
6. Information - a lack of information about a particular amenity or conditions relating to its use can limit access.

Amenities have been defined as 'that which adds to the pleasantness of life' (Oxford dictionary). Things that add to the 'pleasantness of life' include such things as day care centres, parks, playlots and even hospitals. Generally, food, shelter and clothing are not considered as amenities, as they are essential to life and do not merely add to its convenience. However, this statement needs to be further qualified. Shelter, for example, has taken on many connotations apart from the essential provision of protection from the elements. Whilst it is acknowledged that the provision of a basic dwelling is a necessity rather than amenity, as the level of provision is raised the dwelling unit no longer provides the singular function of providing shelter, but becomes an amenity. There is little doubt that homes that are well furnished and have most modern conveniences contribute to the quality of life of members of the household. Standards of housing are directly related to the need for privacy, status, stability and security, and housing is being increasingly regarded by many as a stored form of wealth.



By token of the same argument, education and health facilities too, although often regarded as essentials of life have come to include such a wide range of facilities that they are usually included in any study of amenities.

Amenities are provided by both the public and private sectors of the economy. Within the context of this study central government and local urban authorities have direct control over the former and influence the latter through the provision of infra-structure, land use zoning and legislation. Public sector amenities include :

1. Health services - including hospitals, clinics, ambulances, etc.;
2. Educational services - including all levels, from primary schools to universities and technikons;
3. Social services - incorporating welfare functions, the care of children of working mothers and care of the aged;
4. Recreational and cultural amenities - these include a wide range of facilities including parks, sportsfields, etc.;
5. Transport services and communications - a service which facilitates access to other amenities as well as places of work.

Private sector amenities include :

1. Retail outlets and commercial centres and the availability of related goods and services;
2. Recreation - these would include the provision of restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas, etc.
3. Semi-public amenities - these would include sports clubs, religious buildings, community centres, etc.
4. Professional and health services - including the availability of doctors, dentists, lawyers, etc.

The brief evaluation of what constitutes 'access' and 'amenities' suggests that accessibility to amenities is a key mechanism with which to understand the utility value of an amenity. Social well being must be measured in terms of what people are able to do in a particular environment and not only in terms of their material or other status. There are often hidden constraints on behaviour that will not be revealed by a simple study of socio-economic data and an investigation into peoples' real access to amenities may be a much more accurate measure of social well being than would many of the economic indicators that have formed the basis of many studies to date.

The discussion thus far in the present chapter has highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of using different measures of social well being, and bearing this in mind, it would be naive to believe that anyone of them could provide a totally accurate measure of social well being. All the different measures must be incorporated into any balanced assessment of social well being. In consequence, the present study drew from a variety of approaches and information.

## 2.6 The approach to the Merebank study

The study in Merebank concentrated on five parameters that were used in order to assess the social well being of residents.

These are elaborated on below :

### 2.6.1 The nature and number of amenities in Merebank

A land use investigation was undertaken in order to provide important background information for the present study. In order to determine levels of social well being one has to ascertain what amenities are provided in the area, and this entails a locational analysis as well as qualitative and quantitative assessment. The task of compiling a land use map also afforded an opportunity for the researcher to familiarise himself with the characteristics of the area of Merebank and its people.

### 2.6.2 The quality of the residential environment

The residential environment, as mentioned earlier, is regarded by many as an important amenity and often serves many other purposes besides the provision of shelter. Such purposes include the need for privacy, security and also as a stored form of wealth. In this study the condition of the dwelling units together with the different types of units was used as a measure of the socio-economic standards of the household and as a reflection of levels of social well being.

### 2.6.3 The socio-economic status of households

Socio-economic data regarding income, education and other related data was collected as many of these factors affect access to amenities. The amount of income available after the basic household expenditure, for example, would determine the extent to which the members of a household are able to follow pursuits involving any cost factor. Although socio-economic data on its own could lead to a misinterpretation of levels of well being, since all facets of this well being cannot be measured in economic terms alone, but when taken together with other subjective indicators, provides an important measure of social well being.

### 2.6.4 Levels of access to amenities

Levels of access to a range of amenities was ascertained from the sample population. The degree of accessibility to amenities was measured in terms of time, cost, distance and socio-cultural factors. Although amenities and services may exist, they have no positive utility value to residents of an area unless they are accessible to them with regard to all the factors mentioned above. Any assessment of the level of provision of amenities is not an adequate measure of social well being unless such evaluation takes into account the degree of accessibility to amenities.

#### 2.6.5 Attitudes and priorities of residents towards Merebank

As explained in the conceptual discussion, attitudes of people towards their residential environment provide valuable information about peoples levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a particular environment. Levels of need satisfaction is an indicator of the success or failure of planners to meet the needs and aspirations of different communities, and is thus an integral part of any study that attempts to assess quality of life of individuals and their environment.

#### 2.7 Conclusion

There is no single acceptable solution to the problem of measurement of social well being and for that reason the present chapter has outlined the major approaches highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each. Any attempt at providing an assessment of social well being has to draw from all the approaches postulated and cannot adopt any single method of measurement. The present study considers all the approaches in order to provide a balanced assessment of the social well being of the residents of Merebank.

## CHAPTER THREE : LAND USE IN MEREBANK

*"A land use map is comparable to a snapshot of a neighbourhood. It shows you where people live, where they shop, and where their children play. It shows you not only what is present in the neighbourhood but also what is missing". (U.S. Department for housing and urban development, 1980).*

	<i>Page</i>
3.1 Introduction	27-29
3.2 Survey methodology	29
3.3 The land use classification	29-30
3.4 The distribution of land uses in Merebank	31-54
3.4.1 Residential	34
3.4.2 Public open space	34-36
3.4.3 Communications and transport	36-39
3.4.4 Educational	39-41
3.4.5 Market gardening	41-42
3.4.6 Commercial	43-46
3.4.7 Public and semi-public property	46-47
3.4.8 Recreational	48-49
3.4.9 Entertainment	50-54
3.5 Conclusion	54-55

### 3.1 Introduction

Land use describes the use or activity to which any parcel of land or man made space is devoted. Land use maps show not only what amenities and services are present in a landscape, but also what is missing. The survey described in this chapter was undertaken in order to provide an accurate assessment of the local environment in which Merebank residents live. Although most residents work outside the study area and therefore have some degree of access to city wide facilities, the nature of the local environment is important to any assessment of the provision of amenities and the level of need satisfaction and social well being. Amenities within any area can be studied at several levels, ranging from amenities available within the immediate environment (normally the home) through to the suburban or local environment, and finally to the city wide environment. The amenity levels of the immediate environment are discussed in detail in chapter six, whilst those of the city wide region do not form a part of this study.

In order to ascertain the full range of amenities within Merebank and place them within a spatial framework a plot by plot survey had to be undertaken of the whole area. Such a survey also enabled a detailed description of the study area and allowed the researcher to gain an intimate knowledge of Merebank which could not be obtained in any other way.

The present land use survey therefore aims to :

- (i) *Identify the range of activities and amenities within Merebank;*
- (ii) *Ascertain the proportion of land allocated for the various uses;*
- (iii) *Assess the location of amenities in terms of their accessibility to the local population;*
- (iv) *Determine the level at which amenities are maintained;*
- (v) *Identify any shortcomings in the provision of amenities and make proposals in respect of their provision for the growing population.*

### 3.2 Survey methodology

In order to carry out this survey ortho-photo maps of the scale of 1:2000 were found to be most suitable. Six maps, covering the entire Merebank region were combined to produce a master map. The region was then divided into twenty sub-areas and maps of these areas were used as field sheets to carry out the actual survey i.e. a plot by plot recording of land use. The entire survey was carried out by the researcher over a four week period and completely on foot.

### 3.3 The land use classification

Most land use classifications in existence apply to entire towns or regions and therefore have little relevance to a study of this nature where an essentially residential unit is being examined. In view of this it was necessary to devise a classification that would be more suitable for the present study. In the original planning of Merebank a detailed land use



classification was drawn up by the City Engineers' department but these categories were unnecessarily detailed for the purpose of the present study and were modified. The categories listed in the table below were adopted (Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1 : Categories of land use used in the Merebank study

TYPE OF LAND USE	DEFINITION
Residential	Residential classes based on type of dwelling.
Public open space	Space essentially for passive recreation, e.g. parks and playgrounds.
Recreational	Space essentially for active recreation, e.g. tennis courts sportsfields, swimming pools, etc.
Communication and Transport	Roads and railways and pedestrian right of way.
Commercial	Shops, supermarkets, small businesses
Educational	Elementary, junior and senior high schools.
Public and semi-public property	Temples, mosques, churches, halls, cemeteries, community centres, etc.
Entertainment	Cinemas, hotels, etc.
Market gardening	Small scale farming activities.

### 3.4 Distribution of land uses in Merebank

Whilst the proportions of the various land uses are shown in Table 3.2, the spatial distribution of these uses can be seen in figure 3.1. In order to simplify references to the different parts of Merebank the township has been divided into four sections. These sub-divisions are clearly visible in the landscape because of their distinctive land use characteristics which will become evident in the following discussion. These areas will be referred to throughout the text (Fig. 3.2).

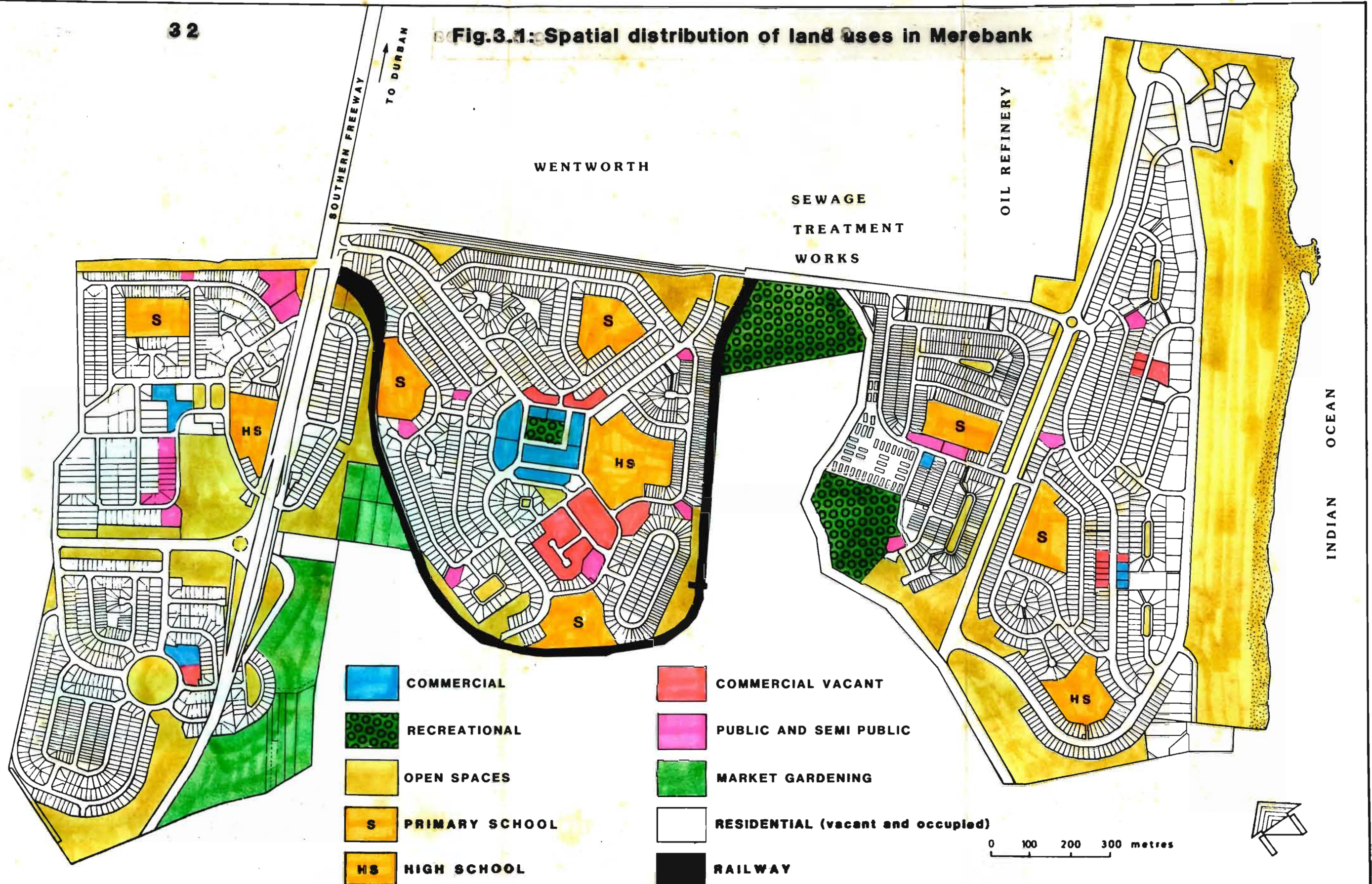
The proportion of the various categories of land use arranged in descending order of magnitude are shown in Table 3.2 below.

TABLE 3.2 : Land uses in Merebank

CATEGORY	AREA (HA)	PERCENTAGE OF LAND
Residential	173,69	54,0
Public open space	46,32	14,4
Communication and transport	46,33	14,4
Educational	18,40	5,7
Recreational	11,24	3,5
Commercial (developed)	2,68	0,8
Commercial (vacant)	5,42	1,7
Religious and community sites	4,6	1,4
Market gardening	12,60	3,9
Entertainment	0,54	0,2
	321,86	100

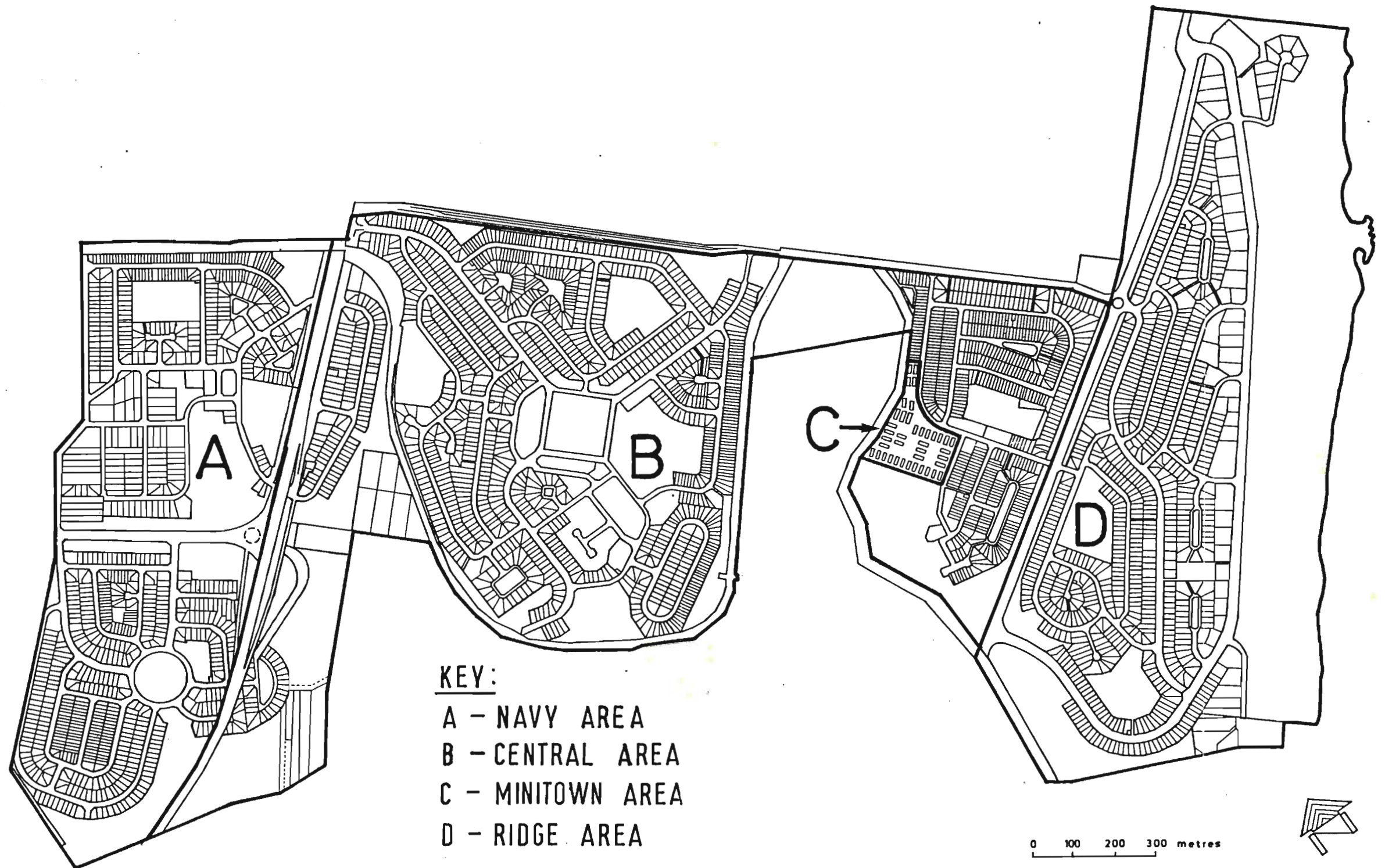


Fig.3.1: Spatial distribution of land uses in Merebank





**Fig.3.2: The four sections of Merebank as demarcated for the study**



### 3.4.1 Residential

Residential uses account for 54% of the total area and clearly dominates the landscape of Merebank. The residences themselves constitute the immediate living environment, and the characteristics of such an environment are an important reflection of the amenity levels of the family living there. Given the importance of the residential characteristics to this study these are dealt with in chapter four.

### 3.4.2 Public open space

The original layout made provision for public open space in the form of playlots and parks. These total about twenty small areas, and their limited size and the nature of the terrain seriously restricts their utility value. Many of the parks and playlots are less than a quarter of an acre in extent and are not nearly large enough for children to indulge in any active recreational pursuits. Some of the parks and playlots consist of hilly, rugged terrain and serves little purpose except to provide a open space, and are almost totally ignored by most residents.

Several of the playlots are tucked away in remote corners of the study area and often people are not even aware of their existence. In some cases the only access to these open spaces consists of a little path between two houses. Other playlots are considered unsafe as they are located adjacent to open railway lines (Plate 3.1) or are exposed to passing traffic (Plate 3.2).





PLATE 3.1 : A playlot adjoining an open railway line

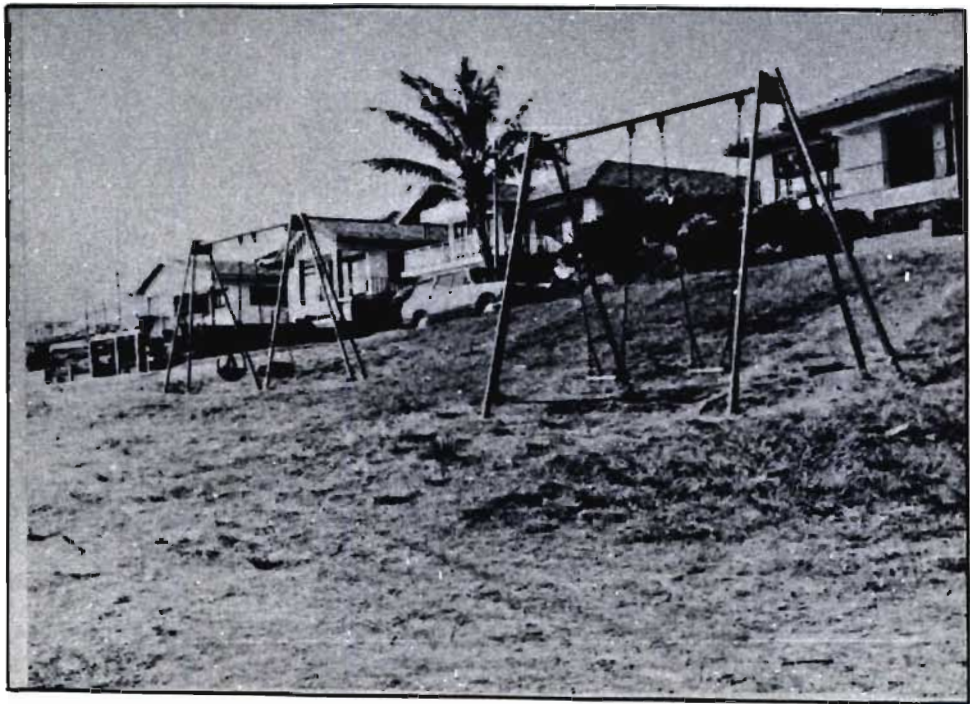


PLATE 3.2 : A playlot unguarded from passing traffic

Many of the public open spaces have degenerated into nothing more than dumping grounds (Plate 3.3, 3.4). Generally parks and playlots were poorly maintained and this discouraged residents from using them. Their non-use by the majority of local residents have made them ideal places for layabouts and other undesirable elements.

Although there is a generous amount of open space relative to that in other similar townships their spatial distribution and quality in Merebank has a negative effect on their utility value to local residents.

#### 3.4.3 Communication and transport

Of the total area surveyed 14,4% was taken up by roads and railways. An extensive network of roads covers the entire area and careful thought had gone into ensuring that passing traffic skirts the township. However there is one notable exception in the 'Navy' area where the residential zone is bisected by an arterial feeding into the southern freeway. The actual amount of land devoted to roads and railways is not unusually high when compared to many small Natal towns, for example, the proportion of land used for roads and railways in Ladysmith, Newcastle, and Dundee respectively are 16,02%, 13,33% and 13,10% (Smout, 1969).

All the roads within Merebank with the exception of the roads in the 'Minitown' area (Plate 3.5) have macademised surfaces and are reasonably well lit at night. However the majority of the roads do not have pavements and this increases the danger of pedestrian accidents. The lack of pavements also has a negative effect on the aesthetic attractiveness of the area (Plate 3.6).



PLATE 3.3 : A public park that has become a dumping ground

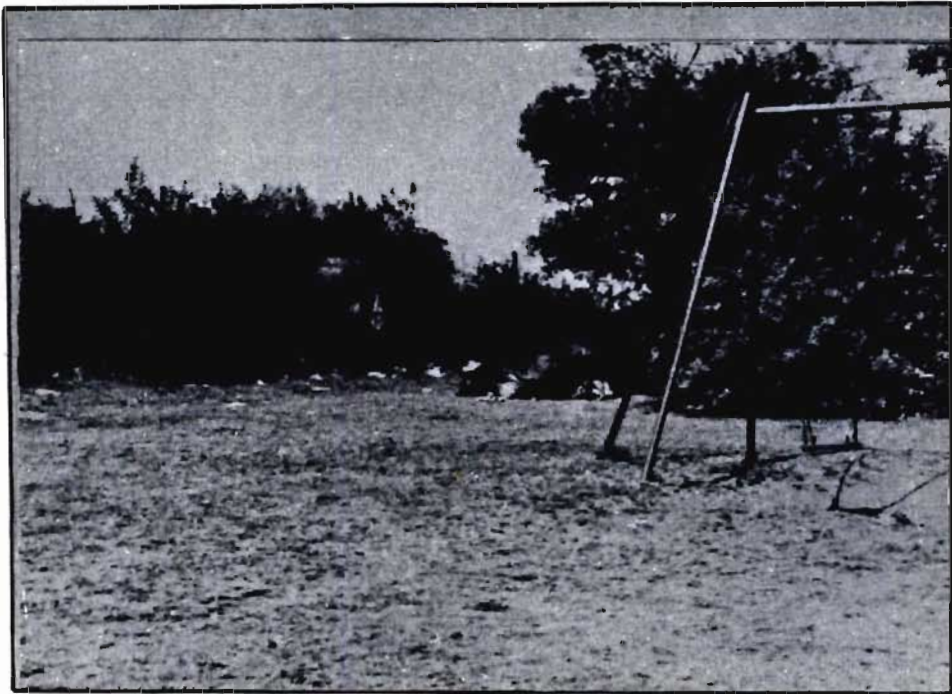


PLATE 3.4 : A playlot strewn with rubbish





PLATE 3.5 : Untarred roads within 'Minitown'

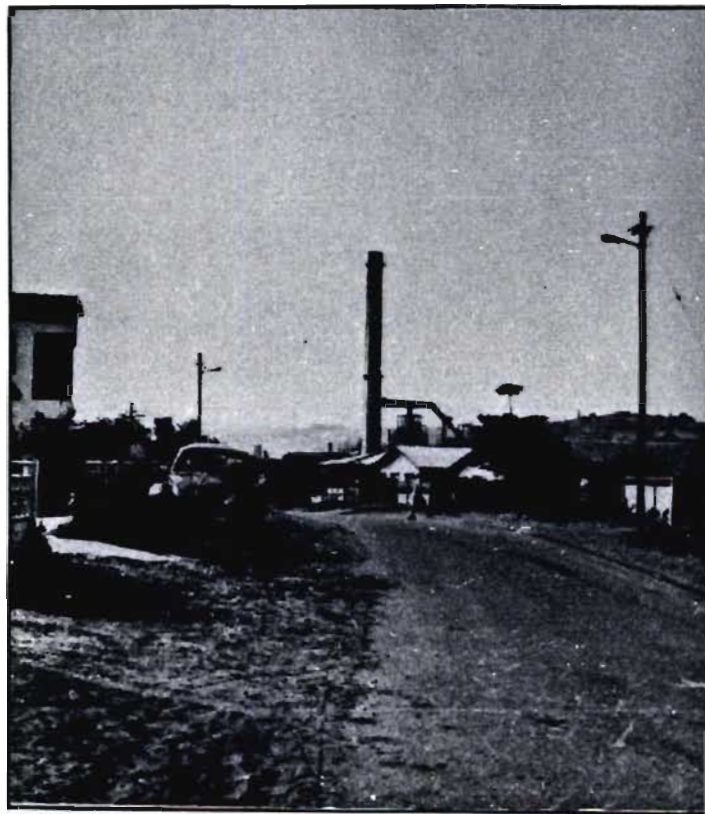


PLATE 3.6 : Many roads do not have pavements

The presence of the railway station offering quick access to the city is a valuable amenity to residents, provided they have the means of getting to the station. The station, although called the 'Merebank station' actually lies about one kilometre to the north of Merebank and there is no shuttle service for the residents to reach the station. Generally Merebank has a good road system that has been well planned and this system is supplemented by the existence of the railway station.

#### 3.4.4 Educational

Merebank is well provided with six primary schools and three high schools which can adequately cater for the school going population. The schools are spaced so as to provide easy access to school children, the exception being the 'Navy' area where primary school children have to cross a major road in order to reach their school. Although there have been a number of accidents involving school children crossing this particular road, the creation of a manned pedestrian crossing has hopefully reduced this danger (Plate 3.7). Apart from children in the 'Navy' area the majority of children were within easy walking distance of their schools. High schools are fewer and involve slightly longer journeys, but for the older students this presents no serious problems.

There are no tertiary educational institutions within Merebank and although one does not envisage a University or Technikon within every residential unit there is a need to ensure a reasonable degree of access to these institutions.

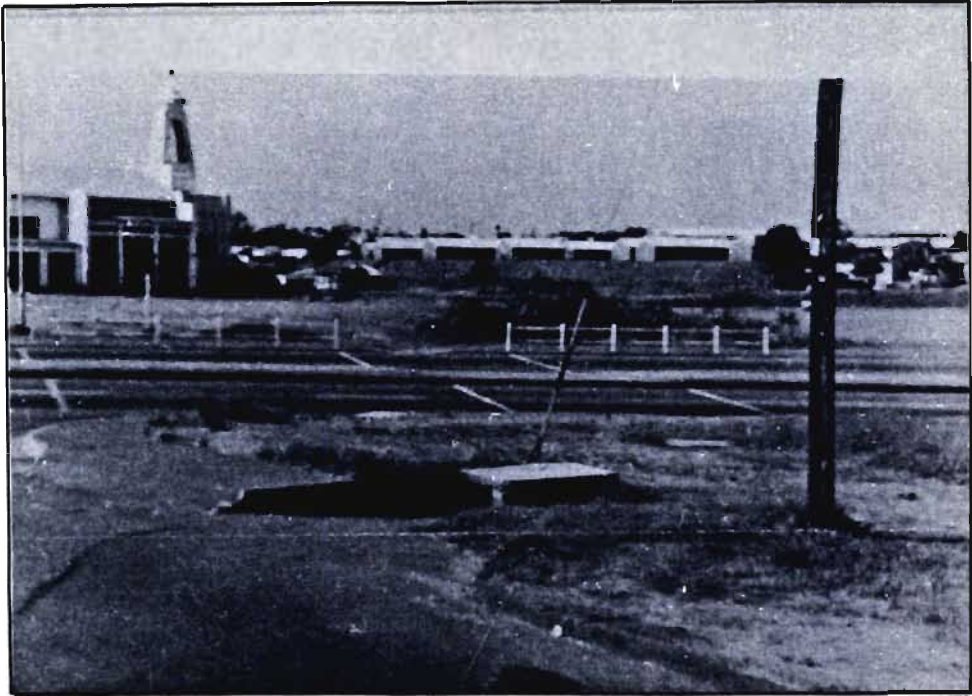


PLATE 3.7 : The major road that children from the 'Navy' area cross daily to get to school

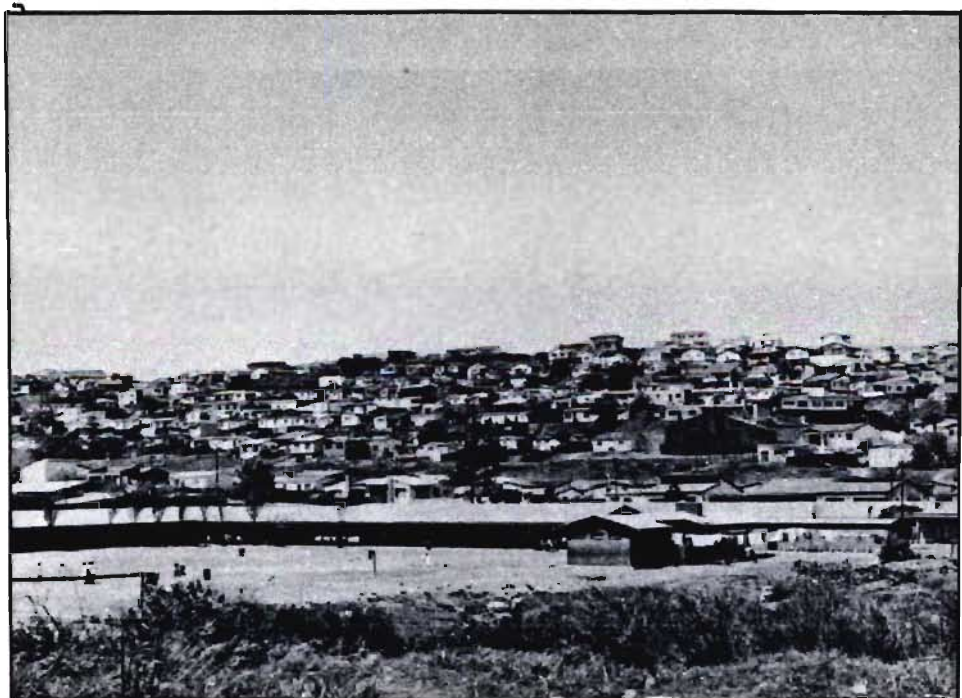


PLATE 3.8 : One of the High Schools in Merebank

All the schools in Merebank were brick and tile structures and of relatively modern design (Plate 3.8).

Apart from the formal educational institutions there were also three informal day care centres or nursery schools in Merebank. These 'schools' were housed in garages which were furnished with pictures and a few desks. People who ran these 'schools' complained about the lack of suitable premises although there was a big demand for such a service, especially in the present economic climate where a greater number of women are forced to seek employment. Existing premises were poorly ventilated and extremely overcrowded. The provision of such a service is an essential amenity and attempts should be made both by the relevant authorities and the community to obtain suitable premises and trained personnel to run these day care centres.

#### 3.4.5 Market gardening

In coastal Natal there is a long tradition of market gardening associated with the Indian community and this is evident in Merebank where 3,9% of the land surveyed is given over to market gardening (Fig. 3.1). The land used for market gardening is rented out to the market gardeners by the Durban Corporation for a nominal amount. The land allocated for this use is not suitable for housing due to the marshy conditions. As far as can be ascertained this activity has been a part of Merebank since the 1900's when the first Indians settled here. Market gardening provides a small number of people with employment and contributes to the supply of fresh vegetables at competitive prices to consumers in Merebank and in Durban (Plate 3.9).



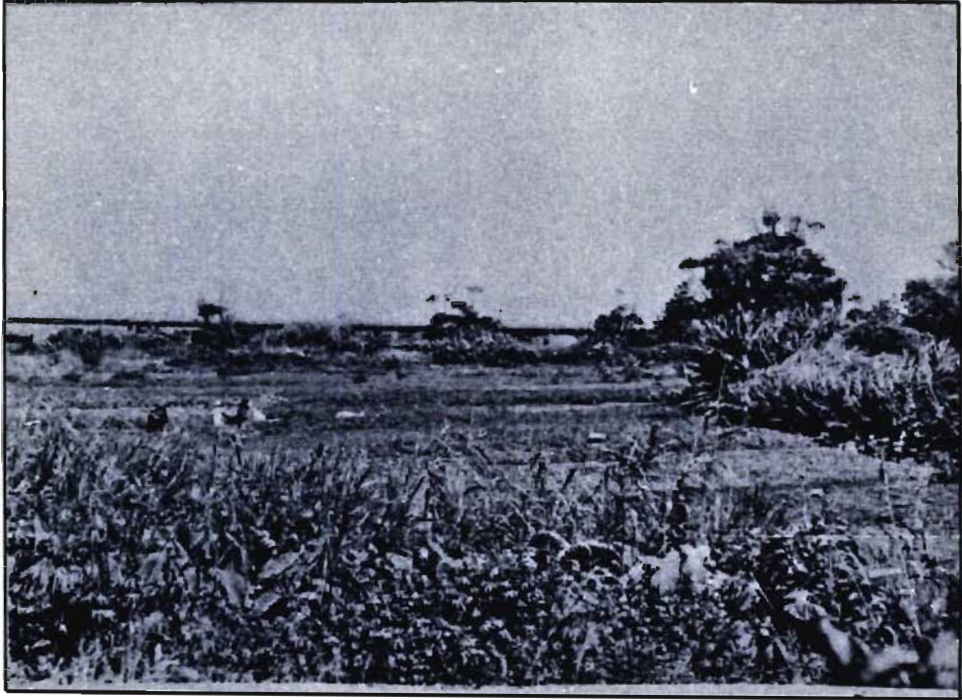


PLATE 3.9 : Market gardening in Merebank

#### 3.4.6 Commercial

Developed commercial land accounted for only 0,8% of the total area whilst a further 2,68% of land designated as commercial is not yet developed. The major proportion of commercial land is the 'Central' area (Fig. 3.1), whilst some provision has also been made in other sections of Merebank. Existing commercial activities consist of one large shopping centre (Fig. 3.3) and three smaller centres (Plate 3.10, 3.11). Although these centres are centrally located within each of the major divisions of Merebank, and maintain a reasonable degree of quality and service they are still inaccessible to a large number of people who do not have access to their own transport.

There is a need for every resident to have easy access to at least to a shop where daily purchases such as bread and milk can be made. This need is greater amongst the lower socio-economic group where most people do not have access to private transport. The traditional 'corner shop' that normally supplies such goods is non-existent in Merebank. The provision of commercial land within Merebank does not match the demand. Although land is available for commercial development, the size of the plots is normally too big and too costly to erect a single shop, and are more geared towards the building of shopping complexes.

The need for lower order 'topping up' goods by a significant proportion of the population has been realised by the commercial sector which has responded by providing mobile shops to supply such goods. Thus the 'corner shop' is brought to the doorstep of the consumer at a little additional cost. Owners of these

Figure 3.3 : The layout of the largest shopping centre in Merebank

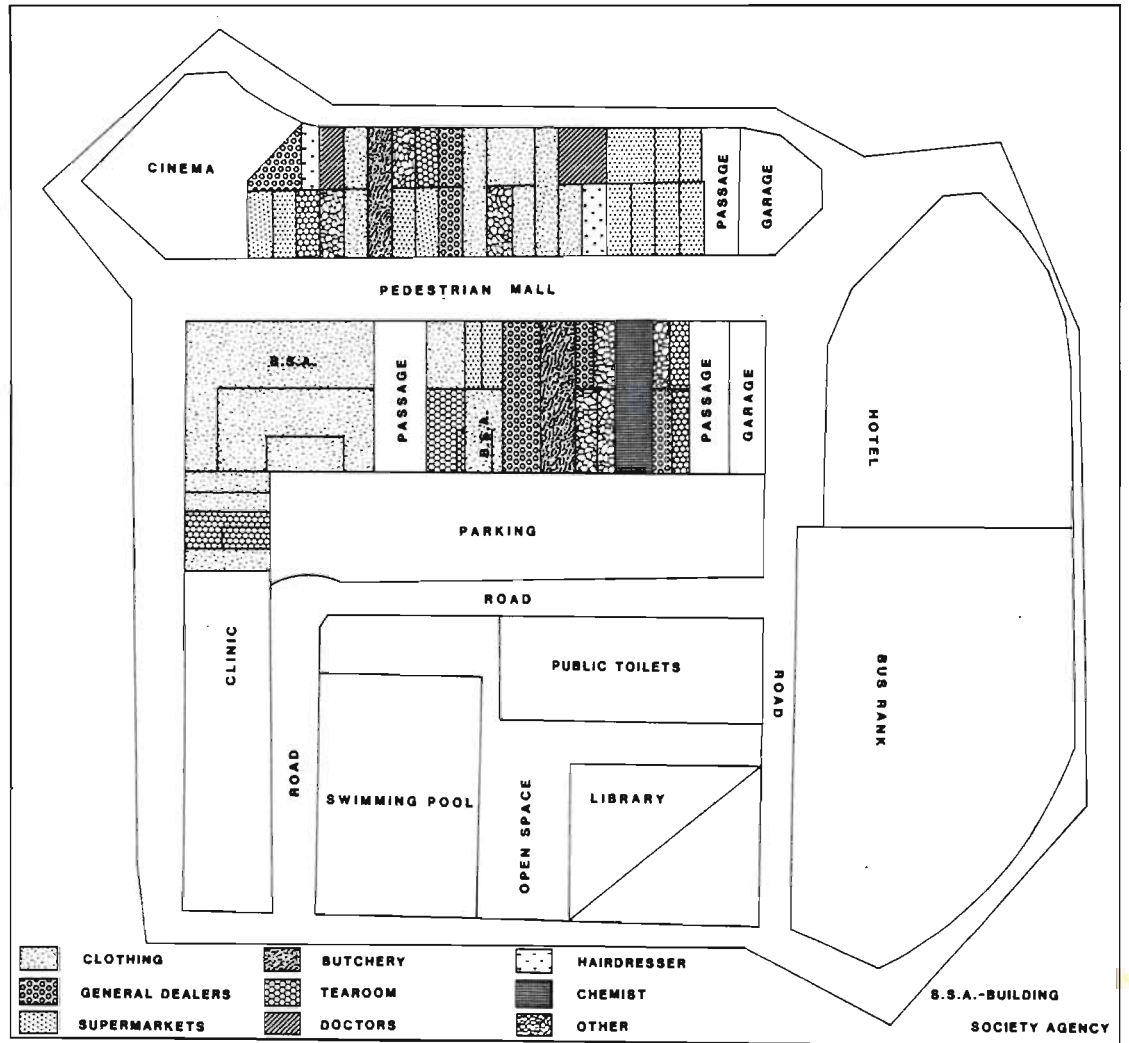




PLATE 3.10 : A view of the largest shopping complex in  
Merebank - 'Bombay Walk'

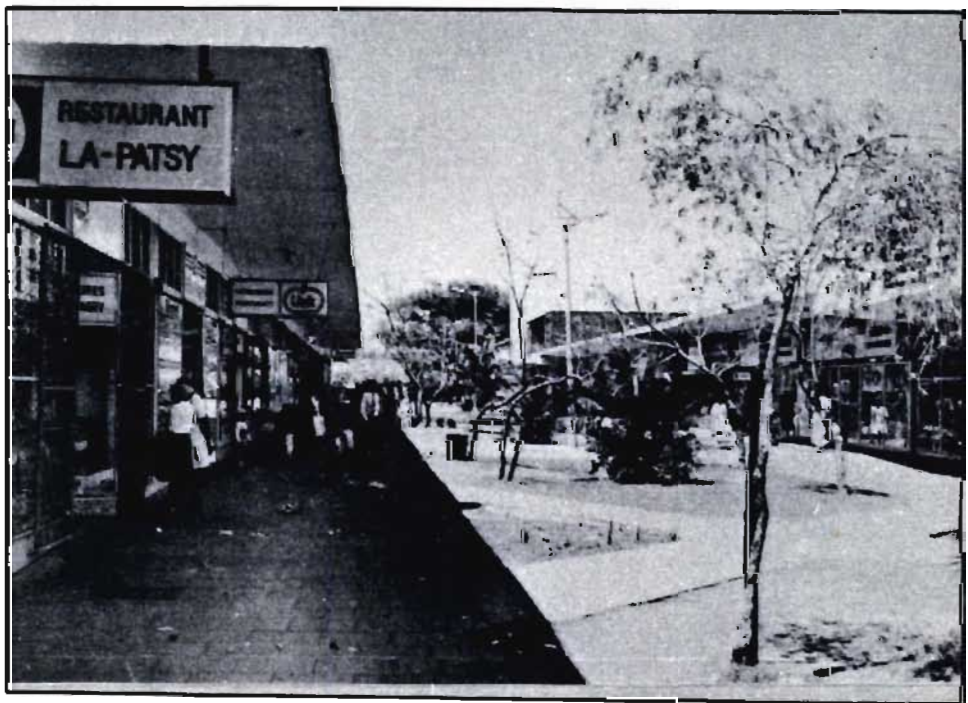


PLATE 3.11 : An 'inside' view of the Bombay Walk shopping  
complex



mobile shops service virtually the entire area and have unwritten laws concerning the demarcation of their respective market areas. Access to low order convenience goods is therefore no longer a serious problem by virtue of these mobile shops (Plate 3.12).

Apart from the mobile shops there are a number of informal commercial activities being operated from private homes (Plate 3.13). These activities ranged from hairdressers' to motor car repairs and radio installations. In fact it can safely be said that most services obtainable in downtown Durban can be obtained in Merebank, and sometimes at a substantially lower cost due to lower overhead costs.

#### 3.4.7 Public and semi-public property

Religious and community sites are scattered throughout Merebank and comprise 1,4% of the total area. There are at present four halls, a community centre, two mosques, four temples and eleven churches covering a variety of religious denominations. Their spatial distribution (Fig. 3.1) is such that they are not equally accessible to all the residents. However, these higher order amenities are used with less frequency than schools or shops and people do not object to the slightly longer distances involved.

These religious and community buildings have been built primarily on a self-help basis by the local community. As a result of this there is a sense of community pride that displays itself in the excellent maintenance of the buildings. There are a number of youth organisations in Merebank which are making concerted efforts to ensure that new clubs are constantly being formed in order to use community facilities to the maximum.



PLATE 3.12 : One of the 'mobile shops' in Merebank (Note the credit book in the seller's hand)



PLATE 3.13 : Informal shop catering mainly for school-children

### 3.4.8 Recreational

Recreational land was defined as active recreational space and constituted 3,5% of the total area. Amenities provided within Merebank comprised of two large soccer grounds, two cricket pitches and a swimming pool (Plate 3.14). All these facilities are clustered together in the 'Central' area making access for residents not located in this central area difficult (Fig. 3.1).

Although the overall proportion of land allocated for recreational use compares favourably with many Natal Towns (for example, Ladysmith - 2,37%, Port Shepstone - 3,03% (Smout, 1969), the density of population in Merebank far exceeds the low density housing in most small Natal towns. The large population in Merebank ( $\pm$  25 000) is virtually double the number that Merebank was planned for. This is due primarily to the housing shortage especially for those people in the lower socio-economic strata. Since the likelihood of the housing shortage being solved soon is remote (a shortage of 10 600 units in 1980-Dept. of Race Relations, 1980) there is a need to increase the number of recreational amenities within Merebank.

Although existing amenities are well maintained they are often overcrowded and therefore unable to meet the needs of the local population. The relatively large amount of open space in Merebank (14,45%) could easily be used by building more facilities such as tennis courts, squash courts and at least another swimming pool. The shortage of these facilities has led to improvisation on the part of the residents. It is not uncommon, for example, to see a fully marked out tennis court on the road (Plate 3.15).

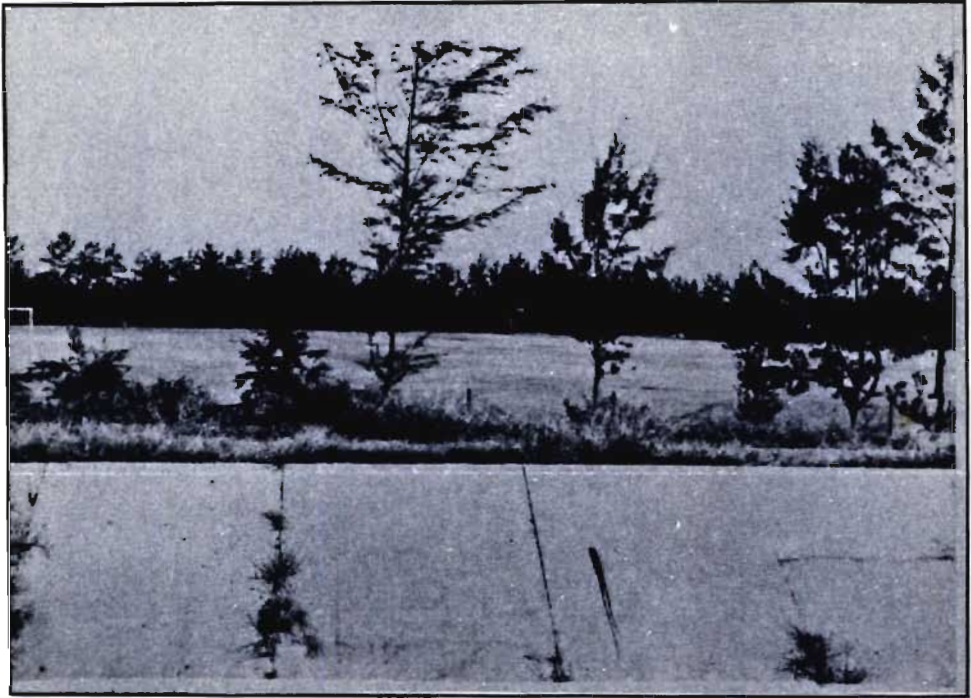


PLATE 3.14 : One of the soccer grounds in Merebank

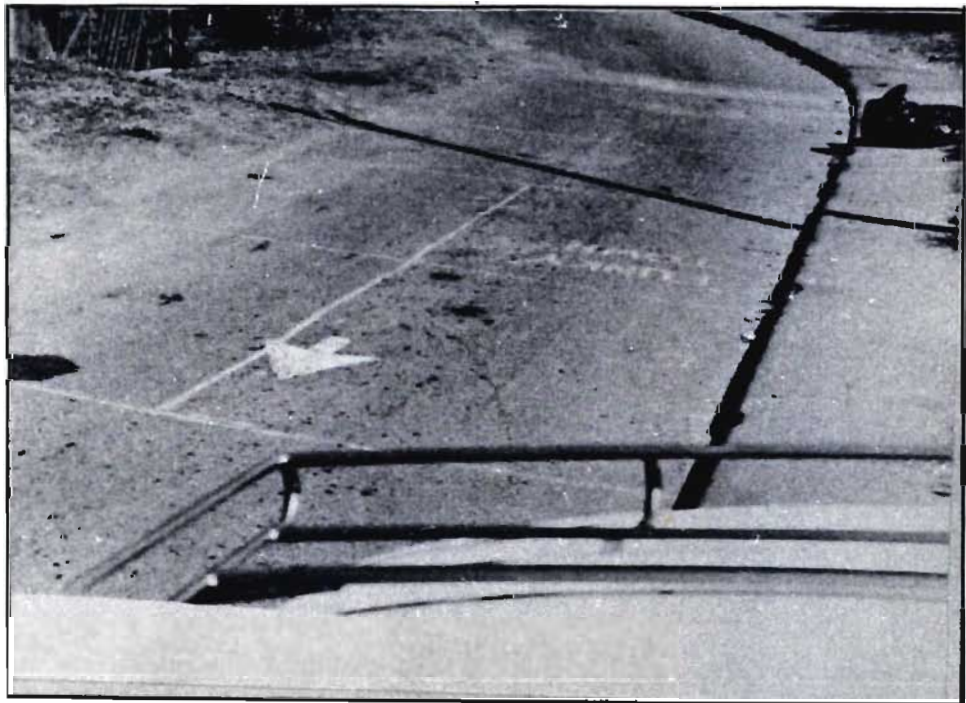


PLATE 3.15 : An improvised tennis court marked out on a road in Merebank



Apart from the conversion of open space into active recreational space the nearby beach could be more fully utilised. At the time of the study (1980) the only access to the beach was a private 'dirt track' belonging to the 'Mondi' paper company (Plate 3.16). This road could be considerably widened and tarred. The beach itself could be developed to at least provide changing facilities and anti-shark nets.

The existing condition of the beach has deprived the local population of what could well have been a major source of recreation (Plate 3.17).

An overall assessment of the available evidence suggests that there is a major shortage of recreational amenities within Merebank. There are two possible ways in which relief can be obtained, firstly, by upgrading existing facilities and secondly, by actually increasing the physical stock of recreational amenities within Merebank.

#### 3.4.9 Entertainment

At the time of this investigation (December 1980) the only entertainment within Merebank was provided by a single hotel and a cinema, both of which were located within the 'central' area of Merebank, in the Bombay Walk shopping complex. Although it is uncommon to find such entertainment facilities in a residential suburb, for the people of Merebank it is a necessity. The public transport service is virtually non-existent after normal working hours and the majority of residents did not have access to private transport. Thus for the people in Merebank the large number of entertainment facilities in the city centre had almost



PLATE 3.16 : The only road leading to the beach

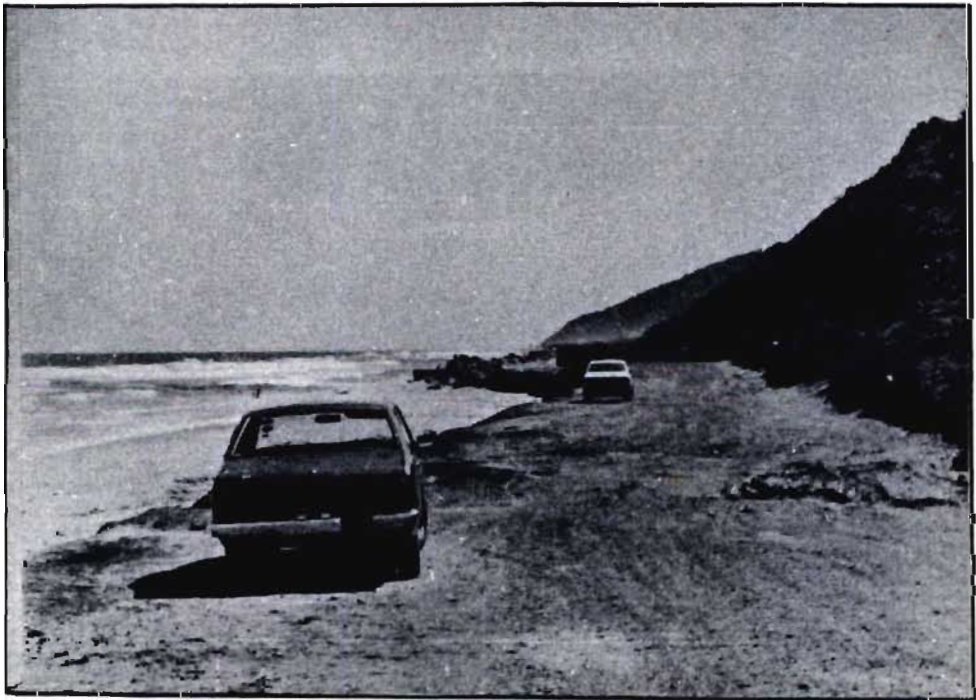


PLATE 3.17 : A barren shoreline with no facilities of any kind

no utility value as they were inaccessible.

The quality of these amenities is sub-standard by most tests, for example, the food at the hotel was probably the worst meal the researcher has had the misfortune to have eaten. The cinema was in a serious state of disrepair and had become more of a haunt for gangsters than for the majority of residents in Merebank (Plate 3.18, 3.19).

People seeking entertainment are forced to travel either to central Durban or to the suburbs of Isipingo or Chatsworth to the north and west of Merebank respectively. Such trips involve increased time and cost factors and for those without their own private transport these facilities are totally inaccessible. There is a serious shortage of developed entertainment facilities in Merebank and all existing facilities are provided by the private sector. Perhaps the public sector could help finance such facilities and charge consumers a price that would facilitate the maintenance of the facility.

The serious shortage of entertainment facilities within Merebank has led to the existence of several 'shebeens' (three are known to exist, but there are probably more) and at least two gambling dens. 'Shebeens' are unlicensed establishments that sell alcohol. Although 'shebeens' do at times attract undesirable elements of society, many provide an opportunity for local residents to socialise over a few drinks and probably a game of darts or cards. 'Shebeens' thus provide a service to the people which is woven into the social fabric of Merebank. Conversations with one 'shebeen' owner revealed that running such an establishment is a lucrative business and most 'shebeens' are seen by local



PLATE 3.18 : The only hotel in Merebank (note the broken panes)



PLATE 3.19 : The Cinema in Merebank (note the poor condition)



residents more as exclusive clubs than merely a place to have a drink.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Three types of problems have been identified :

- (i) *Certain amenities are not sufficiently accessible to local residents primarily because planners assumed a high degree of mobility of local residents. This is the case with regard to retail facilities, for example;*
- (ii) *Some facilities are poorly maintained and thus have no utility value to local residents. This is especially true with regard to public open spaces where such spaces have become nothing more than dumping grounds for all types of refuse;*
- (iii) *There was an actual physical shortage of certain categories of amenities in Merebank. This was especially with regard to both entertainment and recreational facilities. Facilities within Merebank were seriously overcrowded and could not cope with the demands of the large population of Merebank.*

In view of the problems identified above, the following recommendations are made :

- (i) *An internal bus service be operated in order to increase accessibility to amenities within Merebank. Such a service could be planned in such a way so as to ensure maximum use by residents.*

- (ii) *Community interest and initiative should be stimulated in order to maintain facilities such as parks and recreational amenities. Community participation is important to create a sense of involvement in their environment, and subsequently in their social well being. The involvement of a community in attempting to raise their levels of well being often result in creating positive attitudes towards their area.*
  
- (iii) *Authorities should use existing public open space to the fullest by making them safe, accessible and maintaining them well. The high proportion of public open space that is not effectively serving its function should be rezoned for active recreational use. The creation of more land for this purpose, together with the building of more recreational facilities could alleviate the drastic shortage of recreational amenities within Merebank. Areas such as the beach, which has tremendous potential as a source of recreation has to be developed by the authorities and the level of access increased.*

## CHAPTER FOUR : THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

*'Housing is not an end in itself; purely a means of providing shelter for a family. It is a component of city growth, part of the process through which a city develops. As such, it is a powerful tool, for wisely used it can be harnessed to foster this process to enhance the city - poorly used it can reduce the city's economic and social health'. (Rees, B.J. 1979).*

	<i>Page</i>
4.1 Introduction	56-58
4.2 Methodology	58-58
4.3 Types of dwellings and their distribution	59-82
4.3.1 Municipal dwellings (unimproved)	59-63
4.3.2 Municipal dwellings (improved)	63-68
4.3.3 Privately built dwellings	68-71
4.3.4 Privately built flats	71-74
4.3.5 Sub-economic rented units	74-77
4.3.6 Secondary dwelling units (outbuildings)	77-83
4.4 Conclusion	83-84

#### 4.1 Introduction

The residential environment has been briefly alluded to in the previous chapter on land use, but cannot be dismissed as a mere proportion of land being utilised for the building of houses. A house provides for an immediate and fundamental need of any family, namely shelter. Although a house is often regarded as an essential rather than an amenity, it serves so many functions apart from the provision of shelter, that to see it in this light alone would be underestimating the importance of housing to social well being. Housing brings with it a wide range of benefits besides shelter.

Housing provides an important means of self expression for an individual, and provides both social and symbolic status. Status is derived more from visual manifestations than anything else, and the house represents one of these visual components. The type of house one lives in is therefore an important indicator of socio-economic status and following from this, a very good indicator of a family's social well being. Apart from the issue of status the house also provides an area of defensible space which helps fulfill both the individual's need for privacy and his basic territorial instincts. A house has also come to be a major form of storing wealth, as it is normally the single most important investment a family makes.

On the negative side, poor housing can have a far more serious effect on social well being. Poor housing conditions have been shown to lead to increases in the incidence of infant mortality rates, stress, mental ill health, and morbidity from infectious diseases. Poor housing conditions also have an adverse effect

on the intellectual development of children and exhibit strong correlations with deviant behaviour and social instability.

Thus access to decent housing in terms of living space, design, quality and location in relation to other amenities, is an important indicator of social well being, and it is in this context that the residential environment is dealt with in this chapter. Bearing this in mind, the aims of this chapter are to :

- (i) Identify the different dwelling types within Merebank;*
- (ii) Measure the proportion of each dwelling type in relation to the total housing stock in Merebank;*
- (iii) Ascertain the spatial distribution of housing types within Merebank;*
- (iv) Provide a qualitative assessment of the dwellings;*
- (v) Relate dwelling types to location of amenities within Merebank.*

#### 4.2 Methodology

A plot by plot survey was undertaken in order to identify the type, quality and distribution of dwellings within Merebank.

Dwellings were classified into six broad categories, based on the following criteria.

- (i) Type of dwelling - for example, house, flat, outbuilding;*
- (ii) The origin of the dwelling - whether it was built by the municipality or whether it was owner built;*
- (iii) Whether or not the structure of the dwelling has been altered/improved.*

The six categories of dwellings used in the present study are :

- a) *Municipally built, semi - detached houses (unimproved);*
- b) *Municipally built, semi - detached houses (improved);*
- c) *Municipally built, sub - economic multiple dwelling units;*
- d) *Privately built houses;*
- e) *Privately developed flats;*
- f) *Secondary dwelling units (outbuildings)*

The proportion of each housing type within the study area can be seen in Figure 4.1. A description of the above categories follows.

#### 4.3 Type of dwellings

##### 4.3.1 Municipal dwellings (unimproved)

Of the total housing stock 13,4% were municipally erected dwellings that have retained their original structural design. Such dwellings comprised both four and two roomed dwellings (Fig. 4.2).

Construction material consisted of hollow cement blocks, asbestos roofing, cement floors and unplastered bagwashed walls. Dwellings had no internal ceilings or interleading doors, and the sizes of the rooms were very small. These dwellings, although providing rudimentary shelter did little else to satisfy the residential aspirations of the occupants. Monotony of design and the quality of the building materials used in the actual construction of the dwellings were two of the highly negative aspects of this residential environment (Plate 4.1 and Plate 4.2).

Figure 4.1 : Proportion of housetypes in Merebank

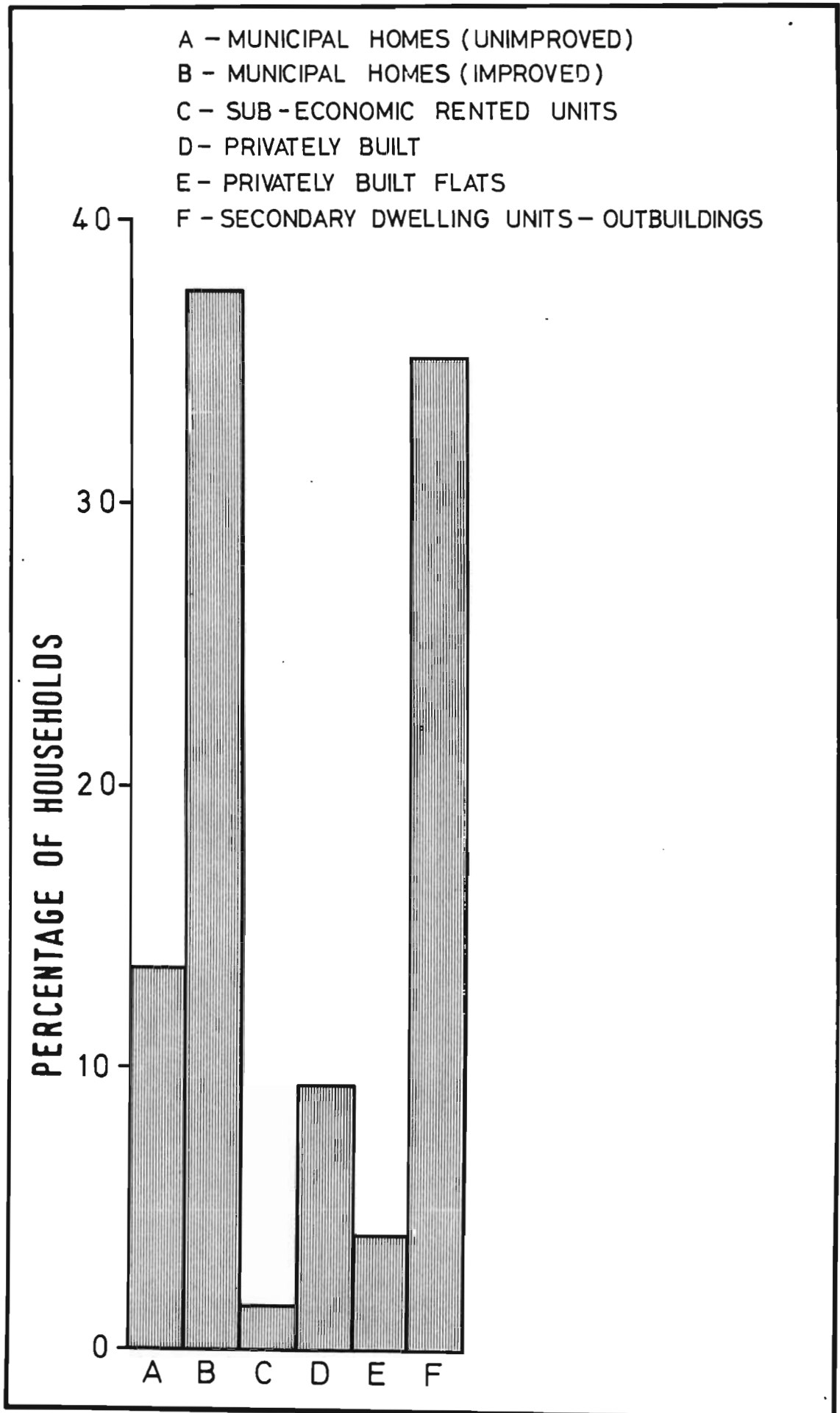
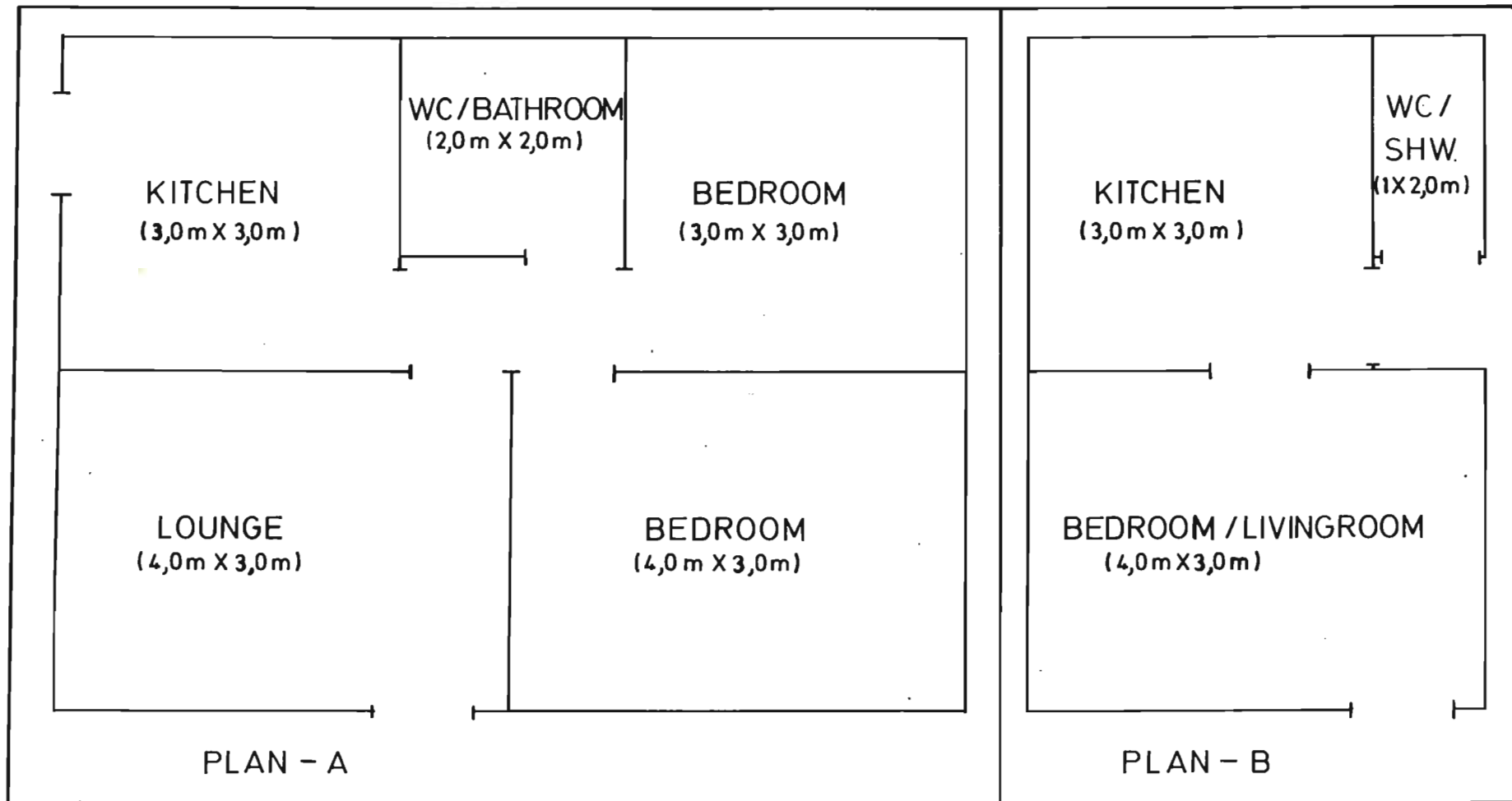


Figure 4.2 : Layout of an economic and sub-economic dwelling unit





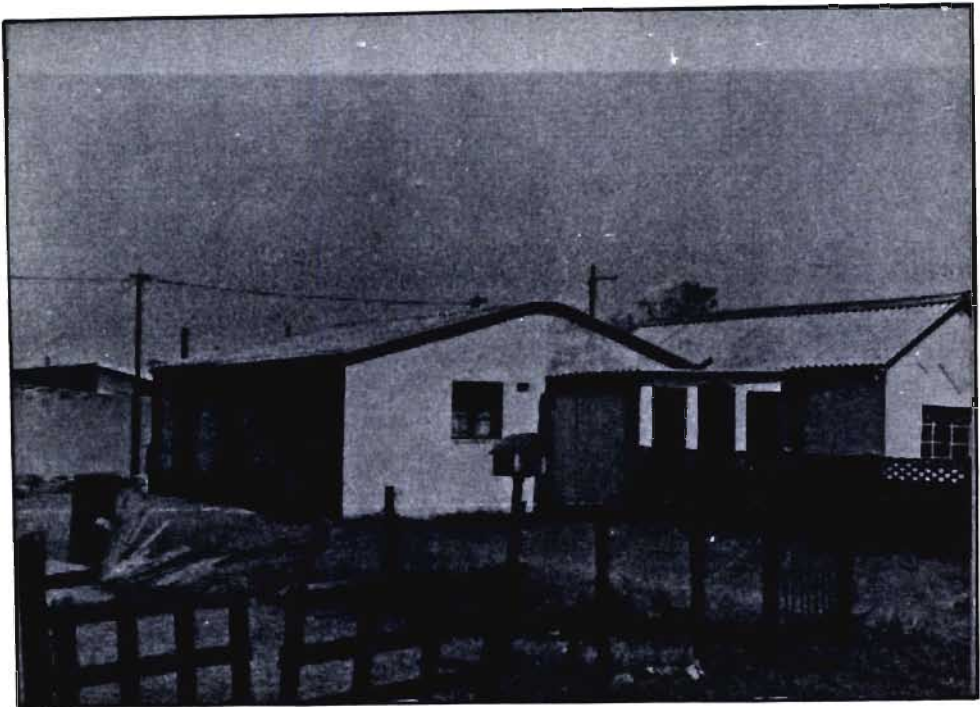


Plate 4.1 : A municipally built dwelling, four roomed  
(unimproved)

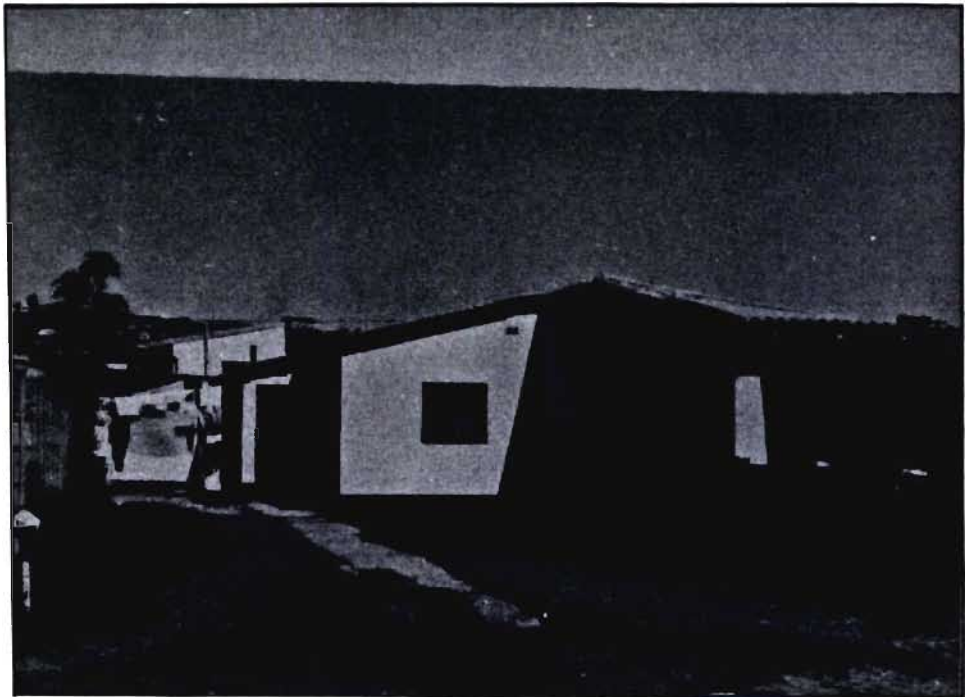


Plate 4.2 : A municipally built dwelling, two roomed  
(unimproved)

The lack of privacy within homes together with the serious problem of overcrowding had a negative effect on the quality of life of the occupants. The average family size in Merebank was 5,6 persons per family and this meant that some dwellings had up to three people sharing a room. People occupying these dwellings could not afford to improve their living conditions due to low incomes and have had to be content with the original structures provided, although these were not of very high quality.

Dwellings in this category were located primarily in the 'central' and 'Navy' sections of Merebank (Fig. 4.3) and whilst those located in the latter area had good access to amenities (virtually all the amenities in Merebank, with the exception of the schools, are located in the 'central' area) people in the former area were disadvantaged with regard to shopping facilities, schools and recreational amenities.

#### 4.3.2 Municipal dwellings (improved)

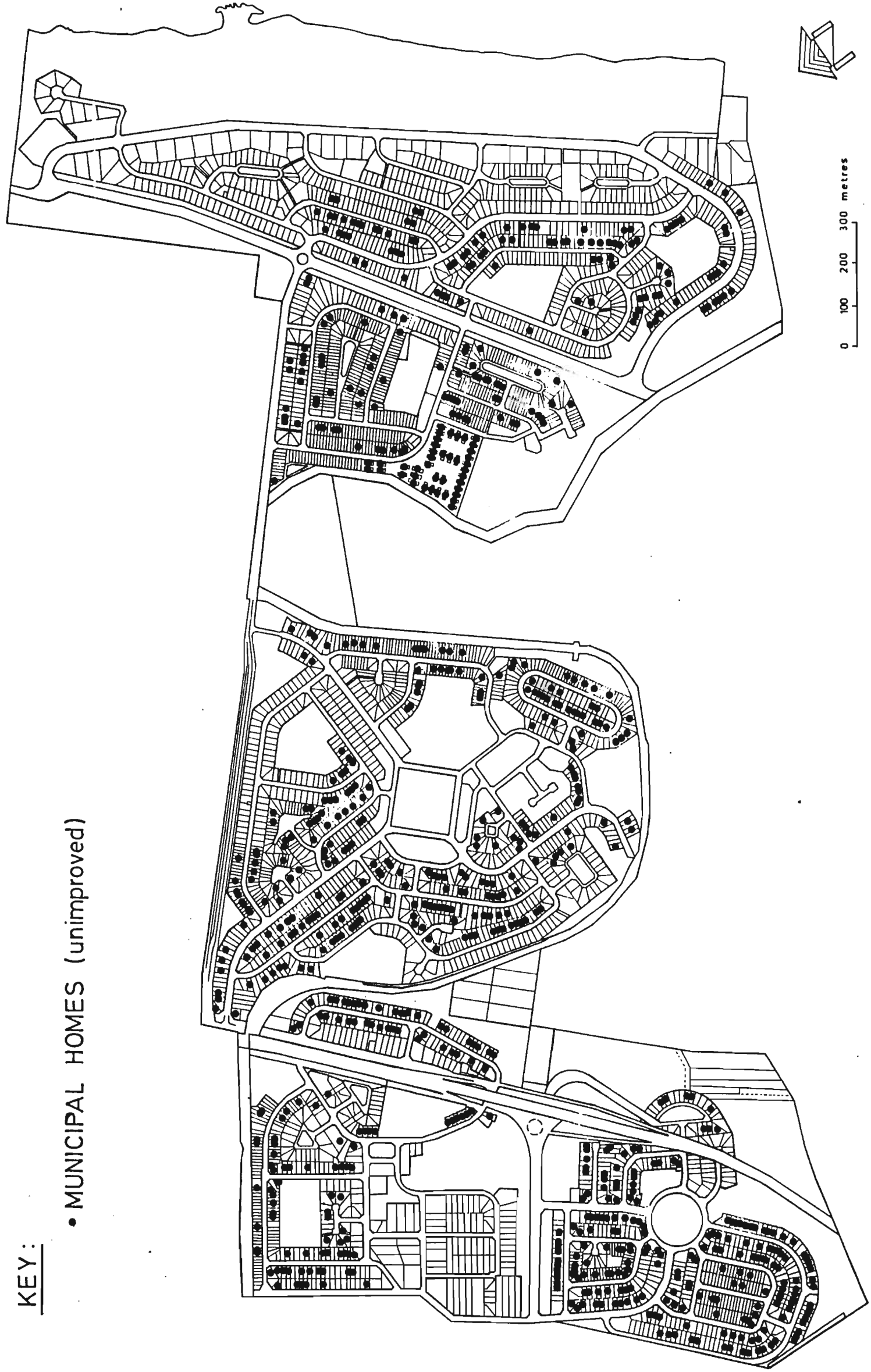
A substantial proportion of the municipally built houses have been upgraded, with considerable changes in structure and design from the original dwellings. These improved dwellings accounted for almost 40% of the total housing stock and reflect a marked improvement in the quality of the living environment for a significant proportion of Merebank residents.

Initially homeowners could not afford to finance their own homes but socio-economic circumstances have changed quite dramatically within the Indian community in the last decade. Improved incomes of households have provided residents with two basic choices - either to move into a better class of residential area or

**Fig.4.3: Spatial distribution of Municipal dwellings (unimproved)**

KEY:

- MUNICIPAL HOMES (unimproved)



alternatively, to upgrade the existing dwellings. Since residential mobility amongst Indians is very low due to the Group Areas Act which has created an artificial shortage of Indian residential land, most people have remained in the public housing schemes and opted for the second alternative, namely, to upgrade the existing dwellings.

Dwellings that have been upgraded bear little resemblance to the original 'box-like' structures (Plates 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). As can be seen from the illustrations, many of these dwellings are well designed and aesthetically appealing structures and would not look out of place in any upper class residential area. This phenomenal upgrading of dwellings in order to create a better living environment in terms of space and design cannot always be attributed to increases in income alone. Because these dwellings were sold outright to residents rather than rented, residents gained security of tenure and the incentive to improve their living environment. Most improvements have not been undertaken with the aid of building society bonds but rather, have been done on a 'self-help' basis as money became available.

The informal sector within Merebank can offer most building services and although the actual building may take some time the results are pleasing and are a reflection of community intent to uplift itself.



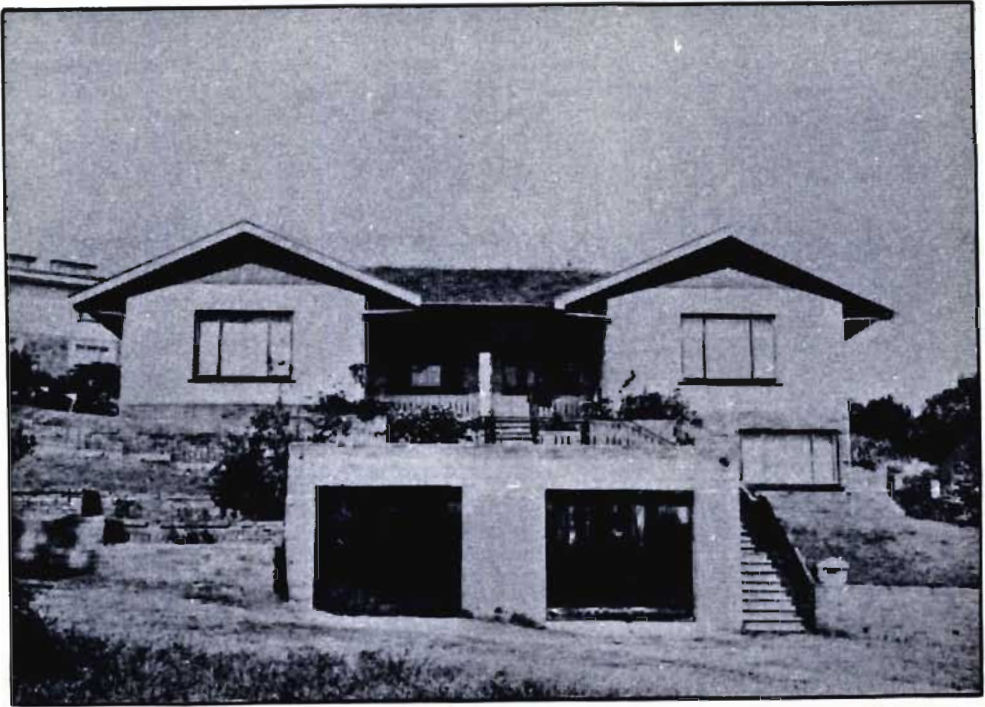


Plate 4.3 : Owners of adjacent plots often make improvements together. This dwelling consisted originally two semi-detached units

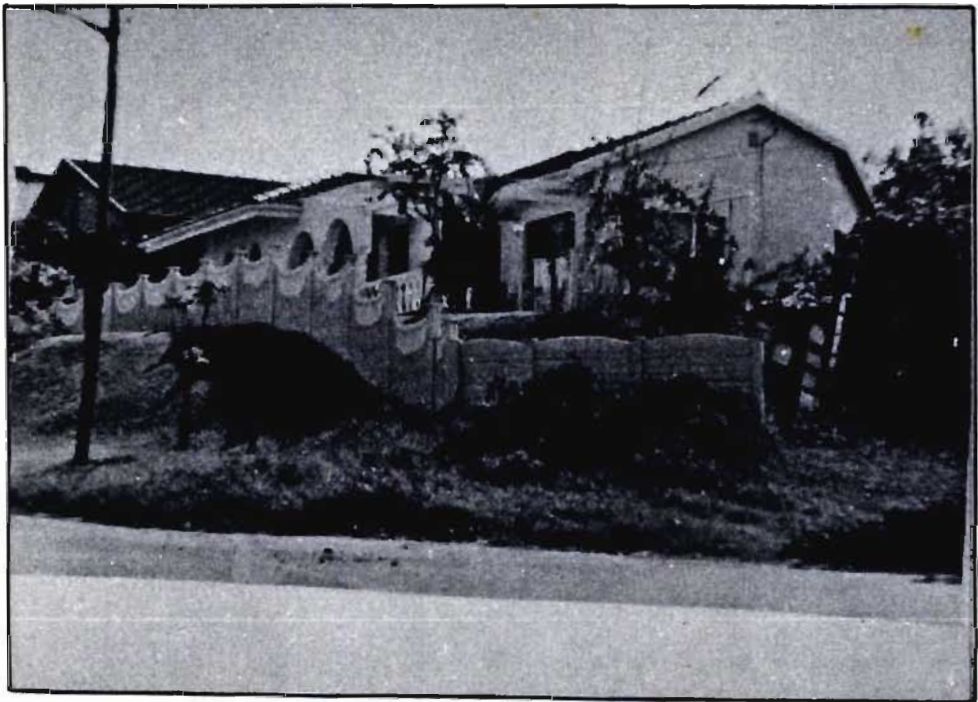


Plate 4.4 : An economic dwelling that has had a complete 'face-lift'

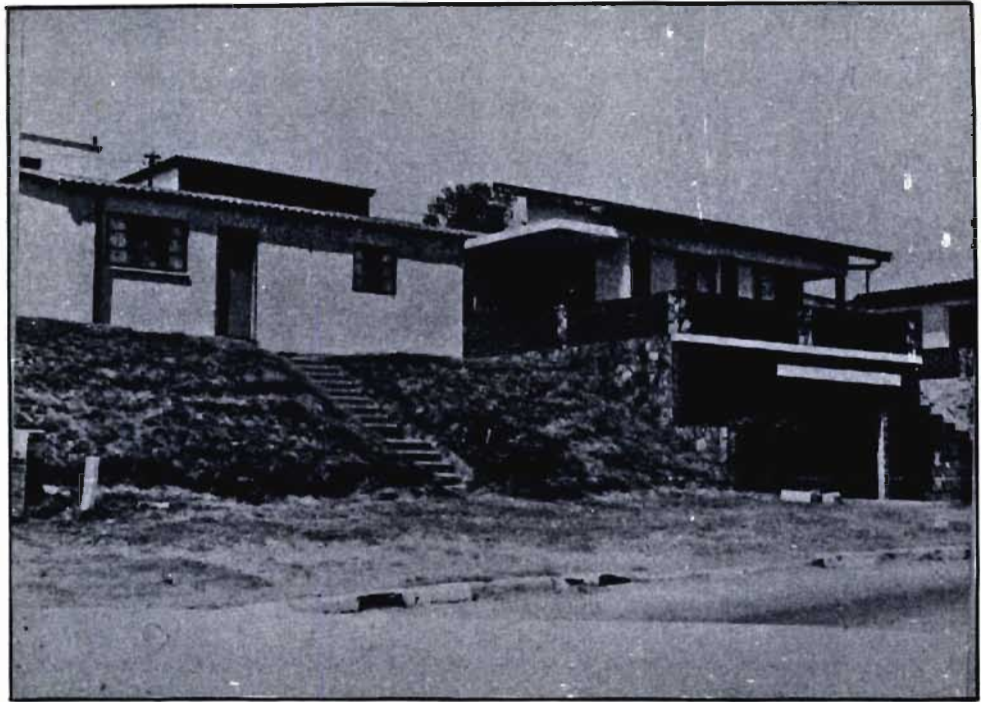


Plate 4.5 : On the left one can see an original municipally erected dwelling. On the right is the identical original building that has been improved.

Apart from the obvious physical changes in the structure of the dwellings the interiors of these units has been almost completely refurbished. Some of the more important interior changes include the proper plastering and painting of walls, the addition of internal doors and ceilings, much larger living rooms and larger kitchens. In most Indian homes the kitchen is normally the most used place for eating and chatting. Many homes are now fully carpeted and tastefully furnished.

In the final assessment of dwellings in this category it can be stated that these units provide far more than just the need for shelter and privacy and are definitely an important amenity to their occupants.

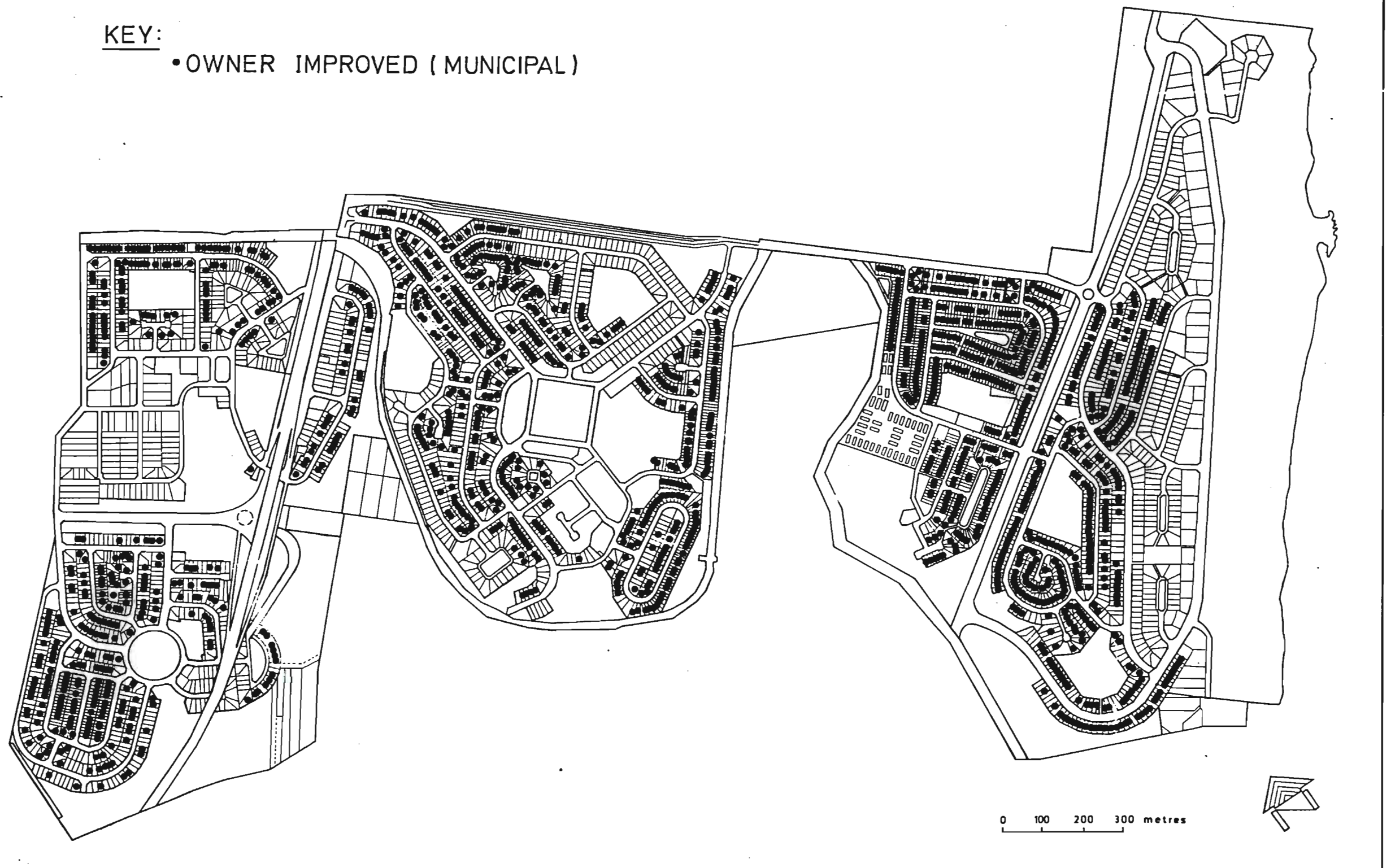
Dwellings in this category were fairly well distributed throughout the study area with the exception of the 'upper ridge' area which was reserved exclusively for the very rich (Fig. 4.4).

#### 4.3.3 Privately built dwellings

Privately built dwellings were on larger plots (approximately 600 m<sup>2</sup>) than were the municipally erected dwellings (about 400 m<sup>2</sup>), and were generally of far superior quality. These houses normally consisted of three or four bedrooms, a lounge and diningroom, a kitchen and a separate bathroom and toilet. The range of house designs made it impossible to depict a typical layout of a dwelling in this category. Construction materials used were of good quality. Roofs were generally tiled or slated, and walls were of brick construction (Plates 4.6, 4.7).



**Fig.4.4: Spatial distribution of owner improved (Municipal) dwellings**



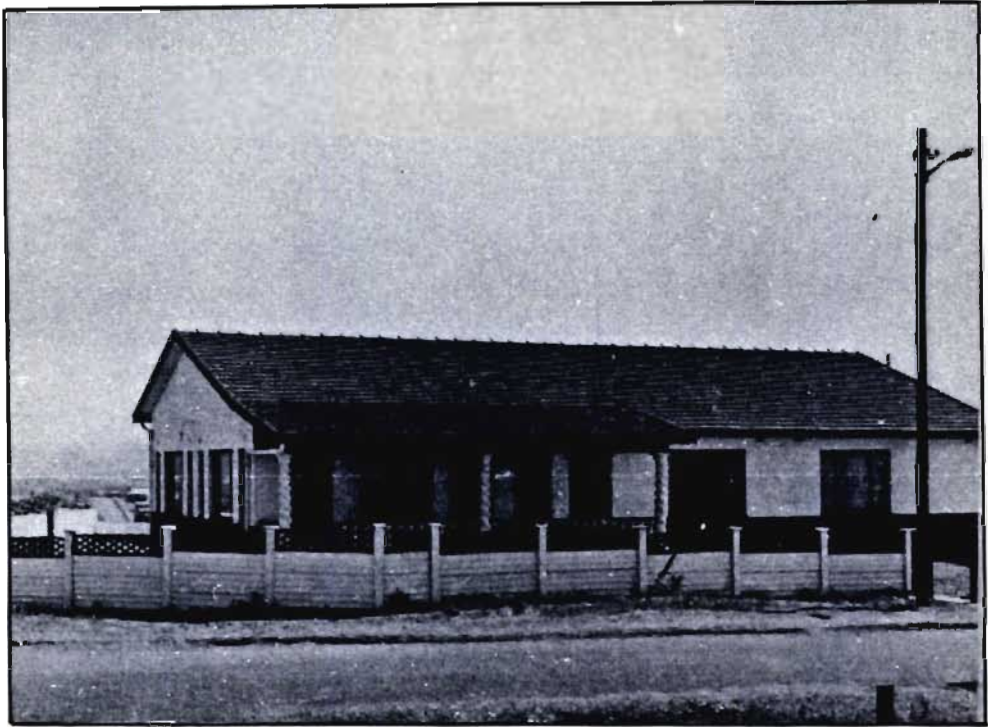


Plate 4.6 : A privately erected dwelling

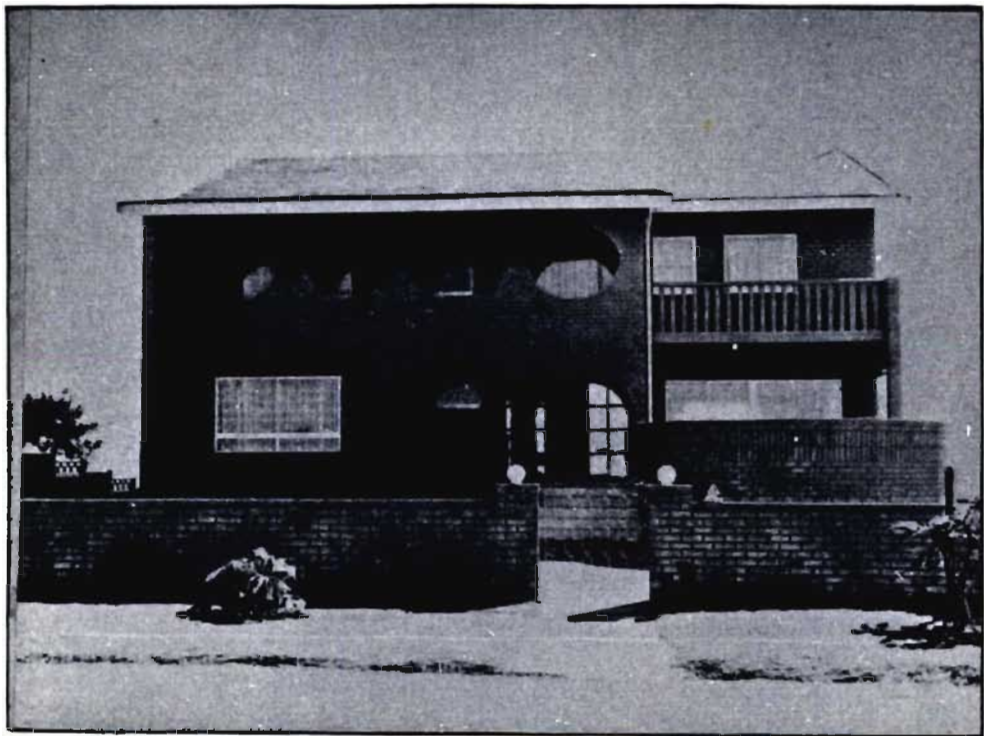


Plate 4.7 : One of the superlative dwellings in Merebank

The majority of privately built dwellings were located in the 'ridge' area, with the quality of dwellings increasing as one moves towards the sea (Fig. 4.5). Dwellings in this category managed to escape most of the negative externalities faced by other residents who lived in the 'central' and 'Navy' areas of Merebank due to their location on the slope of the ridge. As most of the people occupying dwellings in this category were either middle to upper income families they normally had a greater degree of mobility than others in lower socio-economic categories and therefore had access to far more amenities both within and without Merebank. A small percentage of privately built dwellings were of superlative quality. These dwellings were built on plots in excess of 900 square metres and were palatial. Many had their own tennis courts, swimming pools and other amenities. Most of these dwellings were in the 'upper ridge' area and had a view overlooking the sea.

#### 4.3.4 Privately developed flats

Privately developed flats accounted for 4,1% of the total housing stock. Rentals (December 1980) ranged from R120 for a single bedroomed bachelor flat to up to R180 and more for the larger flats. There are three major blocks of flats in Merebank and four smaller buildings that have an average of five flats per block. With the exception of 'Narvani Mansions' sited adjacent to the Bombay Walk shopping centre (Plate 4.8), the other flats were built to minimum specifications and showed signs of neglect. Cracked ceilings, faulty plumbing and poor maintenance were quite common. Corridors are narrow and barely allowed two people to walk side by side. Residents reported that little attention was paid to their grievances by landlords who knew that in most



72-  
Fig.4.5: Spatial distribution of privately built dwellings

KEY:

• PRIVATELY ERECTED HOMES

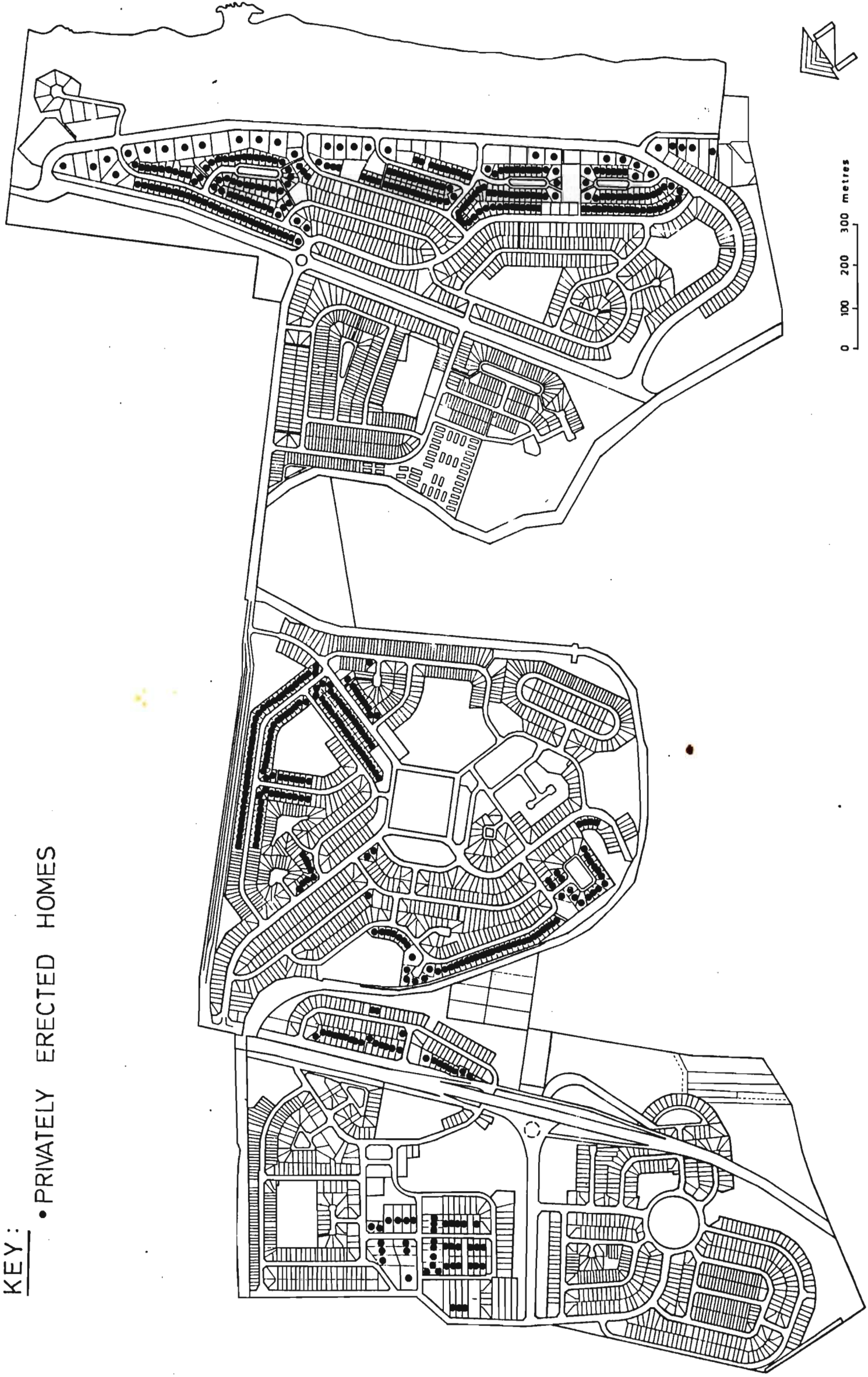




Plate 4.8 : The only block of flats that is properly maintained

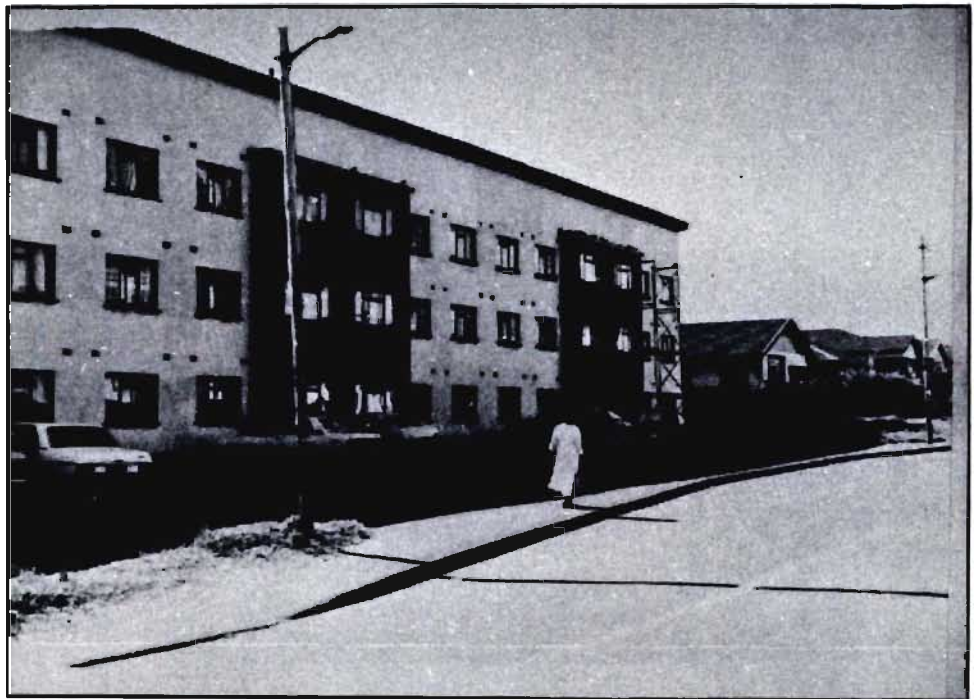


Plate 4.9 : A drab, 'dormitory-type' flat that provides the barest minimum standards to tenants

cases tenants had no alternate accommodation.

It was obvious from the poor physical condition of most flats that landlords cared little for the well being of the occupants (Plate 4.9). The absence of fencing around the flats and the lack of any safe play area for children made it hazardous to leave children unattended, and this further affected the quality of life of flat dwellers.

All three major blocks of flats were in the 'central' area of Merebank and had easy access to both retail shopping and recreational facilities.

#### 4.3.5 Sub-economic rented units

Sub-economic 'barrack' type dwelling units accounted for a very small proportion of the total housing stock in Merebank (1,4%) but for the small number of people inhabiting these dwellings living conditions are appalling. These sub-economic units consist of a number of rooms 'strung' together in a row, and people could rent one or more rooms from the municipality. The internal layout of these sub-economic units is shown in figure 4.6.

Rooms are not provided with water, electricity or sanitation and tenants had to make use of communal toilets and showers (Plates 4.10, 4.11). These toilets and showers are provided in separate buildings and for some people may mean a walk of about 100 metres to the nearest toilet. This may not seem such a great distance during the day, but at night, in a poorly lit environment, every step is fraught with fear, especially for females. Residents lived in perpetual fear of local gangsters who virtually "control the township"

Figure 4.6 : Layout of sub-economic renting unit

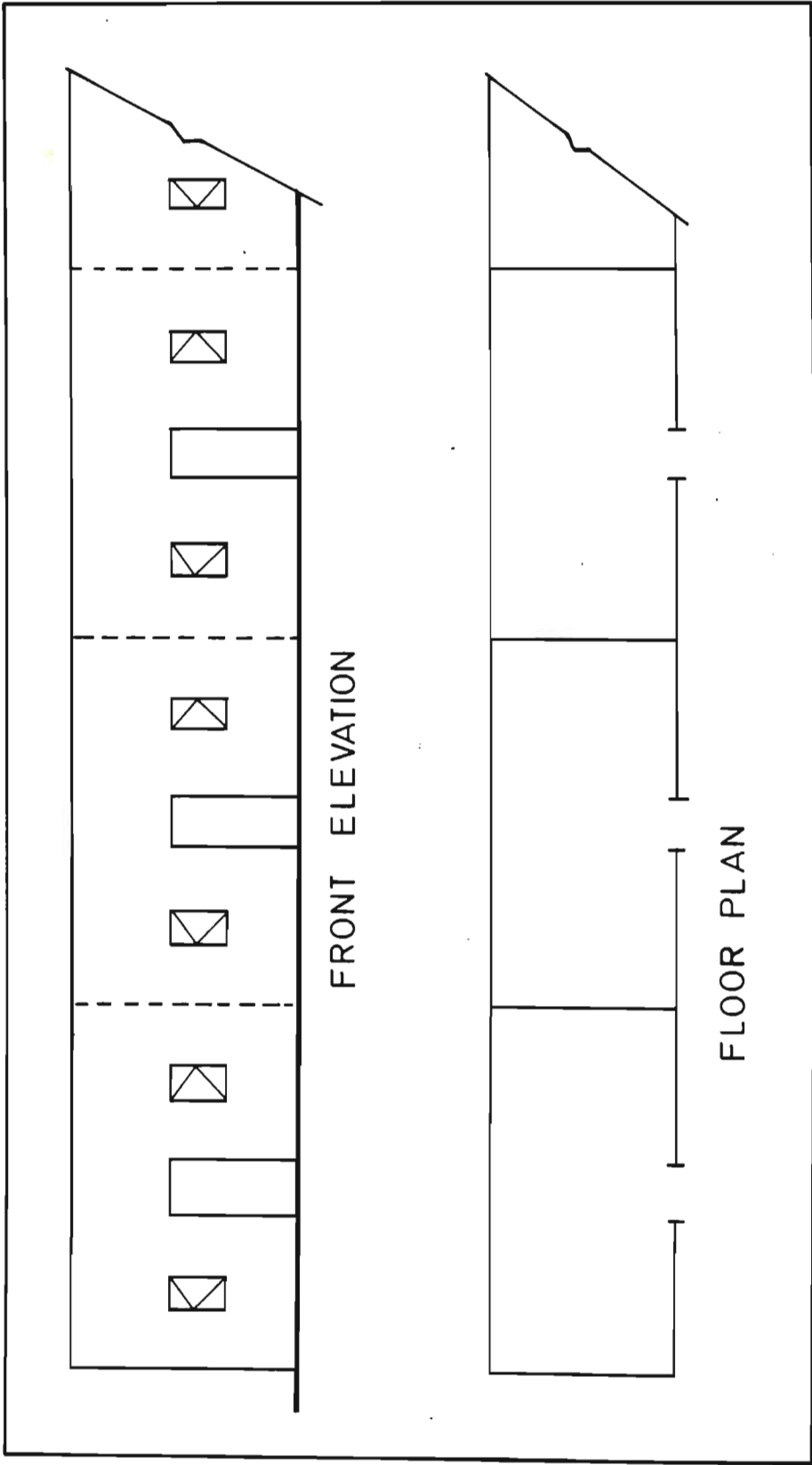






Plate 4.10 : Communal washing facilities



Plate 4.11 : Communal toilets

Vandalism, drunken behaviour, drug pushing and rape are all a daily part of the scenario, and although police make frequent raids into the area they meet with little co-operation from local residents who fear reprisals against their families.

Rentals ranged from about R20 per month for a single room to up to R70 for three rooms. It was not uncommon to find whole families living in single rooms. The poor living conditions under which people live in this area has made it a distinct section of Merebank and is dubbed 'Minitown' by local inhabitants (Fig. 3.2). It is not possible to describe in words the conditions under which the people in 'Minitown' live and therefore the following photographic montage tells the story vividly (Plates 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15).

In the final assessment, every aspect of 'minitown' depicts the terrible conditions under which people are forced to live - the complete lack of privacy, proximity to industry and resultant pollution, the rutted roads, broken panes and lack of any safe play area for children. At the present time strong moves are afoot to move the people out of 'Minitown' into a better living environment, but this process is not yet complete.

#### 4.3.6 Secondary dwelling units (outbuildings)

The inability of central and local governments to keep up with the demand for housing, especially in the non-white sector (17 000 units in 1982) has led to a serious shortage of dwellings for a major part of South Africa's population and this in turn has led to the development of a large informal housing market (Butler Adam and Venter, 1982). The result has been overcrowding in public housing schemes and the use of garages and other out-

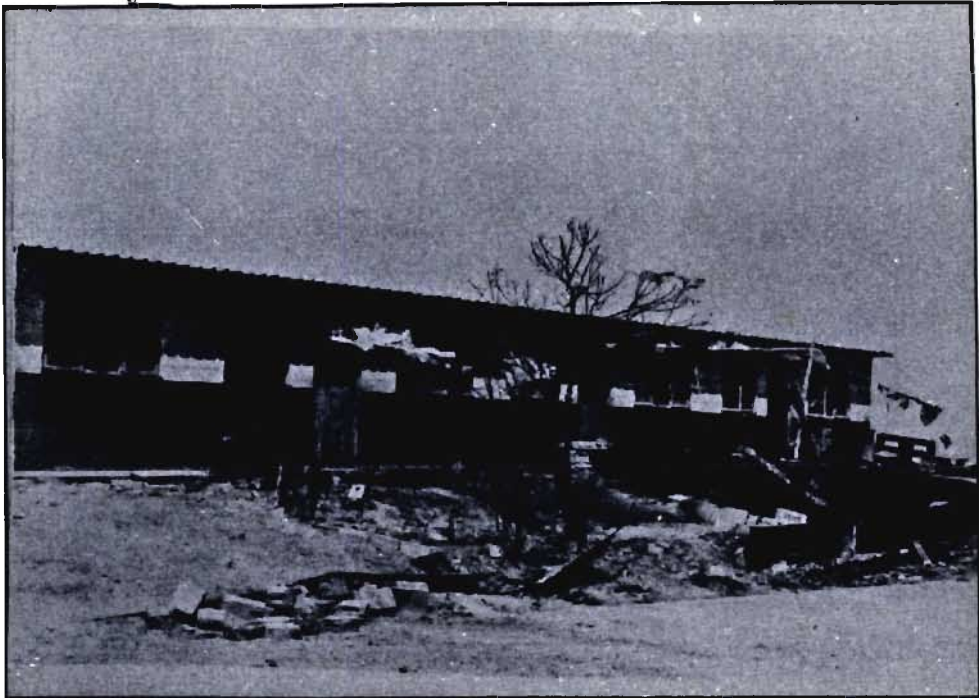


Plate 4.12 : Note the broken panes and discrepit building

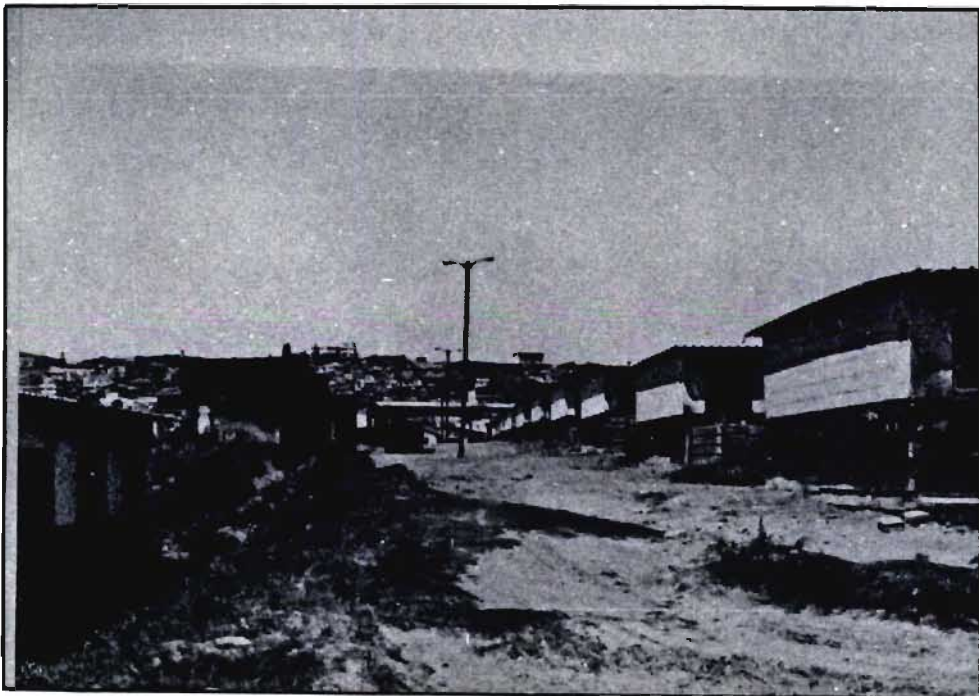


Plate 4.13 : Rows of houses without proper roads or facilities

buildings as dwellings. Further elaboration on the use of such buildings is necessary. Planning ordinances do not allow the erection of more than one dwelling per residential plot, but it is perfectly legal to build a garage or servants quarters.

Although it seems ironical that people in a predominantly public housing schemes have servants quarters since they have such low incomes people have merely used these names in order to circumvent legislation restricting the number of dwellings per plot. Thus 'servants quarters', 'garages' and even 'prayer rooms' are actually used as living space and are rented out to tenants.

In the case of the Indian community outbuildings as have formed an important part of the dwelling stock. In Merebank such buildings (hereafter referred to as outbuildings) accounted for no less than 34,9% of the total dwelling stock.

On the one hand such buildings bring in much needed income to landlords and, on the other, provides the tenant with a building that could range from the rudimentary provision of shelter, to a dwelling that has most modern amenities. The wide range in the quality of outhouses is remarkable and although there were instances where very poor living conditions were evident, many buildings were well designed and fitted with electricity, water and proper sanitation (Plates 4.16, 4.17). Landlords however often imposed restrictions on tenants that affected quality of life - such restrictions included a limit on the number of visitors, restrictions on family size and the lack of parking for tenants vehicles. Also, the letting out of outhouses is illegal and tenants have no security of tenure, and are thus at the mercy of their landlords.



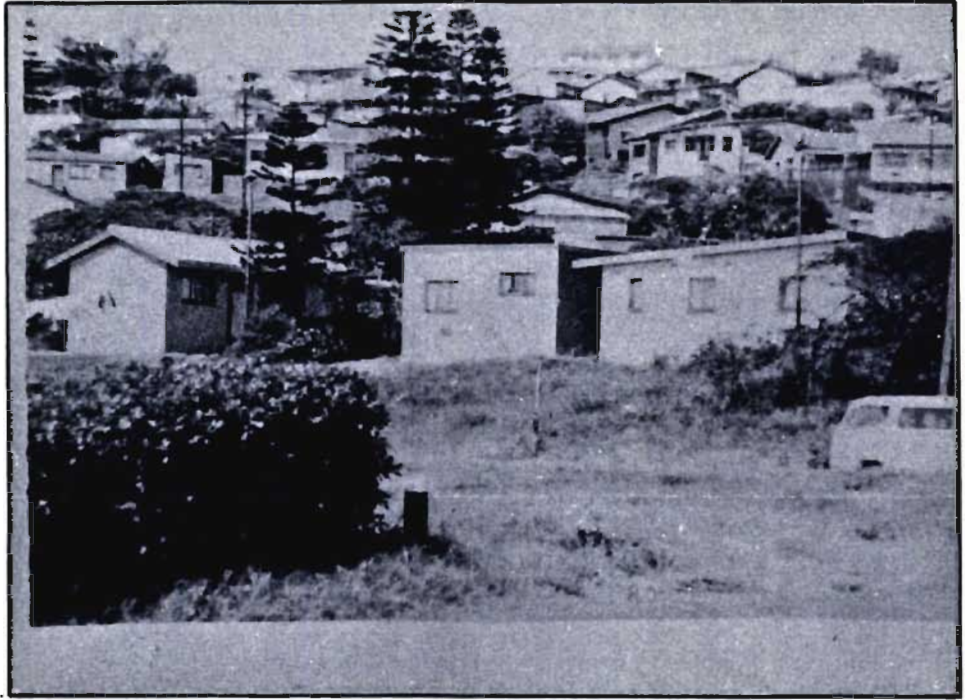


Plate 4.16 : A view of some of the 'outbuildings' in  
Merebank

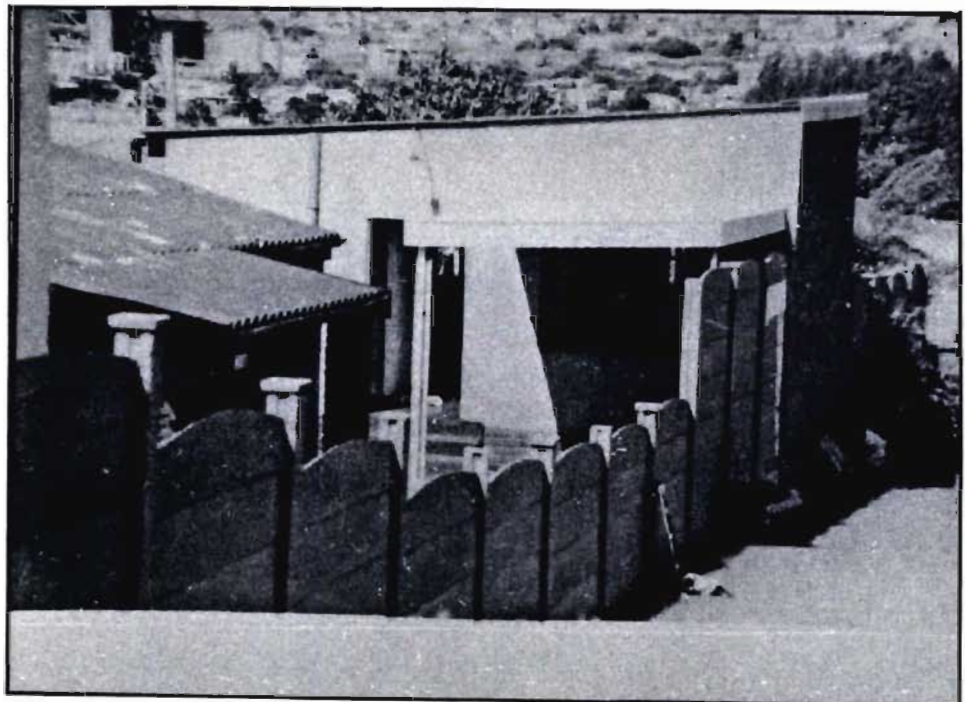
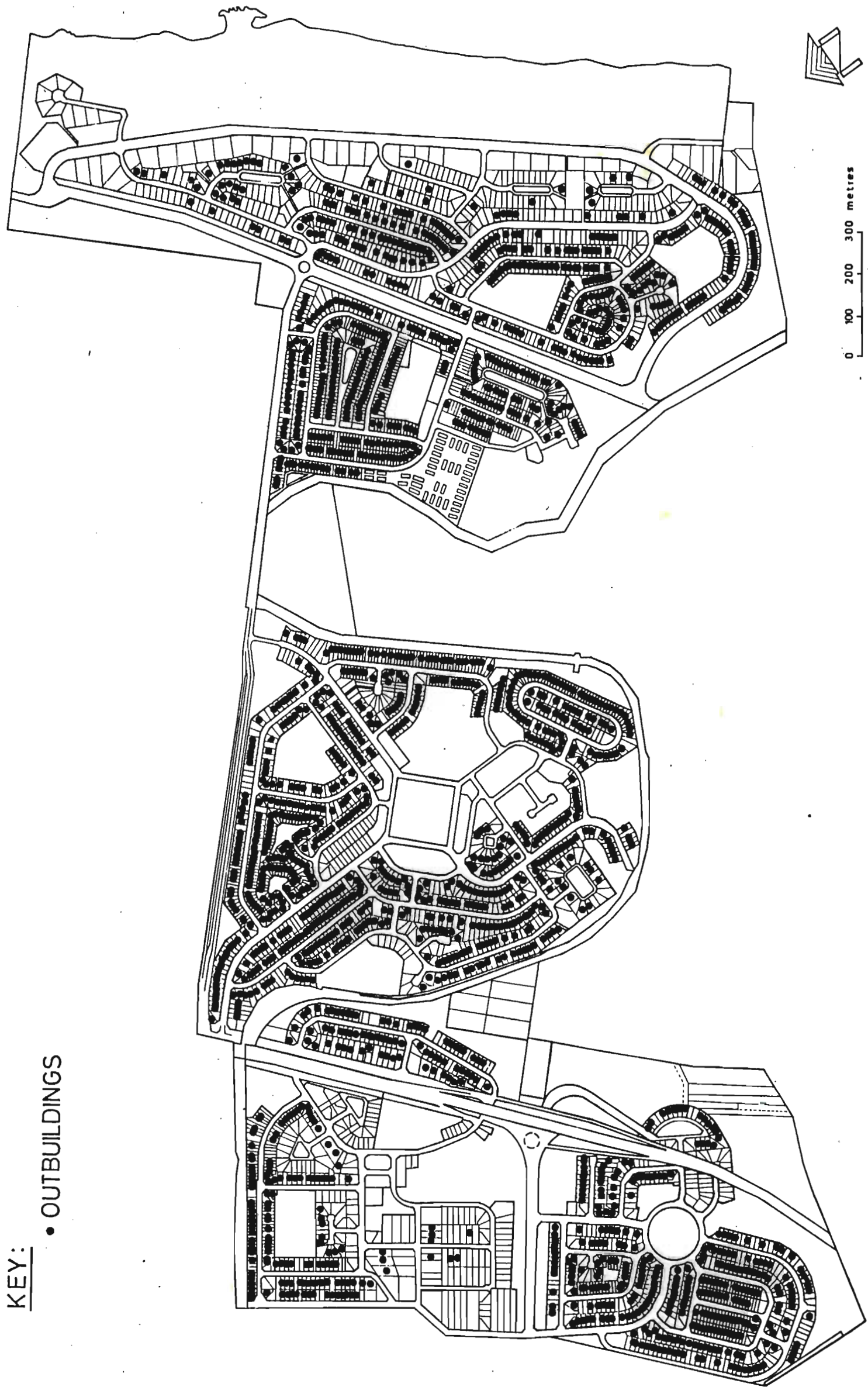


Plate 4.17 : A closer look at one of the higher quality  
outbuildings

Fig.4.7 Spatial distribution of outbuildings

KEY:

• OUTBUILDINGS





Contrary to common belief that outhouse dwellers consist mainly of young married couples in the early stage of the life cycle, empirical findings indicate that many people consider outhouses as a permanent form of accommodation and have virtually no hope of owning their own homes (Maharaj, 1982 - unpublished Honours thesis). Unless the acute housing shortage is alleviated, and the possibility of this seems remote, outhouse accommodation will continue to be a permanent feature of Merebank.

The majority of outhouses were equally distributed in the 'central' and 'Navy' areas of Merebank (Fig. 4.7). Towards the 'ridge' area there is a clear decrease in the number of outhouses and this is linked to the corresponding increase in the level of socio-economic status.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Although Merebank was intended for low income residents there have been many changes over the years, the most striking of which is the process of incumbent upgrading. Only about 10% of the houses in Merebank did not fulfill the basic needs of the occupants. The majority of houses had undergone structural alterations to increase both the aesthetic appeal and the amount of living space. The original dormitory type public housing is being rapidly renovated and upgraded.

The distribution of the housing types within the area displayed certain distinct patterns. The people who were worst off in terms of housing suffered the greatest percentage of disutilities in the form of pollution from the nearby factories and odourous fumes from the sewerage treatment works. On the other hand people who

had houses of superlative quality were located in the upper 'ridge' area, away from these disutilities and benefitting from beautiful views of the Indian Ocean as well as more open space. The greater part of Merebank lies in a basin and one sees a distinct upgrading of houses as one moves away from the 'central' area toward the ridge. People living in the 'Navy' area (predominantly municipal and improved municipal structures) were worst off in terms of access to amenities within the area as they are cut off from the rest of Merebank by the Southern freeway. Whilst those people living in the 'central' area had the best access to existing amenities within the area they were also worst off in terms of pollution from surrounding industrial plants.

In the final assessment the majority of houses in Merebank were of sufficiently high quality to fulfill the basic needs of most families and in many cases represented an important amenity to the occupants. The total residential environment however, in terms of the distribution of housetypes, showed that access to amenities and utilities (both positive and negative) was not the same for all people.

CHAPTER FIVE : SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
CONDITIONS IN MEREBANK

*'An understanding of socio-economic conditions provides the framework within which levels of social well being and quality of life can be examined'. (Knox et al, 1977).*

	<i>Page</i>
5.1 Introduction	85-87
5.2 Levels of post-school education	87-90
5.3 Occupational structure	90-92
5.4 Levels of income	92-96
5.4.1 Material well being of households	96-99
5.5 Conclusion	99-100

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters on land use and residential characteristics have provided a detailed physical description of the township of Merebank. These chapters have provided information on the physical stock and qualitative aspect of amenities and services within Merebank., and form the first part of the thesis.

The second part of this thesis attempts to link the amenities to the people, and in order to do this it was necessary to question the people themselves about their environment and about those factors that either promoted or inhibited access to amenities. Factors affecting accessibility to amenities do not relate to physical barriers alone but include socio-economic conditions as well as attitudes to, and perception of the environment. Chapters five, six and seven focus on the residents themselves, their socio-economic conditions, degree of access to amenities and their attitudes to, and perception of their living environment.

Information relating to the three chapters to follow was obtained by means of a questionnaire administered by the author to a five percent random sample of Merebank households in December 1980 (appendix one). Stratification was based on the categories of dwellings as listed in the previous chapter. The questionnaire consisted of a number of components, the first of which related to an overall assessment of the material well being of residents measured in terms of a number of criteria, which will be discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter. Other components related to socio-economic data, the degree of access to amenities and residents attitudes toward their living environment. The latter two issues form the subject matter of chapters six and seven,

whilst the present chapter focuses on those socio-economic characteristics that are directly related to levels of social well being.

A full analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of residents of Merebank falls outside the scope of the present investigation. Specific characteristics were chosen to represent overall socio-economic levels. These were: income levels and sources of income, levels of post school education, and the occupational structure of the population. A justification for the choice of these characteristics is provided under the relevant sections.

In the light of the above statements the aims of this chapter are to :

- (i) *measure the degree of post school education amongst wage earners;*
- (ii) *Determine the occupational structure of the sample population;*
- (iii) *Determine the range of incomes amongst Merebank residents;*
- (iv) *Assess the material well being of households in Merebank.*

## 5.2 Levels of post school education

Education has been defined as the process of 'developing intellectual abilities, of shaping cultural attitudes, and of acquiring knowledge and useful skills' (Knox et al, 1977). Education, apart from its intrinsic value provides some of the necessary tools for survival in society, and being such, is an important aspect of social well being. In particular, people who have very low levels of education are virtually bound to low incomes, and consequently have the poorest levels of access to amenities.

Unfortunately education is not equally accessible to all members of society, due primarily to its constantly increasing cost. Until about twenty years ago education was regarded by the poorer sections of the Indian community as a luxury they could ill afford, and it was normal practice to keep a child in school until he could read and write, and then send the child to work in order to supplement the family income.

Even if a child was allowed to pursue his studies at school the actual physical shortage of amenities at that time catered for a very small number of students, thus depriving most children of full education. Most of the schools were state aided and the Indian community could not afford to build schools fast enough to cope with the demand. The sum total of all these factors was that most children were only able to acquire a basic education with almost no chance of pursuing studies at secondary or tertiary institutions.

Today the educational situation has changed dramatically. The levels of opportunity for education have greatly improved and this together with the general advances in socio-economic conditions has led to a much greater proportion of Indian children completing their secondary education and even advancing into tertiary institutions.



TABLE 5.1 : Levels of post school education of wage earners

Post school education		Percentage of sample
No such training		90,6
University degree/diploma		2,6
Technical college		3,8
Apprenticeship		1,3
Secretarial diploma		0,1
Other		1,6
TOTAL	N = 334	100

Of the sample 90,6% of the population had no post school education of any sort and only 6,4% had any university or technical qualifications. Of the 90,6% that had no post school education over half of them have had no education at all. The low levels of post school education amongst wage earners have severely affected the access of Merebank residents to job opportunities. The inability to find well paid jobs as a result of low qualifications initiates a series of circumstances that ultimately lead to low levels in the quality of life of individuals.

Although low levels of post school education dominate the working population at this stage it is likely that this situation will change quite rapidly in the future, due primarily to the large number of children who are able to have a complete education and thus be better equipped to compete for better paid jobs. At the time of this survey (December, 1980) about 35% of the population sampled were students and of this over two thirds were already in

high school. This trend could have two possible implications, firstly, it could raise the overall socio-economic conditions in Merebank as more highly qualified people are trained or secondly, people who have post school education may actually move out of the area and allow Merebank to retain its low income public sector housing image.

### 5.3 Occupational structure

Levels of post school education are closely related to the occupational structure of a community. Occupational structure reflects not only the jobs people are engaged in but also social status and prestige and the study of such structures is therefore an important indicator of social well being. In Merebank only a small proportion of the sample held high status jobs (Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2 : Occupational structure of wage earners

Occupation	Percentage
Professional/technical	5,6
Managerial/supervisory	8,3
Clerical	20,3
Artisan	13,6
Manual	26,2
Self-employed (unskilled)	5,7
Unemployed	20,3
TOTAL	100

Only about 14% of the wage earners held high status white collar jobs and if added to the lower category of white collar jobs it is possible to classify 34,2% of the population as white collar workers. Some 45% of the working population were classified as blue collar workers, with only about 13% of these being registered skilled artisans. The majority of blue collar workers were employed in manual, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, for example, labourers, gardeners or municipal workers. A further 6% were unskilled but self employed, for example, a person who goes around the area offering a gardening service or house painting without any formal qualifications.

At the time of this survey (December, 1980) about one fifth of the potential wage earning population was unemployed. At the time of writing (1983) with the increasing downturn in the economy of the country the number of people unemployed has risen dramatically. The serious unemployment situation in Merebank has dire consequences for the residents. In some instances one less wage earner in a family would mean a smaller income and hence less money to spend on luxury items and on the use of amenities and services that involve any cost factor.

In other instances it could mean that the sole wage earner in a family is retrenched and the consequences are far reaching. Such a family may not even have the financial resources to provide even the basic needs of the family.

An overall assessment of occupational structures reveals that almost 45% of wage earners were employed in blue collar jobs and did not earn high salaries. These workers were only able to meet the basic needs of their families and would not have the necessary income to indulge in non-essential activities outside the home.

#### 5.4 Levels of income

Both the preceding sections on education and occupation determine the income that a household accrues, and since income is a key access mechanism to opportunities, amenities and services it is an important indicator of social well being.

Income that a household receives can be divided into two groups, namely, that income which is necessary for the everyday running of the house, and secondly, that income which is surplus to the satisfaction of these basic needs. This 'surplus income' is an important prerequisite for the satisfaction of higher needs and aspirations. As Knox (1977) comments, 'for the fortunate, money income can mean quality and variety in food and shelter, and the ability to indulge in sophisticated pursuits. It buys prestige and status, and even when saved, it provides utility in the form of security'. Income therefore affects many aspects of the quality of life an individual enjoys. There are, however, some drawbacks for depending too heavily on money income alone to measure levels of social well being. A high income, for example, may not be able to compensate for the absence of amenities within an area or the proximity to heavy industries. Another example would be the comparison of two households in a similar financial position yet having unequal access to decent housing. Income levels must be

used in close collaboration with other social indicators in order to achieve a balanced measure of social well being.

In the present study the total income of households was ascertained by providing respondents with a number of categories of incomes and then asking them to indicate the category to which they belong. Information relating to income is always slightly suspect since people often tend to inflate or deflate their incomes depending on who requires the information and for what purpose. In view of this a supplementary measure of quality of life was used, namely an assessment of the material well being of families. The manner of measurement and the criteria used in assessing material well being are discussed later in this chapter.

Incomes encompassed not only salaries and wages, but also pensions, grants, special allowances, rents and any other activity that generated income. In order to ascertain the minimum amount of money an average family required to survive the minimum living level was used. In 1978 the M.L.L. was computed as being R140 for an average family (5.5 members). Since this study was carried out in December 1980 this figure has been increased by 14,75% per annum in order to take into account the average current rate of inflation. The M.L.L. is based on the following type of expenditure :

food

clothing

compulsory payments to local authorities

rent (accommodation costs)

washing and cleaning material

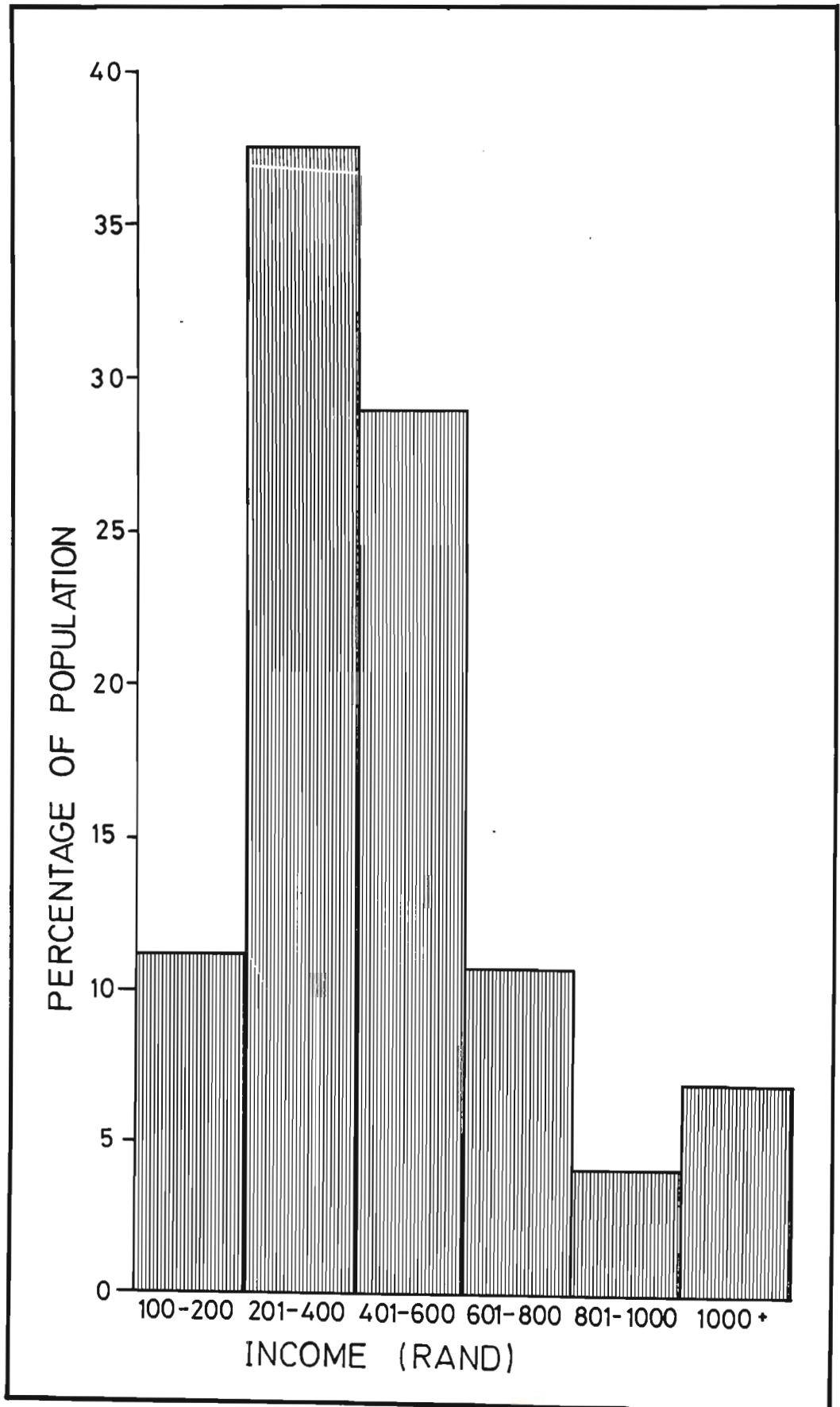
transport (to and from work only)  
 medical and dental services  
 replacement of household equipment.

The M.L.L. makes no provision for expenditure on recreation, education, pension funds or for transport costs other than the journey to work. It is important to bear in mind the limitations of the M.L.L. and realise that all it shows is the lowest sum possible on which a family can survive (Butler Adam and Venter, 1982).

The M.L.L. for metropolitan Durban in 1980 based on the 1978 figures is R185 per average family. Of the population sampled less than ten percent had incomes below this level and this meant that for these families the income received was not enough to meet the basic needs of the family (Fig. 5.1). Another 38% of the sample received incomes between R200 and R400. Even if one assumes that all residents in this category earned R400 per month this would mean that in an average family each member would have about R67 per month with which to meet all their needs. This sum is so low that it would barely be enough to satisfy the basic needs of the family leave alone any other need, such as the need for recreation. Thus for almost 48% of the population of Merebank there is insufficient surplus income with which to indulge in other cost generating activities. Thus the low incomes seriously affect the degree of access to amenities for a large proportion of the population and for about ten percent of the population incomes are so low that they are unable to meet the basic expenses of the household.



Figure 5.1 : Income of households



Almost 52% of the population sampled earned incomes above R400 and of this about 7% earned above a R1000.

This unusually high proportion of families having relatively high incomes for what is regarded as a predominantly low income area is not as contradictory as it sounds. The answer seems to lie in the many supplementary sources of income that families accrue, the most important of which is the number of wage earners in a family. A family often has one head of the household but may have three or four individuals within the house who are working and contributing to the family income. Almost 60% of households sampled had more than a single wage earner (Table 5.3).

TABLE 5.3 : Number of wage earners per family

No. of earners per household	Percentage of sample
1	44,5
2	20,6
3	25,2
4	7,6
5	2,1
N = 238	100

Combined earnings of some households often add up to a substantial amount. Such households therefore have surplus income which can then be used to increase their quality of life and their degree of access to amenities. There was also a small proportion of the population who held highly paid high status jobs and these probably account for some of the households earning more than R1000 per month.

#### 5.4.1 The material well being of households

The material well being of households was assessed in order to arrive at a qualitative assessment of the standard of living of residents of Merebank. In many ways this aspect of the present chapter is the summing up of the net effects of educational levels, occupational structure and income levels because ultimately all these factors result in a particular lifestyle which can clearly be discerned. Perhaps one of the first places that this 'lifestyle' manifests itself is on, and in the home, and this study focuses specifically on the home.

The assessment of living conditions was based on such criteria as the condition and maintenance of dwellings and the quality and range of furnishings and appliances within the household. A checklist of items formed the basis of the assessment (Table 5.4). In order to avoid embarrassment the information was gained from observation alone and not by direct questioning. The evaluation was carried out by the researcher personally and every attempt was made to be as objective as possible.

TABLE 5.4 : Checklist for assessing material well being

- (i) *Quality of building material - brick or cement block construction, plastered or unplastered; floors - cement, carpeted or tiled; presence of guttering and awnings.*
- (ii) *Maintenance of building - when last painted, visual condition (the visual impact of the building was assessed).*
- (iii) *Surrounds (the yard) - condition of yard - well kept, overgrown, amount of time spent on maintaining garden.*

- (iv) *Appliances and furnishings - quality of furniture within the household, presence of carpets, quality of curtaining, range of appliances such as television sets and high fidelity equipment.*

Each household was rated on a five point scale with the lower level of the scale corresponding to the lowest levels of material well being and the upper and corresponding to the highest levels of material well being. It would have been impossible to do such an assessment in any other meaningful way and while there may have been slight differences in the actual assessment the checklist made the task considerably easier (Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.5 : Levels of Material well being

Level of material well being	Percentage of sample
1	2,5
2	20,3
3	58,1
4	18,2
5	0,9
N = 238	100

Of the sample, 58,1% were in the 'average' category (3) whilst 22,8% were lower than this norm and 19,1% were above this norm. Of the 22,8% that were lower than the average level of material well being 2,5% were really living in very poor conditions and subsequently had very low levels of material well being. Of the categories higher than the average, 0,9% had very high levels of material well being.

Almost 78% of the households sampled had reasonable levels of material well being and although this seems to bear no correlation with the low levels of post school education (90,6% of the wage earners had no post school education) or to the occupational structure (45,5% of wage earners were classified as blue collar workers) there is in fact a reasonable explanation for this phenomena. Many households had more than a single wage earner and whilst individual wages may have been low, jointly they could amount to a substantial figure (Table 5.3). Another reason could well be that since residents have such poor access to amenities in general they prefer to spend their surplus income on improving the amenity levels of their homes. The visual impression one gets when looking at Merebank is that people take considerable pride in their homes and often spend substantial amounts of money on improving the quality and comfort of these dwellings, sometimes at the expense of other activities that they could indulge in.

## 5.5 Conclusion

From the available evidence of socio-economic conditions in Merebank it is quite clear that the majority of residents consist predominantly of low income families. Low levels of post school training have resulted in the majority of residents being employed in mainly blue collar jobs and subsequently, earning relatively low salaries. Single family households had little surplus income after the satisfaction of the basic needs of the household to indulge in many other cost generating activities. Households having more than a single wage earner were in a slightly better position since incomes were pooled, resulting in an overall improvement in their quality of life.



The low income characteristic of Merebank has some serious implications for planners as cognisance must be taken of residents economic circumstances when planning the location of amenities and ensuring easy access to them.

## CHAPTER SIX : ACCESS TO AMENITIES

*"Within cities, too, there is generally a far from equitable distribution of, for example, parks, cheap supermarkets, firestations, and a host of other facilities, provided by both private enterprise and local governments. Many people are unprepared, if not unable, to travel far for such facilities, and thus are deprived if the distribution does not match these requirements". (Coates, et al, 1971).*

	<i>Page</i>
6.1 Introduction	101-102
6.2 Components of accessibility	103-109
6.2.1 Origin (the home)	103-109
6.2.2 Destination (the amenity)	106-108
6.2.3 Interaction between origin and destination	108-109
6.3 Factors affecting access to amenities in Merebank	109-114
6.3.1 Distance	110-111
6.3.2 Time	112
6.3.3 Cost	113
6.3.4 Transport	113-114
6.4 Conclusion	114-117

## 6.1 Introduction

Thus far the study has provided information concerning the physical and socio-economic environment of Merebank residents, and although these facets are fundamental to any socio-geographical study they do not always present a full assessment of social well being. As explained in the conceptual framework (chapter two) there is a need to supplement the conventional measures of social well being with an assessment of available opportunities and their relative utility value. Access to amenities provides such a measure, as social well being is partly a function of the level of access a person has to the city wide resource system.

Access to amenities is seldom a simple yes/no situation and the utility value of a particular amenity will be determined by the degree of ease or difficulty required to use an amenity. Levels of access depend on a number of factors which need to be identified before their role in promoting or inhibiting access can be measured. Access not only implies a physical component of travel, but includes a number of equally important factors such as cost, information available, and even socio-cultural issues. In view of the discussion above the aims of this chapter are to :

- (i) *Examine the most important components of accessibility and to formulate a model of the process;*
- (ii) *Identify the most important factors affecting access to amenities for Merebank residents;*
- (iii) *Suggest ways in which the effects of specific components which limit accessibility may be reduced for Merebank residents.*

## 6.2 Components of accessibility

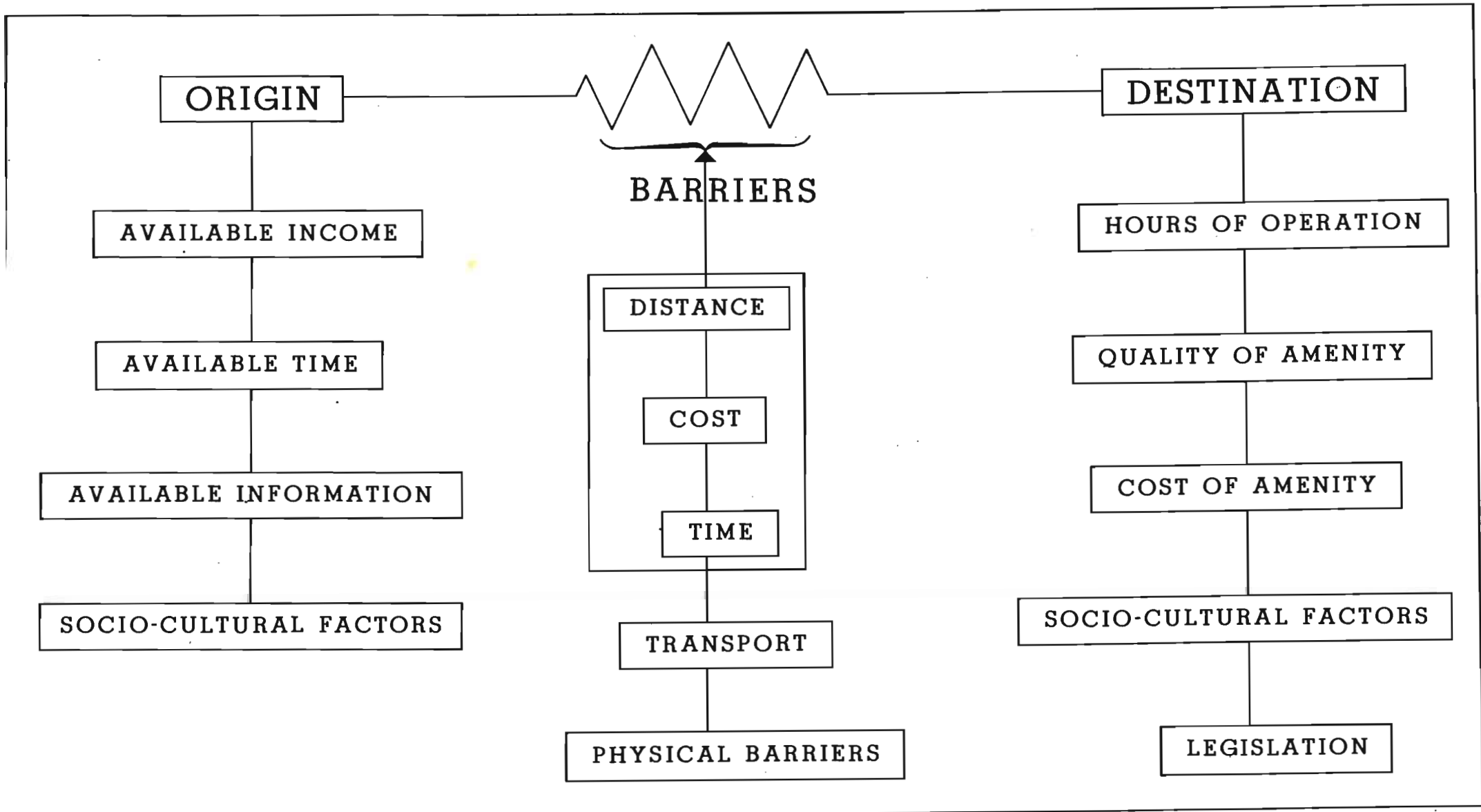
The accessibility model set out below (Fig. 6.1) aims to identify the components of accessibility and shows how each may act independently or interact with other components to affect the availability of an amenity. The model is derived from a migration theory model and demonstrates that the components of accessibility may be considered within a simple spatial framework; at the point of origin (normally the home), at the destination (the point of location of the amenity) and en route between origin and destination. Further, as with migration theory certain factors may act positively or negatively and thereby either promote or inhibit the use of an amenity (Lee, 1966).

### 6.2.1 Origin (the home)

As depicted in the model four factors are of importance at the point of origin. These are : available income, time available, socio-cultural factors and the amount of information that a person has.

Available income, or the amount of income left over after the satisfaction of the basic needs of the household determines the amount of money that can be spent on other activities. Most activities outside the household involve a certain cost and participation in them only becomes available to those individuals who can afford it. The amount of available income therefore becomes a key determinant of access to many amenities. The possession of a great deal of surplus income can also be effectively used to gain special privileges and concessions that are associated with a particular social class.

Figure 6.1 : Model of Accessibility





Time is another important factor that affects ones' access to amenities. Factors that influence the amount of time one has available include the journey to work, the kind of work a person is engaged in and also the ability to purchase time. A family that can afford a maid to do the housework and prepare meals is not only paying for someone to do the household chores but also for giving them more free time to indulge in other activities. The journey to work has a major impact on time available for other activities. The person that has to spend two hours travelling from his place of employment to his home is far worse off than the person who is within easy walking distance of his home. The type of work one is engaged in also affects time available for other activities as this affects the hours of employment. The individual who has to start work at 06h30 and who finishes work at 17h30 is far worse off than for example, a teacher who starts work at 07h45 and finishes work at 15h00.

The amount of information available about the existing amenities and conditions pertaining to their use also affects the degree of access to amenities. If people are unaware of the existence of certain amenities or do not know their location or the rules governing their use, then such amenities have no utility value to the people.

Although many amenities are common to all cultures, cultural differences between people lead to a demand for specific amenities and can also affect access to certain amenities. Pressures from the community in which one lives and even from within the household often exerts a powerful influence on what people are allowed to do. For example, in a conservative society parents would never

allow their children out at night or forbid the frequenting of discotheques or clubs as they regard these as 'bad' places. Other societies may forbid their members to share facilities with other communities of different religious affiliations, and this too inhibits access to the amenities. Thus the pressures exerted on an individual from his community and household may reduce access to some amenities.

#### 6.2.2 Destination (the amenity)

Just as there are factors promoting or inhibiting access at the point of origin (normally the home) there are also a number of factors relating to the destination (the amenity). Five major factors can be identified, namely : the cost of using the amenity, its' quality, hours of operation, legislation which may affect its use and socio-cultural factors. Apart from the cost of getting to an amenity there is also a cost attached to the use of the amenity. The cost of using an amenity can exert either a positive or negative effect on consumer usage, depending on how high or low the cost is. Following this argument planners have to bear in mind the economic status of the people being planned for and ensure that amenities provided are available at a cost that the majority of people can afford. The provision of a golf course, for example, in a predominantly low income area would have little utility value to local residents, as a set of golf clubs normally costs a couple of hundred rand and green fees are at least ten rand a time. Thus the provision of the amenity does not mean that it necessarily serves the needs of the population unless such amenities are within the reach financially, of the people for whom they have been planned.

The quality of an amenity also seriously affects its utility value. For example, a hotel that consistently serves poor quality food and is poorly maintained will not attract many customers, except probably the "wrong type" of people that further add to its unattractiveness. The quality of such amenities as playfields, swimming pools, etc. also affects the extent to which these particular amenities are used.

The hours within which a particular amenity operates may advantage some individuals whilst disadvantaging others. Amenities that only operate during normal working hours disadvantages the majority of working people. For example, a public library or a swimming pool that opens at 08h30 and closes at 16h30 is of limited value to the workman who only returns home at 18h30.

Legislation may also affect access to amenities, and this is even more important in South Africa where discrimination on the basis of colour is written into the law. There are laws which restrict the use of certain amenities to a specific racial group and this has resulted in differential rates of access to the city wide resource system. These restrictions affect access to amenities ranging from the buses to the beaches and there are qualitative differences in the amenities available to the different race groups.

Socio-cultural factors, apart from exerting an influence on an individual from within his community and home could also affect the actual use of an amenity. Certain facilities may be restricted to a specific club or religious organisation and are not open to

the public at large. The provision of amenities within an area may only cater for certain sections of a community and still leave the majority without access to them. Other facilities may be more cheaply available to certain people whilst charging exorbitant rates to others, and thereby seriously affecting the use of such amenities.

### 6.2.3 Interaction between origin and destination

In order for any person to use an amenity he has to actually move from the point of origin to the point of destination. The cost of such movement must be added to the cost of using an amenity and often the cost of getting to an amenity exceeds the actual cost of using the amenity. In such a case access to the amenity is seriously restricted.

The distance to be travelled and the time taken to get to the amenity also affects its utility value and both these factors are closely linked with the availability, efficiency and cost of transport. The means of transport provides the physical means of getting to an amenity. The existence of an efficient public transport system, especially in low income areas where the majority of the people do not have access to private transport, is an essential amenity.

Apart from the travel component affecting access to amenities there could also be physical barriers inhibiting access to amenities. For example, children that have to pass through a neighbourhood that is known to be dangerous in order to use an amenity may do without the amenity rather than run the risk of getting beaten up or robbed.

In conclusion, the model of accessibility presented here attempts to show only the broad components of access and simply provides a framework within which access could be examined for this particular study.

### 6.3 Factors affecting accessibility to amenities in Merebank

Four factors influencing accessibility to amenities, emerged in the Merebank study and these related to time, cost, distance and transportation. Respondents to the questionnaire were required to state the problems they experienced in getting to different amenities. The information derived has been simplified into a single table. For the sake of convenience factors were discussed in general rather than relating each factor to the point of origin, or destination each time. However the discussion clearly outlines their influence on accessibility to amenities. Access to four types of amenities was assessed (Table 6.1). Levels of access were indicated on a four point scale with four representing the most serious limits to access and one representing the least serious limits to access. However it must be remembered that respondents were asked to name only the most important factors affecting access to amenities and therefore all four factors are important to different degrees.

TABLE 6.1 : Hierarchy of factors affecting access to four types of amenities

FACTORS	RANGE OF AMENITIES			
	MEDICAL	RECREATIONAL	EDUCATIONAL	COMMERCIAL
Time	3	2	2	2
Cost	1	3	3	1
Distance	4	4	4	3
Transport	2	1	1	4

The factors in order of importance are :

- (i) *distance*
- (ii) *time*
- (iii) *cost*
- (iv) *transport*

#### 6.3.1 Distance

Distance emerged as a major factor affecting accessibility to amenities. The location of Merebank in relation to the amenities available in the Greater Durban region is such that unless one has access to private transport and the necessary finance to overcome the friction of distance, most amenities of the city wide resource system remains inaccessible for the greater part of the population of Merebank.



There are virtually no facilities for active recreational use, such as squash and tennis courts, and those that do exist (a swimming pool and two soccer grounds) are so much in demand that they cannot adequately satisfy the needs of the population.

People requiring the use of such recreational amenities have to travel to one or the other townships such as Chatsworth (where there is also a tremendous strain on amenities) or to the Durban CBD, some 15 kilometres away.

Medical facilities within Merebank do exist, but the doctor-patient ratio is approximately 1 : 4000. The shortage of primary care physicians compels residents to travel further afield for medical attention. The nearest hospital is about twenty kilometres away in Chatsworth, and residents who do not have access to private transport find it difficult to get to the hospital as the trip normally requires the taking of two buses and an average journey time of an hour.

Distance not only limits access to amenities outside Merebank but also acts as a barrier to residents wishing to use amenities within Merebank. The only recreational facilities for residents are in the 'central' section of Merebank and people living in the outer sections have to walk a considerable distance in order to use amenities. Retail purchasing also poses the same type of problem to consumers who may want to purchase goods from local stores but do not have the physical means to get there and have to carry their purchases by hand. Once again it would seem that the distribution of amenities within Merebank was not planned to take account of the fact that most residents are heavily dependant on the public transport service.

### 6.3.2 Time

The amount of time that a person has available affects the degree of access to amenities either positively or negatively. In the case of Merebank the large distances to be travelled in order to use amenities take up a considerable amount of time.

The importance of time as a factor inhibiting access is clearly seen in the case of medical facilities. In order to use the hospital in Chatsworth, a person using the public transport system spends an average of an hour to get there. This varies depending on the time of day one is actually travelling. If one were travelling in the middle of the day, for example, the chances of even getting a bus are remote as buses normally only operate efficiently during peak hours.

In addition to travel time, access to amenities is also affected by the time spent at an amenity before actually being able to make use of it. Thus people wishing to use either one of the two soccer grounds in Merebank for a football match had to wait for long periods before the ground was available. In the case of medical facilities, the situation is far more serious as out-patients at the hospital sometimes have to stand in a queue for up to six hours before being attended to. It is not uncommon for a person to arrive at 07h00 at the hospital and only be treated at 15h00 hours. Thus a visit to a hospital may involve the loss of an entire day and possibly of a day's wages, and this seriously inhibits the use of the hospital services.

### 6.3.3 Cost

Cost is closely related to both time and distance and it takes money to overcome the friction of distance. Cost plays an important part in access to all types of amenities ranging from retailing purchasing outlets, to built recreational amenities and medical care. The cost of using an amenity must also take into account the cost of the journey to the amenity. Activities that required a large cost remained inaccessible to the majority of the population of Merebank, and they would normally do without the amenity, or substitute it for a less expensive alternative. Thus one would not expect residents of Merebank to use the ice skating rink in Pinetown about 30 kilometres away as the cost of travel and the cost of entry precludes their use by the less affluent. It is not unusual therefore to find that the majority of people in Merebank do not indulge in sports like squash, bowling or golf. This has often been misconstrued as being caused by cultural differences whereas the real cause is an economic one.

### 6.3.4 Transport

Transport facilities provide the link between the point of origin and the point of destination, and as such is an important amenity by itself. Of the sample population almost 62% rated the existing bus service as being of sub-standard quality and not being able to meet their needs. The majority of the population in Merebank depended heavily on the public transport system for their movement outside the area. Although there was a high degree of car ownership these were used primarily for journey to work and seldom for any other type of trips, as the cost of petrol is very high.

The present bus service is run by a number of separate bus owners, each clamouring for their share of the market. The result has been that most of the buses are at a premium during the peak periods in the mornings and evenings, but very few buses at other times of the day. Bus operators seem to be motivated only by profit and their inefficiency seriously affects accessibility to many amenities.

Apart from the bus service there is an efficient railway system that brings commuters into the CBD. The problem with the railway system is that there is no feederservice to the station, and people find it difficult to get to the station unless they have access to their own transport. Although the railway station is called the 'Merebank station' it is not actually in Merebank but lies about a kilometre outside the area.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

For most residents of Merebank access to amenities was seriously restricted primarily because there were so few amenities within the area and secondly, because there were so many factors inhibiting access to amenities outside Merebank.

Distance, linked with transport emerged as a major factor limiting access to amenities and this was closely linked to both time and cost. The fact that the majority of the population of Merebank were engaged in blue collar jobs meant that most families did not earn sufficiently high incomes so as to have a large amount of surplus money available for use other than the day to day running of the household.

The present problems concerning access to amenities for the residents of Merebank are not insurmountable and positive steps could be taken to increase the degree of access to amenities and thereby improve the social well being of the majority of the population.

In the case of medical care, the major problem involved the long distance to the nearest hospitals and the shortage of primary care physicians within Merebank.

Many people could not afford to visit private physicians and therefore relied solely on the service provided by the hospital. Although there is a clinic in Merebank, this amenity caters primarily for people suffering from tuberculosis and does not handle other medical problems. In order to increase access to medical facilities the only solution seems to be in moving the medical facilities to the people. This could be done by either providing more health care facilities within Merebank or provide some form of para-medical service on a mobile basis. Such units could treat minor health problems and refer the more serious cases to the hospital. The mobile unit could visit the area twice a week at a time that is most convenient to the residents. Such a service must be provided by the public sector and be well within the reach of the majority of the population. Mobile units could ease the problem of access to primary health care considerably and also be far less expensive to the state than to build new hospitals in each township. Another alternative would be to use the existing clinic as a centre for primary medical care by extending its services.

The long distances entailed in travelling to recreational amenities outside Merebank can be solved by developing and maintaining existing facilities within Merebank and by improving the public transport system so that people do not have to waste time and money in order to use any facility. Of the total area of Merebank 14,4% was designated as public open space and at present most of these areas are vacant and are poorly maintained. A large proportion of this land could be rezoned for active recreational use and facilities built for residents. The provision of such facilities within Merebank would render long time consuming journeys to other areas unnecessary and substantially increase access for the majority of the population.

Retailing outlets within Merebank also presented problems of access to most residents. Although there were many shopping facilities within Merebank it was often easier for a person to go into town to buy goods than from local dealers where they most probably had to walk to get to a particular shop and carry their purchases home. The inconvenience of not having an internal transport system that promotes access within the area is as important as the service links outside the area. An internal bus service would allow existing amenities within Merebank to be more fully utilised. A bus could most probably run continuously along a route that would suit the majority of residents.

Transport has emerged as a major factor inhibiting access to amenities to most amenities, and it is imperative that steps be taken to remedy the present situation. The present bus owners should be urged to form a single company and run their buses



according to a strict schedule, failing which, the state should intervene and run a public service at a subsidised rate in order to ensure that people had ease of access to amenities that they desired to use. An internal bus service should be instituted in order to increase access within Merebank. This would ensure a fuller utilisation of existing amenities within Merebank and could also provide incentives for the private sector to develop more facilities. The bus service within the area should also feed into the nearby railway station so that commuters could take more advantage of the train service.

In the final analysis it could be seen that although residents face serious problems regarding accessibility to most amenities there are in fact a number of ways in which the degree of access could be improved, and these measures have been suggested above.

## CHAPTER SEVEN : ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEREBANK

*'Places are not just rooms, buildings or outdoor spaces but total environments made up of physical space together with people, furnishings, amenities and actions. Places form the settings for all the significant and insignificant events of our lives. More than just containers, they are living changing systems which support or hinder our actions, please or disturb our emotions. To understand places, we must become actively involved with the people and places around us' (Farbstein, J. & Kanrowitz, 1978).*

	<i>Page</i>
7.1 Introduction	118-120
7.2 Methodology	120-122
7.3 Attitudes towards Merebank	123-129
7.3.1 Noise	125
7.3.2 Attractiveness and condition of dwellings	125-126
7.3.3 Friendliness and pleasantness	126
7.3.4 Convenience	127
7.3.5 Safety	127-128
7.3.6 Privacy	128-129
7.4 Positive and negative features of Merebank	129-134
7.4.1 Negative responses	129-131
7.4.2 Positive responses	131-134
7.5 Priorities for change	134-136
7.6 Conclusion	136

## 7.1 Introduction

Each person perceives his or her own environment in a unique way and equally, develops either positive or negative attitudes to their overall state of social well being. Perhaps one of the most important and underrated social indicators is this individual perception of one's own environment and state of well being. This chapter sets out mainly to assess individual attitudes towards Merebank. This in itself will contribute to an understanding of the social geography of the region. Further, it is of particular value to those concerned with the physical planning of Merebank and other similar residential areas.

One way of taking cognisance of peoples' perception of their living environment would be to encourage more public participation in the physical planning process. In many modern housing schemes participation by residents in the actual planning process is limited, and most planners generally assume that their knowledge and expertise is adequate. What is important to remember is that the urban planner, or the social worker, or the politician may be aware of their own goals and aspirations but be quite misinformed about the goals and aspirations of people belonging to other socio-economic groups. This does not imply that the planning process should rely totally on resident's perceptions of their environment, or that urban planners are redundant, but that there is an urgent need to combine the expertise of the planner with the needs and priorities of the people being planned for.

In the case of Merebank the actual physical planning process has been largely complete for some time, but the results of those plans are still being experienced by residents today, and in that sense, planning must be seen as an ongoing process catering not only for present needs and aspirations but for future ones as well. Plans have to be constantly monitored in order to isolate positive and negative features which should be borne in mind when planning similar areas. One of the most effective ways of monitoring the success of any plan would be through feedback from the people who are actually living in the planned environment. It is the residents who would know the problems they face and who are able to point out where a plan has succeeded and where it has failed. The manner in which people perceive their environment is therefore of paramount importance in the planning process and to an understanding of the social geography of an area. With the above issues in mind the aims of this chapter are to :

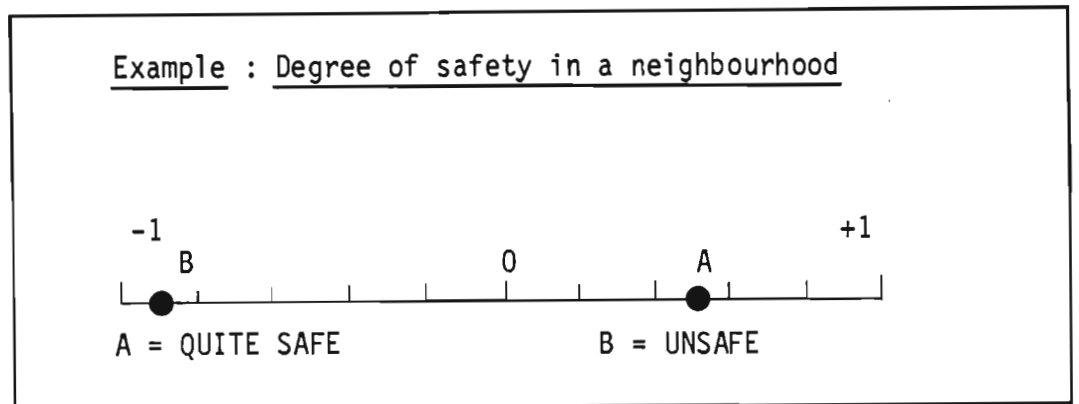
1. *Ascertain residents' attitudes towards Merebank as a total residential environment;*
2. *Determine the major positive and negative features of the environment as perceived by Merebank residents;*
3. *Ascertain the priorities of Merebank residents with regard to any changes in the physical environment which might result in an improvement of the quality of life.*

## 7.2 Methodology

Attitudes towards the study area were measured by means of a technique known as the semantic differential scale of attitudes. Although this technique was originally designed to measure

attitudes towards certain commercial products it has since been modified to apply to both psychology and geography. The differential technique consists of a concept to be examined and a scale on which to measure it. Each scale is a straight line function with a neutral zero at the mid-point. The opposite poles are designated 'positive' and 'negative'. The positive pole is equivalent to the term 'agree' and the negative, to the term 'disagree'. The midpoint zero is therefore the lower limit of both positive and negative poles (Fig. 7.1).

Fig. 7.1 : The semantic differential technique as originally applied



The major weakness of this method is that many respondents do not fully understand the manner in which the scale works. This is especially true amongst people who do not have high educational qualifications, as is the case in Merebank. For this reason the semantic differential technique was modified so that respondents would be fully able to comprehend what the question required.

The scale was transformed into words indicating both positiveness and negativeness. In figure 7.2 this adapted method is demonstrated. Here the letters of the alphabet have been substituted for the figures used in the original technique. Each letter has a specific meaning which was clearly explained to the respondent. For example, if a respondent chose 'B' in the case sited below (Fig. 7.2) this would indicate that the respondent felt that Merebank was 'somewhat noisy'. If on the other hand the respondent chose 'E' this would indicate that Merebank was regarded as being 'very quiet'.

Fig. 7.2 : The semantic differential technique as modified for use in the Merebank study

WORD PHRASE	VERY NOISY A	SOME- WHAT NOISY B	NEUTRAL C	SOME- WHAT QUIET D	VERY QUIET E	WORD PHRASE
NOISY						QUIET



The question of attitudes towards the whole of Merebank formed a part of the general questionnaire (appendix 1) and responses to a number of different attributes were assessed. The results have been translated into graphic form and make up the subject matter of the following discussion.

### 7.3 Attitudes towards Merebank

Before analysing the responses of residents it is necessary to briefly explain the reasons why particular environmental attributes were chosen and to provide working definitions of these terms within the context of the present study.

The degree of noise was assumed to be an important factor affecting social well being in Merebank as the residential area is in close proximity to both heavy industries, and an international airport. The constant noise pollution that residents are subjected to may well contribute to a negative image of the area.

The visual attractiveness of Merebank related to the physical condition of the area as well as other positive features of the living environment. People who perceive their residential environment in a positive light normally display this positive attitude towards their fellow residents and towards their residential area in general.

The condition of dwellings related to the level of maintenance of dwelling units within Merebank. This attribute was used to assess the degree of pride people displayed towards their own homes and their attitudes towards the condition of other dwellings within Merebank.

Privacy was an important issue as the majority of houses in Merebank are semi-detached units, and most plots are relatively small ( $250 \text{ m}^2$ ). The dwelling unit must not only provide shelter from the elements but also provide a degree of privacy for the occupants. Living in close proximity to each other could actually affect peoples' social well being either positively or negatively. On the one hand it could foster a feeling of neighbourliness, and on the other, it could seriously restrict privacy.

How safe a person feels in his or her residential area is an important general indicator of peoples' perception of their neighbourhood. The safer a person feels in an area, the more is it an indication of the bond with the people living there and the degree of security that people feel. As such, it is an important indicator of social well being.

Convenience was regarded as a measure of the degree of access to places of employment and to amenities within the area. Easy access to places of work and amenities is an important positive feature of any residential area.

The friendliness of people tells one about the way people feel about their fellow residents and whether or not there is any sense of community spirit. This community spirit is a dominant feature of many low income areas where people often recognise the need to stand by, and help each other in times of need. Pleasantness of environment was closely related to the 'friendliness' of people as friendly people normally make an environment pleasant. It (pleasantness) was therefore used in conjunction with 'friendliness'.

The attributes discussed above were those tested during the survey and the results are discussed below.

### 7.3.1 Noise

The majority of residents in Merebank perceived the degree of noise to be a negative externality affecting their social well being (Fig. 7.3.g). The chief source of noise is the international airport (Louis Botha) that lies adjacent to Merebank (Fig. 3.1) and the Mondi paper mill that lies in the middle of the residential area. One has to be actually standing in the area to realise the extent of noise caused by a jet or an aeroplane passing overhead. In addition to regular flights of South African Airways (approximately thirty a day) the South African Airforce practise their manoeuvres from Louis Botha airport virtually everyday, and the roaring of low flying jets can be extremely disconcerting and noisy.

Of the sample population about twenty two percent had no strong feelings about the noise levels in Merebank. The reason is probably that these people have accepted the high noise level as a daily part of their living environment since there is very little that they could do about it.

### 7.3.2 Attractiveness and condition of dwellings

These two concepts were used to measure responses to the immediate physical environment and included both the condition of dwellings and that of the environment as a whole. About 45% of the sample population perceived Merebank to be an attractive place and enjoyed living there (Fig. 7.3a, b). The many improvements that people have made to dwellings in so far as design, space and the

quality of materials used has also further enhanced the attractiveness of Merebank.

### 7.3.3 Friendliness and pleasantness

Almost seventy percent perceived their fellow residents as being friendly, and 63% considered Merebank to be a pleasant environment in which to reside (Fig. 7.3c, d). This positive attitude of good neighbourliness is primarily a consequence of long community ties that extend to well before the implementation of the Merebank public housing scheme. As early as 1890, Merebank possessed a fairly large community who resided in mainly wood and iron dwellings. This long sense of community spirit seems to have been maintained even in the 'new' planned environment. Respondents spoke of being always able to count on their neighbours to look over their homes if they were away and even keep an eye on their children when the parents were otherwise engaged.

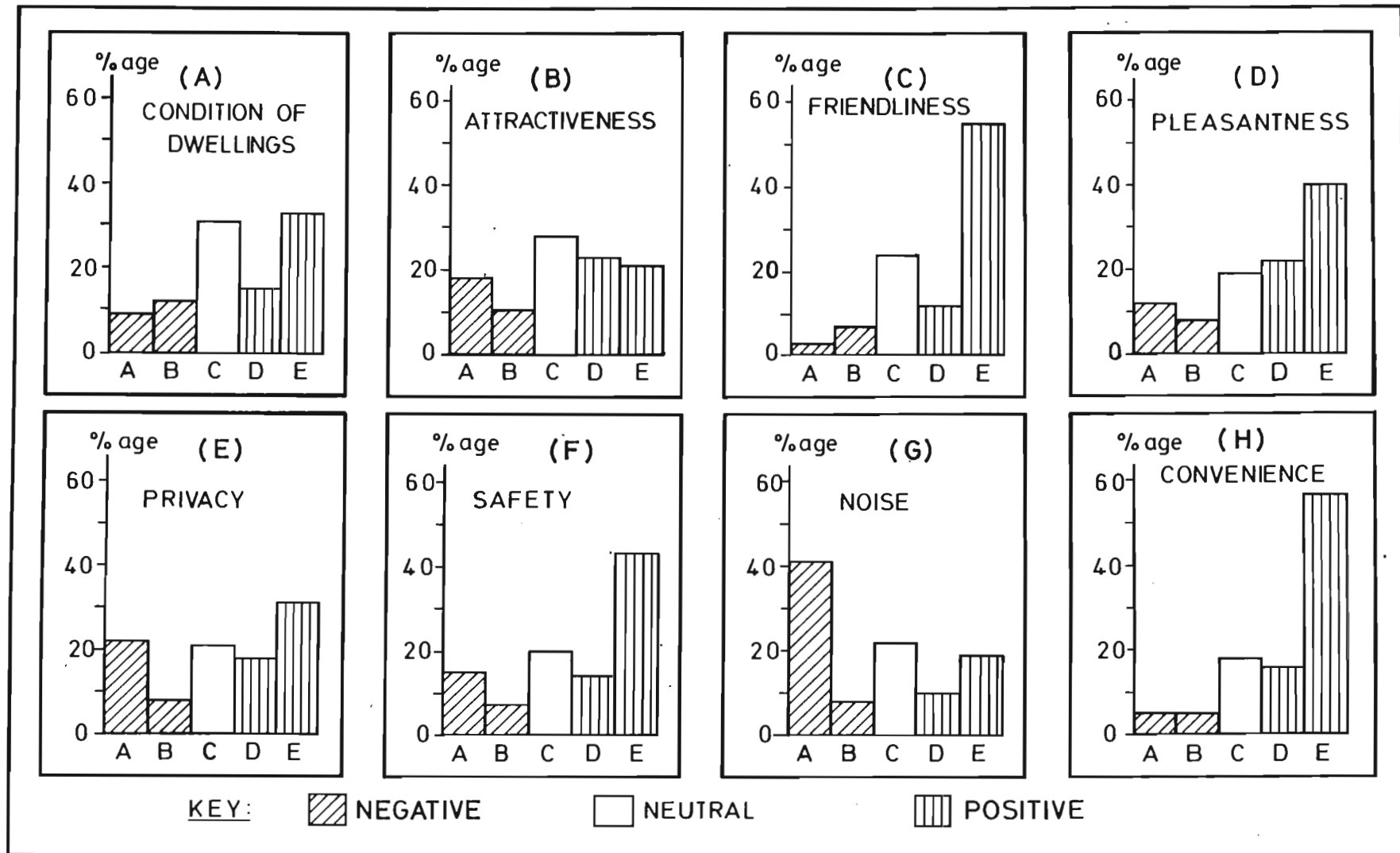
### 7.3.4 Convenience

Almost 70% of respondents felt that Merebank was conveniently located in terms of access to employment (Fig. 7.3h). For the low income wage earners of Merebank easy access to places of employment is an important positive feature of the area. Merebank is well located in relation to the Jacobs-Mobeni industrial complex as well as to the Prospecton industrial area to the west.

### 7.3.5 Safety

The majority of respondents felt that Merebank was a safe area in which to reside (Fig. 7.3f) and felt quite safe even at night. This feeling of security in ones residential area is an important

Figure 7.3 : Attitudes towards eight attributes in Merebank



positive feature of any living environment. There was a moderate proportion of residents (about twenty percent) who did not feel safe within Merebank, and for these people levels of access to amenities were restricted, and therefore affected their social well being. Residents who feel insecure would not venture out at night and even fear using amenities within the area for fear of harassment. It is interesting to note that the highest incidence of insecurity was expressed by those people living in and around the 'Minitown' area, an area that had the lowest quality of life in Merebank. It is not uncommon to hear of the most horrifying crimes being committed here, and these may range from rape to murder. The high incidence of crime in this area is a serious negative feature of the environment for some of the residents of Merebank.

#### 7.3.6 Privacy

Approximately 30% felt that there was a need to have a greater degree of privacy (Fig. 7.3e). The degree of privacy was dependent on such features as the size of dwellings; whether or not the dwelling had been extended and improved; and whether or not the dwelling was a detached or semi-detached unit. The smaller the plots of land (the largest proportion of residential plots were approximately 250 square metres) the less was the scope for expansion and people were forced to live a fairly public life. Those residents who occupied municipally built structures and have been unable to improve or expand their homes were most affected by the lack of privacy whilst those that have managed to improve their dwellings have also been able to increase their amount of privacy. Privacy is a fundamental priority of any dwelling and a person needs to have a sanctuary where he is



not constantly under the scrutiny of neighbours.

#### 7.4 Positive and negative features of Merebank

In the preceding discussion on attitudes towards Merebank respondents were asked questions relating to specific aspects of their environment. In the present discussion residents' perceptions of the positive and negative features of the overall environment of Merebank are discussed. In order to assess these features respondents were asked two open-ended questions (appendix 1) namely :

(a) *What do you dislike most about Merebank?*

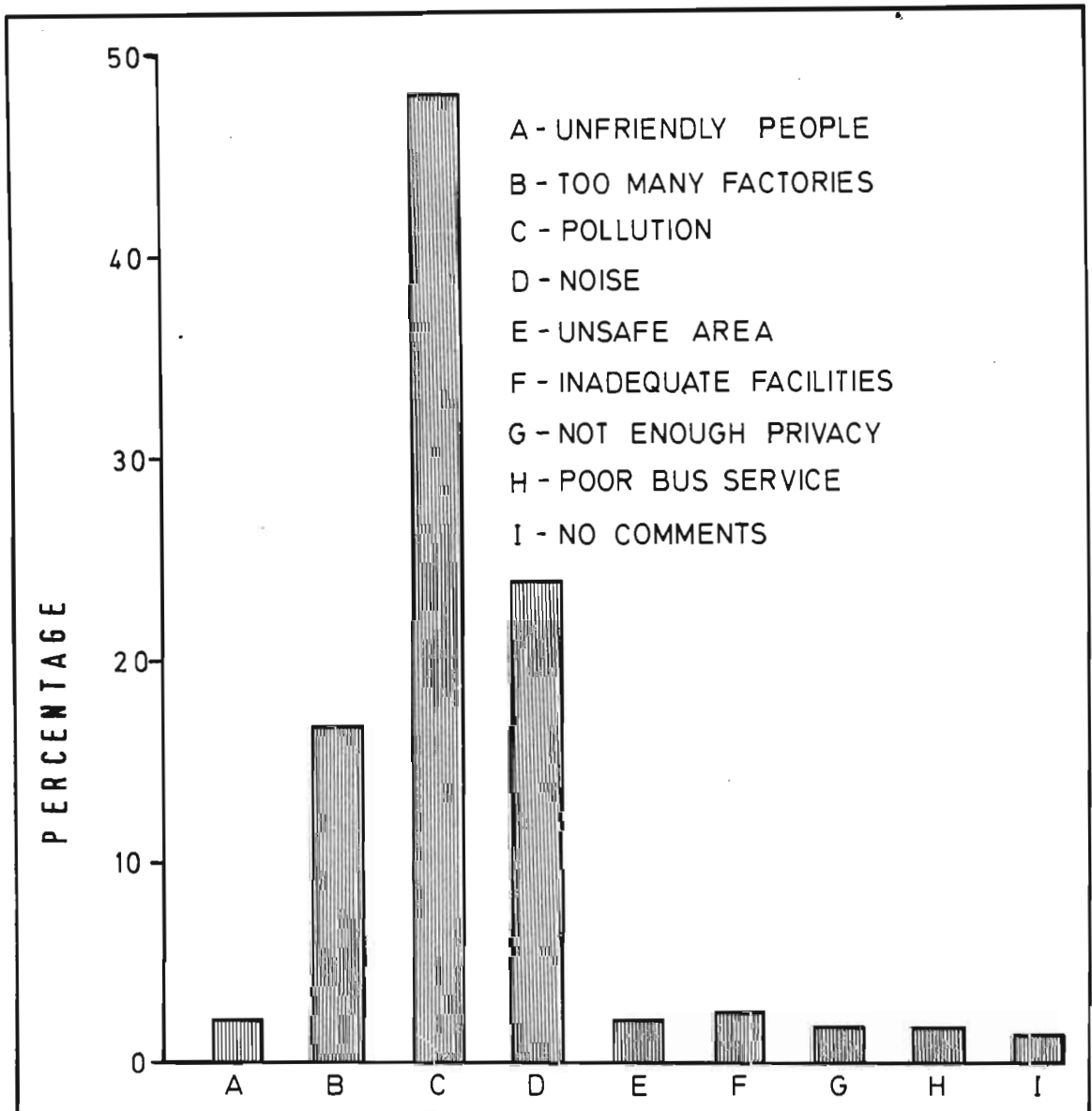
(b) *What do you like most about Merebank?*

Responses were then categorised for the purpose of analysis. It is important to note that each respondent was asked to name the single most important positive or negative feature of the environment, and therefore in a sense all the features mentioned were important to different degrees.

##### 7.4.1 Negative responses

The most significant negative features of Merebank included the high levels of industrial pollution generated by the surrounding industrial plants and the large volume of noise associated with the adjacent international airport (Fig. 7.4). Almost 48% of respondents complained about the high level of atmospheric pollution that lead to corrosion, especially of window frames and painted surfaces, which in turn led to higher maintenance costs in an area that is predominantly working class. Clothing was often discoloured, and residents felt that the high pollution levels caused a health hazard, although there is no conclusive

Figure 7.4 : Negative features of the Merebank environment

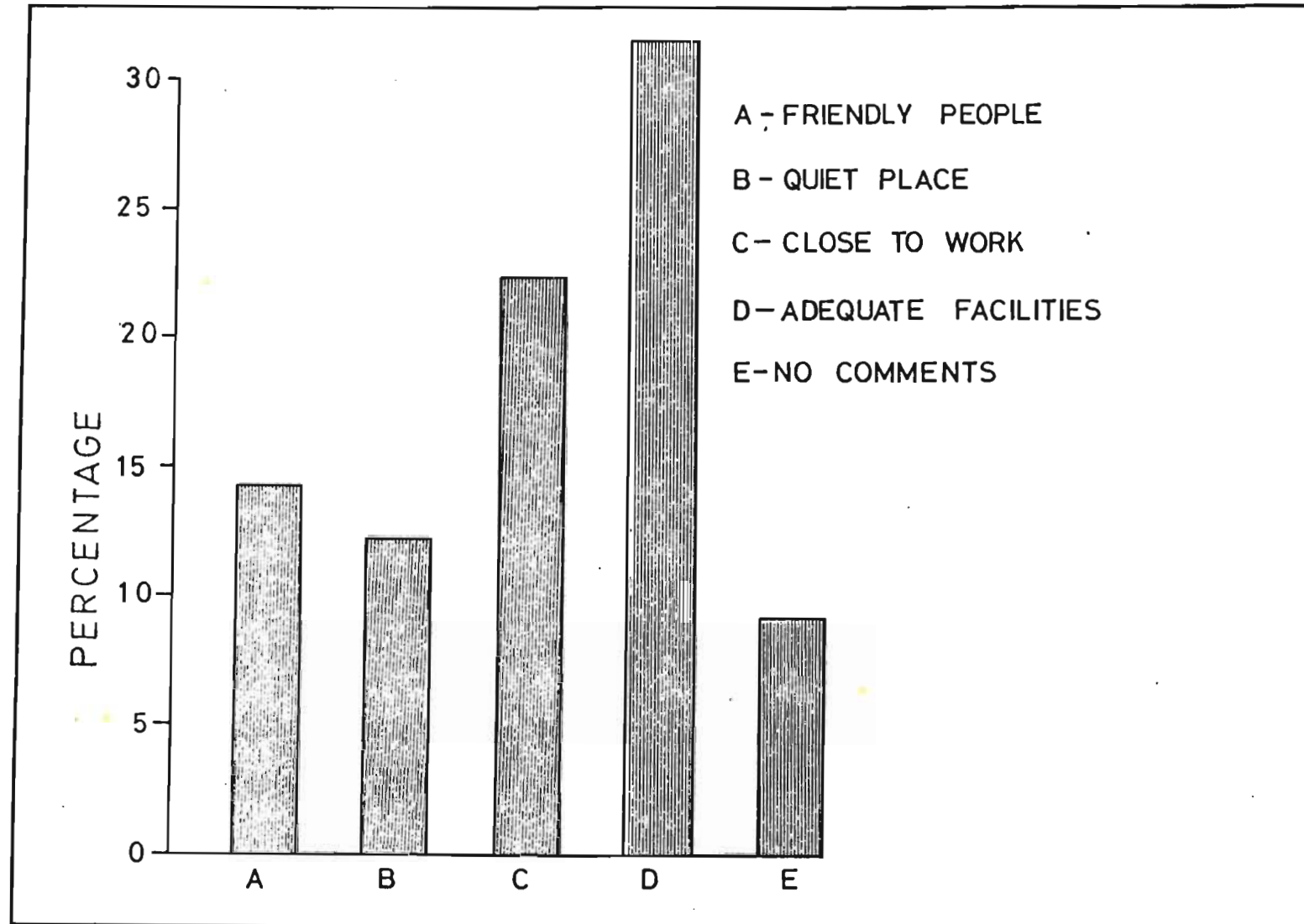


evidence of this. At least one doctor confirmed that many of his patients suffered from chronic chest complaints that are normally associated with high pollution levels.

The high degree of noise generated by the Louis Botha airport was also an extremely negative feature of Merebank. Other negative features of Merebank include the poor bus service, the lack of adequate privacy and a shortage of many amenities within Merebank. All these negative characteristics are born out by the empirical findings, namely, that the existing bus service is grossly inadequate; that a significant proportion of residents living in municipally unimproved structures had a serious lack of privacy and finally, that the residents of Merebank faced a serious shortage of recreational amenities within Merebank.

#### 7.4.2 Positive responses

Two of the most important positive features of Merebank that emerged from the study were the relatively easy access to places of employment and the provision of basic facilities such as electricity and proper sanitation (Fig. 7.5). The issue of access to places of employment has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter and needs no further elaboration. However the second issue, relating to the provision of adequate facilities warrants comment, especially as the land use survey showed a serious lack of amenities, especially with regard to the recreational needs of residents. This apparent contradiction is partly a result of the limited perspective on the part of residents with regard to the variety of amenities that could be provided for them, but there is another reason, namely that Merebank provided them with a reasonable living environment with

**Fig.7.5 : Positive features of the Merebank environment**

n = 238

proper sanitation and electricity. For many people in the lower socio-economic category the provision of these basic facilities is often regarded as more than adequate for their needs, and this is probably the case in respect of Merebank residents.

However, the fact that a significant proportion of respondents were satisfied with existing amenities should not be used by authorities as an excuse for not providing further amenities.

The friendliness of fellow residents emerged as a positive feature of Merebank and this fact is reinforced by the positive attitude towards friendliness in the preceding discussion on attitudes. There is obviously a sense of community spirit in Merebank and one of the reasons could well be the small size of Merebank (about 4.8 square kilometres) compared to other similar Indian residential townships that have an enormous extent and house over three times the present population of Merebank. The smallness of Merebank has probably led to the majority of residents knowing each other and this in turn has fostered feelings of good neighbourliness.

About 12% of the sample population felt that Merebank was a 'quiet' place. 'Quiet' was used to denote 'safe' or 'trouble free'. As has been discussed previously in this chapter the majority of residents felt relatively safe in Merebank and this is borne out by the number of people who cited this reason as one of the positive features of Merebank.

Some respondents felt that one of the more important features of Merebank was the security of tenure it offered. The Indian community has been subjected to a number of forced upheavals from former places of residence due to the implementation of the Group

Areas Act and the fact that Merebank residents were not affected remains an important positive feature of the area.

## 7.5 Priorities for change

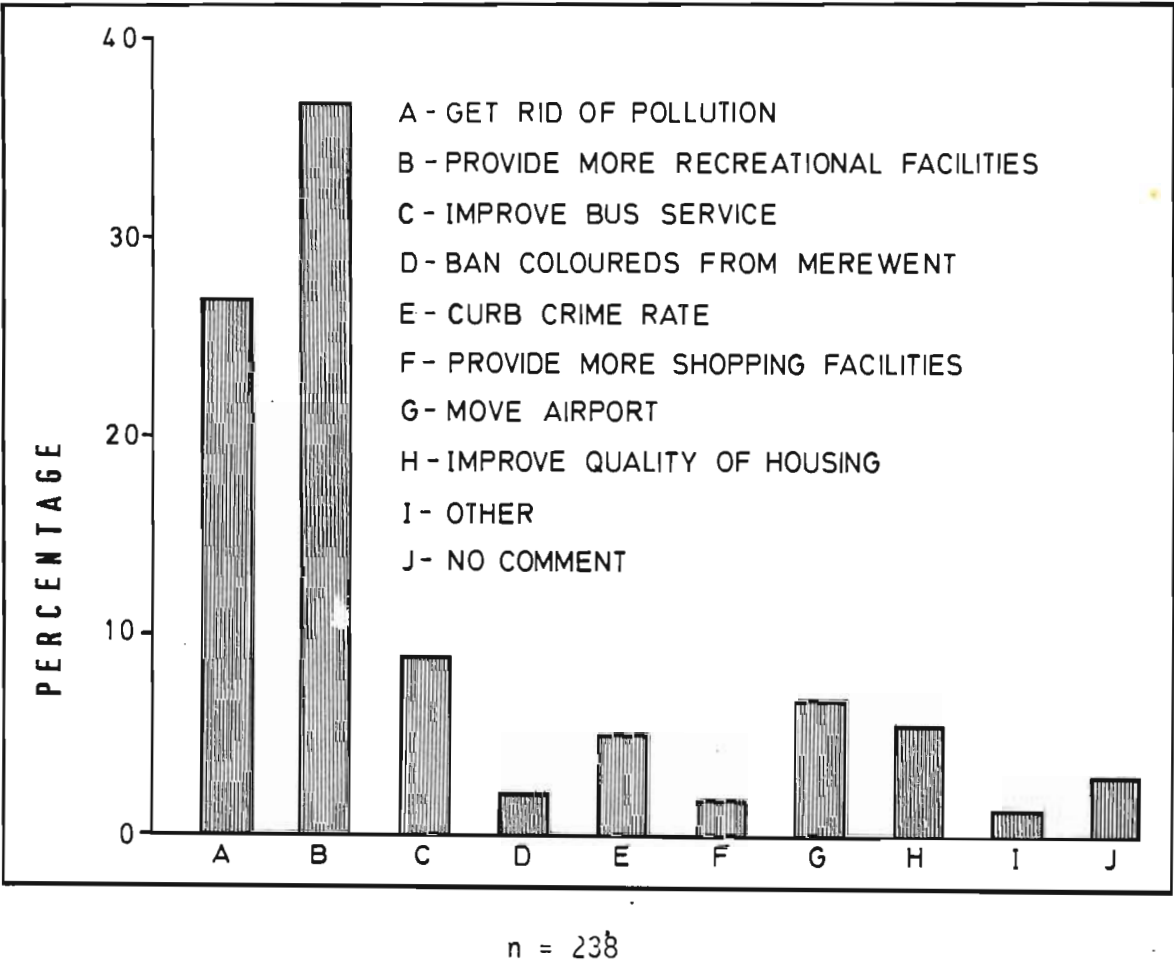
The provision of more recreational amenities within Merebank gained top priority for most respondents and this is understandable in view of the extremely limited recreational amenities provided in Merebank (Fig. 7.6). In view of the difficulty of access to amenities within the wider city resource system respondents felt that the provision of more amenities within Merebank would decrease both travel time and cost.

Almost 30% of respondents felt that something should be done about the serious extent of pollution in Merebank (according to a pollution research station bulletin Merebank was found to be one of the most heavily polluted areas in so far as atmospheric pollution was concerned). Whilst respondents agreed that they needed employment and that factories were a necessary evil, residents felt that stricter control should be kept on factories in order to limit the extent of pollution.

Other priorities for change included the curbing of the crime rate in certain areas of Merebank, particularly around 'Minitown'; an improvement in the quality of dwellings provided for the lower economic group; the physical moving of the airport from its present location and lastly, restricting the entry of Coloureds into Merebank. This last problem is an extremely sensitive one and needs further elaboration in order to avoid any misinterpretation. Merebank lies adjacent to the Coloured township of Wentworth where living conditions for the majority of residents is very poor and where there is a very high



Figure 7.6 : Priorities for change



unemployment rate. In addition there are virtually no amenities within Wentworth and residents often come into Merebank in order to use what limited amenities are available there. The competition for the limited amenities has often led to conflict between the two racial groups. There is little doubt that if the residents of Wentworth were provided with adequate amenities much of the source of the conflict would be eliminated.

## 7.6 Conclusion

The predominant feelings amongst most residents was that Merebank had a number of positive attributes such as proximity to workplace, the friendliness of the people and the provision of most basic amenities such as proper sanitation and electricity, tarred roads, etc. and that these positive attributes outweigh the negative features of the area.

Although respondents consistently stated that Merebank had many positive features they also felt that much could be done to improve their quality of life. These priorities for improvement included stricter pollution control measures, a reduction in the noise generated by the airport, providing more recreational amenities within Merebank, curbing the crime rate in certain sections of Merebank, as well as providing an efficient public transport system.

Authorities should not misinterpret the largely positive attitude of residents towards Merebank as meaning that people were totally satisfied with their environment as there is still much that can be done to improve levels of social well being amongst the people. The positive feelings of the community towards this residential area should be fostered by the authorities to ensure both a healthy and happy community.

## CHAPTER EIGHT : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*'The planning process requires the co-operation of urban planners, sociologists, architects, environmentalists and most important, the people being planned for. Too often 'public participation' has meant simply the approval of plans already designed and decided on. What is needed is meaningful active participation of people in the planning process from beginning to end' (Farbstein and Kanrowitz, 1978).*

	<i>Page</i>
8.1 Introduction	137-138
8.2 Summary of findings	138-143
8.2.1 Range and spatial distribution of amenities	138
8.2.2 Parameters limiting access	138-139
8.2.3 Priorities for improvement	139
8.2.4 Strategies to minimise the limits to accessibility	139-141
8.2.5 An assessment of social well being	141-143
8.3 Recommendations	144-145
8.4 Conclusion	145

## 8.1 Introduction

The final chapter is intended to briefly summarise the major findings of the Merebank study in terms of the aims as set out in chapter one, and to make recommendations in order to increase the level of social well being amongst Merebank residents in particular and to other similar communities in general.

## 8.2 Summary of findings

Each chapter contains a fairly detailed summary regarding that aspect of social well being with which it dealt, and only the major findings are discussed in this chapter.

### 8.2.1 Range and spatial distribution of amenities within Merebank

In general, the range and spatial distribution of amenities within Merebank did not match the requirements of the majority of the people. There was an actual physical shortage of amenities within Merebank and both medical and recreational amenities were in extremely short supply, and those that were provided were not well distributed throughout the area. Most amenities in Merebank were clustered in the 'central area', whilst others such as parks and playlots were tucked away in remote corners of Merebank where they were both physically inaccessible and dangerous.

### 8.2.2 Parameters limiting access

The physical shortage of many amenities within Merebank seriously affected the social well being of residents and people faced a number of obstacles when attempting to use amenities. The most important parameters that limited access included the long

distances to be travelled in order to use amenities in distant locations, together with high transport costs, increased travelling times and a poor public transport system. Certain amenities within Merebank, such as parks and playlots were inaccessible due to their locations as well as their low levels of maintenance.

### 8.2.3 Priorities for improvement

The majority of respondents felt that the extensive pollution in Merebank, the lack of adequate recreational facilities and the poor bus service were three of the most urgent problems requiring immediate attention. Other problems included the high crime rate in certain sections of Merebank, reducing the amount of noise being generated by the airport, and the provision of more shopping facilities.

### 8.2.4 Strategies to minimise the limits to accessibility

The implementation of strategies to overcome obstacles to accessibility leads ultimately to an improvement in the level of social well being, as access can be defined as the ability to use any amenity a person may desire. There are five strategies that could be employed in order to increase access to amenities and therefore levels of social well being for Merebank residents.

Firstly, more amenities must be provided within Merebank. These amenities must be well maintained, conveniently located and accessible in order to benefit the maximum number of people. Amenities should include sportsfields, playlots, medical care, retail facilities and other general purpose amenities.

Secondly, access to the city wide amenities must be increased by firstly, improving the existing public transport system (which at the time of the survey was being run by a number of small operators and operated fairly efficiently only during peak periods), and secondly, by encouraging the use of the railway system by providing an internal feeder service to convey residents to and from the railway system station which at the present moment is largely inaccessible to the majority of residents. The public transport system has to be efficient as well as being within the financial reach of most households. The possibility of a subsidy to reduce bus fares has been offered by the Durban City Council provided the many bus owners amalgamate and form a single company. Despite attempts by the Merebank Ratepayers association to get owners together to discuss the forming of a single company their efforts have been unsuccessful.

Thirdly, where specialised amenities such as hospitals are inaccessible, as is the case for most Merebank residents, authorities could provide these services by the use of mobile clinics. Such mobile clinics have been used extensively in many third world countries and have been very successful (Smith, D.M., 1977). These clinics would be able to treat most patients and refer the more serious cases to a hospital. Such a service would take the strain of the few state hospitals and provide an invaluable, and accessible service to the residents. A similar kind of mobile service could be applied to banking or other specialised amenities.



Fourthly, amenities should be developed to the fullest in order to ensure the maximum utility value to residents. It is of little benefit to the people to say that a beach has been provided for them, when the beach has no access road, or facilities of any kind, and is often polluted by effluent from surrounding industries. Thus it is not only the physical distance to many amenities that restricts their access, but also the quality of the amenity as well. As long as amenities remain undeveloped or underdeveloped they do not contribute in any way to the social well being of residents.

Lastly, a body should be formed in Merebank which is given representation on the Durban City Council for all matters pertaining to Merebank. At the present moment there are two opposing local bodies and although the Merebank Rate-Payers Association seems to be more popular the Local Affairs Committee which is a quasi-government body is represented on most matters concerning Merebank. A single body, that authorities would recognise, and the people would support, should be formed in order to voice any problems the residents may have within Merebank.

#### 8.2.5 An assessment of social well being

The general social well being of Merebank residents was assessed on the basis of conditions of the residential environment, the degree of access to amenities, socio-economic conditions, the and residents' level of satisfaction with their own environment.

The majority of residents had a fairly decent standard of living and only a very small proportion lived in very poor conditions. Residents have managed to make many improvements to their homes over the years and have succeeded in increasing the amenity levels of their dwellings quite considerably. Most dwellings were purchased outright by residents with the aid of low interest loans from the City Council, and at the time of this survey most dwellings were already fully paid for. The many changes reflect an improvement in socio-economic conditions and the desire of residents to improve their quality of life. Although incomes were not very high people managed to satisfy most of their basic needs, however there was still a lot that could be done to improve the social well being of residents.

Most wage earners in Merebank were predominantly blue collar workers, but because there was often more than a single wage earner per household, families managed to fulfill most of their basic needs. Low levels of post school education has seriously restricted access to better paid jobs, however the present school going population is quite large and with the increased availability of loans and bursaries more people are being better qualified to compete for highly paid jobs. It is envisaged that over a period of time the occupational structure of Merebank would change quite considerably due to this factor.

Although most families had sufficient income to satisfy their basic needs there was little surplus income available for indulging in many other activities that involved a cost factor, and this seriously affected access to many amenities.

In spite of the fact that most people had poor access to amenities and faced many negative externalities within Merebank the majority of residents displayed a very positive attitude towards the area, felt that they had a decent standard of living, and that Merebank provided them with the basic amenities, such as electricity, proper sanitation and tarred roads. The friendliness of the people together with the convenience of location in relation to places of employment emerged as two important positive factors affecting attitudes towards Merebank. The residents of Merebank obviously have close emotional ties both with the area and the people who live there and feel relatively secure. Many of the people living in Merebank are second or third generation of Merebank residents and thus intimate social relationships exist among many families.

Whilst the majority of respondents viewed Merebank as having more positive than negative attributes, there were a number of negative features relating to the physical environment, which as shown throughout this thesis, has much scope for improvement. The positive attitudes of the community of Merebank have to be fostered and encouraged in order to create a healthy and happy community and one way of achieving this would be by attending to their grievances.

### 8.3 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the Merebank study the following recommendations are suggested for the future development of similar area :

- (i) *Basic general amenities such as retail, recreational, medical and social services must be provided in sufficient number to fulfill the needs of the population, and these must be well distributed in order to ensure maximum accessibility to the largest number of people; ✓*
- (ii) *Residents must have access to an efficient and cheap public transport system, especially where such townships are far removed from the city centre and the many amenities and services it provides. Where townships are large in physical extent an internal transportation system should be implemented in order to increase access to amenities within the area;*
- (iii) *Amenities should be well maintained so that people are encouraged to use them and take good care of them;*
- (iv) *Planners should take cognisance of the future needs of a community when the initial plans are being discussed as all communities are always dynamic and changing with regard to such aspects as age structure, and socio-economic conditions. Provision should be made for future expansion of buildings and services in order to cope with the growth in population;*

- (v) *Where low income townships are located close to industrial areas strict control must be kept over pollution in order to minimise the hazard to people and the environment. Ideally, no residential area should be in close proximity to heavy industries;* ✓
- (vi) *Dwellings should be designed in such a way so as to provide a reasonable degree of privacy for residents and materials used in the construction of dwellings should at least ensure that the occupants are well protected from the elements;*
- (vii) *Organisations should be created within the communities who would be in constant contact with planning authorities in order to identify problems and ensure that the grievances of people are heard by the right people and acted upon.* }

#### 8.4 Conclusion

The present study has provided a general social geography of Merebank by using most of the conventional indicators of social well being, but has also introduced the concept of accessibility to amenities as an important and accurate measure of social well being in terms of what people can actually do in their environment. The present study not only provides a meaningful assessment of social well being in Merebank, but also provides a guide to planners and policy makers in the future planning of similar areas.

## S E L E C T E D   B I B L I O G R A P H Y

ALLARDT, E.

About dimensions of welfare :  
An exploratory analysis of a  
comparative Scandanavian Survey.  
Research group for Comparative  
Sociology, *University of  
Helsinki*, 1973

ATKINSON, A.B.

On the measurement of Inequality.  
*Journal of Economic Theory*,  
Vol. 2, pp244-263, 1970

BREHENY, M.J.

The measurement of spatial  
opportunity in planning,  
*Regional Studies*, vol. 12,  
pp463-479, 1978

BREHENY, M.J.

Towards measures of spatial  
opportunity, *Progress in  
Planning*, Vol. 2 (2), pp85-142,  
1974

BRUMWELL, A.C.

A model of intra-urban mobility,  
*Economic Geography*, Vol. 55 (4)  
1979

✱ BUTLER-ADAM, J.F. &amp; VENTER, W.M.

Indian Housing Study in Pieter-  
maritzburg and Durban, Vol. 1,  
*Natal Town and Regional Planning  
Commission*, 1982

BUTTIMER, A.

Social Space and the planning  
of residential areas.  
*Environment & Behaviour*, Vol. 4(3),  
1972

CHAPIN, F.S.

Human activity patterns in the  
City : Things people do in space  
and time, *John Wiley & Sons*,  
New York, 1974

COATES, JOHNSTON AND KNOX

Geography and Inequality.  
*Oxford University Press*, London,  
1977



- COX, K.R. *Location and Public Problems, Basil Blackwell, London, 1979*
- DOLING, J. *A comment on the measure of spatial opportunity, Regional Studies, Vol. 13 (2), pp245-246, 1979*
- DRENOWSKI, J. *On measuring and planning the quality of life, Mouton, The Hague, 1974*
- EYLES, J. *Social Theory and Social Geography, Progress in Planning, Vol. 2, pp244-263, 1974*
- FARBSTEIN, J. AND KANTROWITZ, M. *People in places : Experiencing, using and changing the built Environment, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1978*
- GANS, G.H. *People and Plans - Essays on urban problems and solutions, Basic books Ltd. 1968*
- GROSS, P.F. *Urban Health Disorders : Spatial Analysis and the Economics of health facility location. International Journal of Health Sciences, Vol. 22, pp64-83.*
- HARVEY, D. *Geographic processes and the analysis of point patterns : Testing a diffusion model by quadrant sampling, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Vol. 40, pp81-95, 1966*
- HARVEY, D. *Social Justice and the City, Edward Arnold, London, 1973*
- HAGERSTRAND, T. *Transport in the 1980-1990 decade - 'the impact of transport on the quality of life'. Paper presented at the fifth International symposium on the theory and practice of transport economics at Athens, 1973*

- INGRAM, D.R. 'The concept of accessibility': a search for an operational form, *Regional Studies*, Vol. 5(2), pp. 101-107, 1971.
- KINCAID, J.C. Poverty and Inequality in Britain, *Penguin Books*, London, 1973
- KNOX, P.L. Social priorities for social indicators : A survey approach, Occasional Paper No. 4, *Department of Geography, University of Dundee*, 1976
- MAHARAJ, B. 'Residential mobility amongst outhouse dwellers in Merebank, *Unpublished Honours thesis, University of Durban-Westville*, 1982
- MASLOW, A.H. Motivation and personality, *Harper*, New York, 1954
- MORRIL, R.L. AND WOHLNBURG, E.H. The geography of poverty in the United States, *Mc Graw-Hill*, New York, 1971
- MURACO, W. Intra-urban accessibility, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 48, pp388-405, 1972
- MOSELY, M.J. Accessibility : The rural challenge, *Methuen*, London, 1979
- PROSHANSKY, H.M., ITTELSON, W. AND RIVLIÑ, L.G. Environmental Psychology : Man and his physical setting, *Holt Rinehart*, New York, 1970
- REES, B.J. 'Housing is a powerful tool', *Housing in South Africa*, March/April, pp26-30, 1979
- RUNCIMAN, W.G. Relative deprivation and social justice, *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1966

- SCHAEFFER, K.H. AND ELIOT, S. Access for all. *Penguin Books, London, 1975*
- SEERS, D. The transmission of inequality, *Ekistics, Vol. 21(4), pp163-169*
- SHANNON, G.W. AND DEVER, G.E.A. Health care delivery : spatial perspectives, *Mc Graw-Hill, New York, 1972*
- SMITH, D.M. *37. 45109* The geography of social well being in the United States, *Mc Graw-Hill, New York, 1973a*
- SMITH, D.M. An introduction to welfare geography, *Occasional Paper No. 11, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Witwatersrand, 1973b*
- SMITH, D.M. Human Geography - a welfare approach, *Edward Arnold, London, 1977*
- SMITH, D.M. Where the grass is greener - living in an unequal world, *Penguin Books, London, 1979*
- SMOUT, M.A.H. An analysis of Business Districts in the Major Regional Centres of Natal, *Journal for Geography, Vol. 3(5) 1969*
- STAGNER, R. Perceptions, aspirations, frustrations and satisfaction : An approach to urban indicators, *Ekistics, Vol. 30, pp197-199, 1970*
- TEITZ, M.B. Towards a theory of Urban Public facility location, *Papers of the Regional Science Association, Vol. 21, pp35-51, 1968*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1980. Neighbourhood Planning Primer. *U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C.*

WHITE, A.N.

Accessibility and Public facility location, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 55(1), 1979

YANCEY, W.L.

Architecture, interaction and social control : the case of a large scale housing project, *Environment and Behaviour*, Vol. 3(1), pp3-22, 1971

[illegible]

4. SOURCES OF INCOME OF FAMILY  
MARK WITH AN X ALL ACTIVITIES FROM WHICH YOU DERIEVE AN INCOME.

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT		
SELF EMPLOYMENT (P/T)		NO.
OTHER WORKING FAMILY MEMBERS		
MARKET-GARDENING		
LETTING OUT ROOMS		
PENSION		
GRANT		
OTHER (SPECIFY)		
TOTAL INCOME		(Family per month)

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD : DOES HOUSEHOLD POSSESS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (MARK WITH X)

ITEM	(MARK WITH X)
CAR	
REFRIGERATOR	
FREEZER	
PORTABLE TV	
B/W TV	
COLOUR TV	
RADIO	
HI-FI SET	
CARPETS (LIVING-ROOM F/L)	
STOVE (ELECTRI-CAL)	



6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION THREE ANSWER EITHER 7 OR 8.
7. WHO TAKES CARE OF YOUR NON-SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN WHILE YOU/YOUR WIFE IS AT WORK. (MARK WITH X)

NO NON-SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN	
LEAVE WITH NEIGHBOURS	
LEAVE WITH RELATIVES	
LEAVE WITH MAID	
CRECHÉ	
OTHER (SPECIFY)	

8. WOULD YOU/YOUR WIFE WORK IF SOMEONE WAS AVAILABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN?

YES/NO	
--------	--

9. IF THE TOP OF THE LADDER REPRESENTED EXCELLENT HEALTH AND THE BOTTOM OF THE LADDER BAD HEALTH, WHERE WOULD YOU PLACE YOURSELF? YOUR WIFE?

HUSBAND

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

WIFE

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

10. IF YOU HAD TO VISIT A ....

	WHERE WOULD YOU GO TO?	HOW WOULD YOU GET THERE?	ARE THERE PROBLEMS IN GETTING THERE? (IF ANY)
DOCTOR			
CLINIC			
HOSPITAL			

11. EDUCATION - IF ANY MEMBER/S OF THE FAMILY ATTEND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, THEN PLEASE STATE ADDRESS OF INSTITUTION AND MODE OF TRANSPORT

INSTITUTION	AREA (ADDRESS)	MODE OF TRANSPORT
PRE-SCHOOL		
PRIMARY SCHOOL		
HIGH SCHOOL		
UNIVERSITY		
TECHNIKON		

12. ARE THERE ANY FACTORS THAT LIMIT YOUR ACCESS TO ANY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS? (MARK WITH X)

COST

TIME

DISTANCE

TRANSPORT

OTHER (SPECIFY)


[illegible]

14. ARE THERE ANY SPORTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLAY BUT CANNOT?  
WHY NOT?

SPORT YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLAY	FACTORS PREVENTING YOU FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS SPORT

15. WHAT ELSE, APART FROM SPORT, DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

ACTIVITY	AREA	MODE	QUAL. OF FACILITY	FACTORS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION IN THESE ACTIVITIES (e.g. cost, time distance, etc.)	TIME TAKEN TO GET THERE	COST
CINEMA						
DRIVE-IN						
GARDENING						
'PUBBING'						
DANCING						
(OTHER						
SPECIFY)						

16. ARE THERE ANY OTHER LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO INDULGE IN, BUT CANNOT? WHY NOT?

ACTIVITY	WHY NOT?

SHOPPING

17. WHERE DO YOU MAKE THE FOLLOWING PURCHASES?

TYPE OF GOODS	AREA	MODE OF TRANSPORT	QUALITY OF SHOPS	DO YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PROBLEMS IN GETTING THERE (SPECIFY)
DAILY GOODS				
GROCERIES (MEAT, VEG.)				
CLOTHING				
FURNITURE				
JEWELLERY				
OTHER (SPECIFY)				

18. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU LACK ANY AMENITIES IN MEREWENT?

YES/NO	
--------	--

19. IF THE ANSWER TO PRECEDING QUESTION IS YES, WHAT AMENITIES ARE YOU LACKING?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) \_\_\_\_\_
- (vi) \_\_\_\_\_

20. ARE THERE AMENITIES IN THE AREA THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE, BUT CANNOT BECAUSE IT IS INACCESSIBLE? WHY?

AMENITIES	WHY NOT

21. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT LIMIT YOUR ACCESS TO AMENITIES (MARK WITH X)

FACTOR	(X)
RACE LEGISLATION	
NOT ENOUGH TIME	
LACK TRANSPORT	
HIGH COST	
CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS FACTORS	
DISTANCE	
OTHER (SPECIFY)	

22. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES IN YOUR AREA? (A SCORE OF 5 INDICATES A VERY HIGH QUALITY, AND A SCORE OF 1 INDICATES A VERY LOW QUALITY);

Very poor      Poor      Average      Good      Very Good

SERVICES	1	2	3	4	5
BUS SERVICE					
STREET LIGHTING					
TELEPHONE BOOTHS					
POLICE PATROLS					
STREET PAVEMENTS					
PARKS					
OTHER (SPECIFY)					



23. WHERE WOULD YOU ACQUIRE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES, SHOULD YOU NEED THEM?

SERVICE	AREA	MODE OF TRANSPORT	NOT APPLICABLE
PLUMBER			
MECHANIC			
PANELBEATER/ SPRAY PAINTER			
MOTOR SPARES			
DRY CLEANER			
OTHER (SPECIFY)			

24. ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL SERVICES THAT YOU REQUIRE, BUT DO NOT HAVE?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) \_\_\_\_\_

25. HERE ARE SOME WORDS OR PHRASES WHICH WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO USE TO DESCRIBE THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD AS IT SEEMS TO YOU. (BY NEIGHBOURHOOD IS MEANT THAT AREA WHICH YOU CAN SEE FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR).

e.g. (a) NOISY - A (very noisy); B (somewhat noisy);  
C (average); D (rather quiet); E (very quiet).

WORD/PHRASE	A	B	C	D	E	WORD/PHRASE
Noisy						Quiet
Attractive						Unattractive
Unfriendly people						Friendly people
Enough privacy						Not enough privacy
Poorly kept buildings						Well kept buildings
Pleasant						Unpleasant
Convenient						Inconvenient
Very poor place to live						Very good place to live
Safe						Unsafe
Well kept lawns and gardens						Poorly kept lawns & gardens

26. RESPONSES TO CARDS :

Please complete the following statements :

CARD 1 : The most negative aspect of Merebank is .....  
.....  
.....

CARD 2 : The most positive aspect of Merebank is .....  
.....  
.....

CARD 3 : If I were given the chance, the first thing I would change  
in Merebank would be .....  
.....  
.....