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Edhi graveyard: unknown in death

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Master of Science in Journalism



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EDHI GRAVEYARD: UNKNOWN IN DEATH

This Capstone Project is submitted to the Faculty of Business Administration as partial fulfillment of Master of Science in Journalism (MSJ) degree

by

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Fall Semester 2020

Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, Pakistan

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Abstract

As visitors walk down the eerie and dimly lit path, they are greeted by a strange whiff as they inch closer to the white steel door that serves as the final barrier between them and the dead. There are moments of awkward silence followed by commotion and workers at the Edhi Morgue rushing to process the next ‘unknown’ they’ve received.

Silence can be felt in parts of the morgue. Particularly the area where anxious relatives are asked to wait while the remains are prepared for the identification process.

From storing hundreds of dead bodies on a daily basis at the morgue to cleaning, bathing, and preparing the deceased for their final abode, Edhi Foundation has devotedly taken care of the post city’s ‘unidentified dead’ since 1951.

The process starts shortly after the control room receives a phone call. Within minutes, an ambulance is dispatched to collect and transport the remains to the nearest government hospital. Once the death certificate is issued and the foundation receives the clearance from the local police station, the body is transferred to morgue.

After ‘Shanakht’ (biometric identification of dead bodies), the bodies are stored for 3-5 days. During this time, the Citizen Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) make every effort to trace the family. In case the records are not found, the body is assigned a serial number, photographed, and the information is entered into the register. This is followed by the burial.

The record helps when families come searching for their missing loved ones. It also holds information about the burial and the final resting place. In some cases, the body is exhumed on the orders of a judge. This is only done when the family insists on burying their loved one at another location.

After more than two decades of service, the graveyard has reached maximum capacity. The

government has made promises, but the foundation is yet to receive more land to bury Karachi's unclaimed. The foundation also continues to serve as the largest and only morgue in Karachi.

Link to the project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32urVZBf85g>