

Issues Confronting Management of Gwange Cemetery in Maiduguri, Borno State-Nigeria

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***Abstract:** Disposal of the dead is not typically considered an urban or landscaping planning problem, but how we managed the deceased spans a set of public issues that planners and managers often encounter. Recently, a lot of issues and challenges have arisen in the management of cemetery caused by the increase in human population and development. This study examines the challenges associated with management of cemetery using case study research design with the aim of examining the challenges facing the Management of Gwange Cemetery in Maiduguri Borno State. Interviewees were used for the collection of primary data from the staffs of the cemetery. Questions in the interview probed into what things required management in cemetery, management techniques adopted for the management of cemetery, and challenges associated with management of cemetery. Primary data collected were analyzed using content method of analysis. The Study revealed that the major challenges of Gwange cemetery are insecurity and unavailability of space. The study recommended that the security standard of cemeteries should be improved by providing adequate security needs and more space should be provided through acquisition of land from adjoining owners.*

Keyword: Cemetery, Management, Gwange Cemetery, Maiduguri, Borno State

INTRODUCTION

Disposal of the dead is not typically considered an urban or landscaping planning problem, but how we managed the deceased spans a set of public issues that planners and managers often encounter (Basmajian & Curl, 2010). Though, land shortage for burials is one of the many issues and challenges that emerged out of accelerated urban growth in most municipalities, the older cemeteries which were initially considered to be large are often run out space for new burials and vacant land is scarce to extent the existing cemeteries or to develop new one. According to Nigeria Population Census (NPC) they

forecasted that from 2020 to 2030 Nigeria population is projected to increase by 10 percent of the current population. From this amount, increasing number of elderly is expected to increase by 60 percent (Kolbuszewski, 2001). As this cohort moves into old age and faces higher mortality rates, the absolute number of death will increase significantly, as will the subsequent demand for interment spaces.

In highly dense cities it is often hard enough to find room for the living, let alone the dead. Cemeteries devoid of religion affiliation date largely from early 19th century and many were planned as spacious landscape gardens to house human remains (Moodley, 2009). Rapid urbanization in town and cities is also resulting in fierce competition for well-located land. Further, compounding the shortage of cemeteries is the fact that a cemetery among many cultures is much more than a place of spiritual and cultural reference. As well there is often resistance among communities to adopt alternatives way of disposing the dead such as sharing the graves and refuse of graves among others hence addressing scarcity of land for cemeteries is proving difficult (Salga, 2012). Thus, this research work is aiming to discuss extensively the management of cemetery and will also assess the challenges that the managerial sector of cemetery were facing. Mohammad and Sulaiman (2012), carried out their research in Muslim community in Malaysia in which the outcome of their research stated that the major problem cemetery management is facing in Malaysia is inadequacy of land to use for the provision of cemeteries. Douglas (2013) of University of Port Harcourt Nigeria carried out his own research in different five public cemeteries in Rivers state Nigeria and he came out with the verdict that the main challenges that the managerial sector of cemetery do faced is lack of securities (i.e. cemetery is not properly secured from bad people) to be catering for the cemeteries in River State Nigeria. There was no research with regards to Muslim cemetery in Maiduguri, Borno State which established the gap. Therefore, the researcher intends to cover the gap. Hence, the following objectives will be adopted to achieve this aim:-

- i To identify the problems associated with the management of cemetery.
- ii To offer solution to the highlighted issues

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 CONCEPTS OF CEMETERIES

According to Rugg, (2006) he says cemeteries are defined by having a number of distinctive characteristic which are;

LOCATION:- Cemeteries are generally located close to but necessarily within settlements. When cemeteries were first introduced in number in the second half of 18th and first half of 19th century, many were laid out perhaps half a mile away from the populous area of town, this location also meant that cemeteries could be substantial in size far larger than the overcrowded places. Many cemeteries were in excess of 10-15 acres of land and were able to expand as required this is the most physical features of cemetery.

PURPOSE AND OWNERSHIP:- Cemeteries can also be distinguished by their purpose and ownership. The principal function of the cemetery as with many other burial sites is the interment of dead. However as with other site, the population represented by the dead is an important consideration. Generally cemeteries serve a complete community with the catchment area being an entire district or town.

SACREDNES:- A further distinguishing feature of cemeteries site is the extent to which they are regarded as “sacred”. Sacredness is a concept that is in itself slippery. Dictionary definitions gives the word a range of meanings from the ‘holy’ and ‘consecrated’ implying a spiritual element through to protected from irreligious action and the almost secular in tone worthy of or regarded with reverence or respect.

2.1 TYPES OF CEMETERY

Cemeteries are the final resting places dedicated to our bodies after death. Since the mid-18th century, cemeteries have also served as city’s green space allowing families and other a place to go for visiting, mourning reflecting and memorializing dead and while many people may only see a cemetery as just a place where the dead are laid to rest. According to Gillies (2014), He categorized cemeteries types as the following.

2.2.1 PUBLIC CEMETERY:- These are plots of land owned by a governmental unit within a town, city or county and are by law the public cemeteries and must be remained open for use to the public.

2.2.2 PRIVATE CEMETERY:- This often owned and operated by a corporation, lodge, community organization, military or specific family, these cemeteries are restrictive to the public and will list the owners and or caretakers at the cemetery entrance.

2.2.3 CUSTOMARY CEMETERY:- With no formal or legal status; no customary cemeteries are simply plots used by neighbors as a burying place which are further cared for by the survivors of those buried within. While they are not generally legal, these types of cemeteries are tolerated and can often be found in the rural areas.

2.2.4 THE ETHNIC CEMETERY:- These types of cemeteries can either be public or private but are owned, operated and maintained to support one religious group.

2.2.5 THE MONUMENTAL CEMETERY:- Monumental cemeteries are cemeteries in which headstone or other monuments made of marble, granite or similar materials rise vertically above the ground. However, because maintenance of monuments is the responsibilities to the family and further because of the number of graves inside the cemetery, monuments cemeteries have been considered unsightly.

2.2.6 THE LAWN PARK CEMETERY:- With commemorative plaque placed horizontally at the head of the grave at ground level, a lawn cemetery is a cemetery that void of grave mounds but covered entirely with flat grassy lawns which barely shows any evidence that people have been buried there. However, because the plaques are in the ground, many families are restricted from leaving objects on grave makers due to maintenance and the use of mowers.

2.3 CONCEPT OF CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

Cemeteries are history, memory and recollection of a community and special attention must be paid to places preservation, cleaning, and maintenance of existing flora and above all to the needs of their visitors (Salga, 2012).

2.3.1 LAND SCARCITY AS A CRITICAL ISSUE IN CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

In the context of land scarcity and despite the availability of a range of alternatives, conventional burial is still the most common and preferred. A change of mindset regarding funeral and burial practices is required and the solutions must involve communities. The

funeral and burial services offered by municipalities cannot be decontextualized from the religious and cultural beliefs that people hold (Salga,2012).

2.3.2 DAY-TO-DAY CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

Cemetery management includes many skill sets. These range from the most hands-on tasks on the ground, from grave-digging to landscaping and horticulture to the higher level task undertaken by managers including the scheduling and logistics associated with running a cemetery.

On a day-to-day and weekly basis the cemetery officer and horticulturalist have to plan for the funerals that have been booked in their cemetery, taking care of everything from the booking of the grave and burial method to the digging of the grave and making sure each burial goes smoothly. They also have to manage the flow of visitors to the cemetery paying their respects at the graves of loved ones and perhaps unveiling tombstones, ensure their security and the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery (Salga, 2012).

The cemetery manager oversees a team of horticulturalist, cemetery officers and gardeners. Each cemetery has a cemetery officer who reports to the cemetery manger. The cemetery officer informs the cemetery manager for the municipality of the logistic at the grave site itself; the number of funerals that have been booked through undertakers and weather they for first burial, or burials and other categories. Based on this information the head gardener decides how many graves should be dug and confirms this figure in consultation with the cemetery manager. Gardeners are responsible for maintenance and digging the holes for graves. In the past this used to be done by hand but it is now using a tractor with a back hoe.

2.3.3 CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

Cemetery maintenance covers a lot of different areas. The access road, internal roads and internal walkways either needs to be tarred or if dirt, then graded and kept smooth and passable in all weathers. Fences, gates and building structures must be maintained as well as signage and grave numbers. Horticulture issues include mowing of lawns, weed control, watering and pruning trees shrubs and flowers. Finally water, sewer and storm-water drains must be kept in good working order. (Rugg, 2006). Cemetery management is a profession that is not often spoken of, but it is so essential in one of the most important rites of life, the final goodbye. (Douglas, 2013).

2.4 THE CHALLENGES IN CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

The burdens of day-to-day management, long-term planning and sustainability remain with cities. Each city is affected differently due to differing land sizes, budget, population size, religions, cultures and other elements. (Salga, 2012)

2.4.1 SHORTAGE OF LAND FOR CEMETERIES

The major challenges facing the cemetery sector is the unavailability of land for the use of cemeteries. Apart from the high demand for in-ground causing the shortage of space, cemeteries have also been located on unsuitable land. This is because environmental legislation relating to the suitability of the soil and the gradient of the land is either insufficient or not enforced. In some cities cemeteries are located near water source and the challenges are compounded by non-adherence to burial standards regarding grave depth. (Salga, 2012)

2.4.2 LOW UPTAKE OF ALTERNATIVE BURIAL METHODS

Miles (2005) a key solution to the admonishing availability of land is the introduction of burial alternatives. Many of these have existed for many years around the world, but are not actively practiced in most of African countries. There is limited knowledge of an exposure among communities to alternative ways of interment which would reduce this pressure. Example of this is cremation, cremation reduces mortals remains as the body is burnt to ash, cremation is permissible in the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Parish but however forbidden by Islam religion.

2.4.3 INSUFFICIENT BUDGET FOR CEMETERY SERVICES

Budget for the cemetery sector is quite constrained. In most of our cities the situation has worsened as there is not much needed infrastructures in the cemetery like offices space, water, fumigation equipments, worship/meditation space, gardening tools, lawn mowers e.t.c, due to how budget or contribution from the government to the cemetery sector (Gillies, 2014).

2.4.4 COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

Rugg (2006) cemeteries (some) are so close to residential areas that the risk of under water contamination is very high.

THE STUDY AREA

Maiduguri town is the capital and the largest commercial centre of Borno state, Nigeria. Borno state is located in the northeastern part of Nigeria. It has an area of 70,898 km² (Max Lock Group, 1976). The city has an estimated population of 1,197,497 in 2007. Its citizens are mostly Muslim and largely Kanuri. There are also a considerable Christian population and other ethnic groups (Borno State Dairy, 2007) Gwange Cemetery as it is popularly called has been in existing since the birth of Maiduguri It is located at Gwange neighborhood along Bama road and considered as the largest Muslim cemetery in Maiduguri, Borno State

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research methods were applied in this study. The respondents were given a questionnaire to fill out. The participants in this study are staff of the Gwange Cemetery in Maiduguri metropolis. As a result, the study's population comprises all staffs in the Cemetery. As such, a total of 14 staffs of the Gwange cemetery make up the sample frame and thus was selected for distribution using krejcie and Morgan Table. Judgment sampling will be used since the researcher has considered the staff of cemetery as the target population and they are likely to provide the requisite data or information.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

3-0 Result and Discussions

Table1: Demographic Data of the Respondents

TABLE: 3.1.2: RESPONDENT BY GENDER

GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
MALE	14	100%
FEMALE	-	-
TOTAL	14	100%

From the table above, the total numbers of respondents were fourteen (14) by the researcher in which all the respondents are male by gender which makes 100% of the population. This analysis shows that all the staffs and workers working in Gwange cemetery are male which implies that not even a single female is working there and the sole reason for this is due to its sacredness according to male respondent.

TABLE: 3.2.2: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENT INTERVIEW

LEVEL	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
PRIMARY CERT.	4	29%
O. LEVEL CERT.	4	29%
NCE/ND CERT.	-	
HND/BSc CERT.	6	42%
OTHER	-	-
TOTAL	14	100%

From the table 3.2.2 above it revealed the educational level of the respondents as those with primary and secondary school certificate constitutes 29% each while those having HND/BSc holders has the highest number representing about 42.% of the respondents. This suggested that majority of the respondents were HND/BSc holders

TABLE: 3.2.3: WORKING EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENT

RANGES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
0-5 YEARS	2	14%
6-10 YEARS	5	36%
11- 15 YEARS	3	21%
16 YEARS AND ABOVE	4	29%
TOTAL	14	100%

From the table 3.2.3 above it shows working experience of the respondents with those between 0-5 years representing 14%, 6-10 years constitutes 36%, 11-15 years representing 21% and those above 16 years representing 29%. Hence the studies revealed that majority of respondents have between 6-10 years working experience in cemetery management

WHAT IS THE RATE OF USER'S TOWARDS THE USE OF GWANGE CEMETERY BY THE COMMUNITY?

Respondent 1: based on the Questionnaire administered it shows that there is high rate of patronage by the Muslim user's towards the usage of Gwange cemetery. The above shows that people of Maiduguri preferred to make use of the cemetery which resulted to them undertaking most of the maintenance carrying out there.

HOW OFTEN IS THE INCREASE OF PEOPLE USING GWANGE CEMETERY FROM YEAR 2016-2021?

Respondent 1: based on the Questionnaire administered, seven (7) respondents answered that the increase in usage of the Gwange cemetery in Maiduguri is by 80-90%.

Respondent 2: Five (5) respondents said 75-100%. This implies that from year of establishment till now there is a wide range of increase in people that make use of the cemetery rather than burying their dead at home.

HOW DID YOU KEEP RECORDS?

Respondent 1: the Questionnaire administered shows that, Gwange cemetery does not have a record of their user's because there is no any evidence of record keeping by the staffs of the Gwange Cemetery when ask to shows us their record.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES CONFRONTING GWANGE CEMETERY?

Respondent 1: Nine (9) respondents tell the researcher that the major challenges facing Gwange cemetery is lack of fund.

Respondent 2 : Four (4) respondents answered that the challenges are insecurity and lack of facilities. This analysis shows that Gwange cemetery majorly having financial issue, inadequate security as people do come in to exhume the dead and adequate facilities is not provided, though land and community resistance is not an issue or challenges to them as of 2016-2021.

DO YOU CONSIDER GWANGE CEMETERY TO BE PROPERLY MANAGED?

Respondent 1: Seven (7) respondents said it is well managed based on the interview conducted.

Respondent 2: Five (5) respondents said it is fairly managed. This analysis shows that the management of Gwange cemetery is good but there is still room for improvement.

IS AN ESTATE SURVEYOR AND VALUER ENGAGED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GWANGE CEMETERY?

Respondent 1: from the Interview conducted it is clearly shown that expertise skill of an Estate Surveyors and Valuation is not being sought. This analysis implies that estate surveyor does not partake in the process of cemetery management within the study area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research revealed that land issue is not part of the challenges or problems cemetery are facing in Nigeria as it is the major issue cemetery do face in some other countries like Malaysia though in Nigeria they are lacking fund to cater for those available land to be useful. Gwange cemetery in Maiduguri was once suffered from inadequacy of securities to cater for both buried corpse and cemetery facilities as some people do go into the cemetery to exhume buried corpse.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to examine issues confronting management of Gwange Cemetery in Maiduguri, Borno State. Cemeteries are not systematically managed which is

causing the community to become uninterested to make visits to the cemetery. On a day-to-day basis cemetery managers are required to meet burial needs of the community they serve, which they do under trying circumstances. Sustainability for the future is a key issue. The study concludes that those responsible for managing cemeteries in cities are left to their own devices in finding solutions to these problems. Cemetery management is a profession that is not often spoken of, but it is so essential in one of the most important rites of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government should be contributing more to the sector of cemeteries by issuing adequate or separate budget for the cemetery services as their budget is quite constrained, this will give cemetery sector rooms to improve their infrastructures like offices space, backhoe tractors, fumigation equipment, worship or meditation space, gardening tools e.t.c.. Cemeteries should also be located at a far distance to the city where people resides as to prevent the risk of underwater contamination because the hazard can pollute the underwater., The number of security officers and patrols should be increased and they should be given adequate securities needs, CCTV cameras can be installed to cemeteries as to monitors criminal acts like exhumations of buried corpse.

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