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Nkumba University
P.O.Box 237 Entebbe
Uganda

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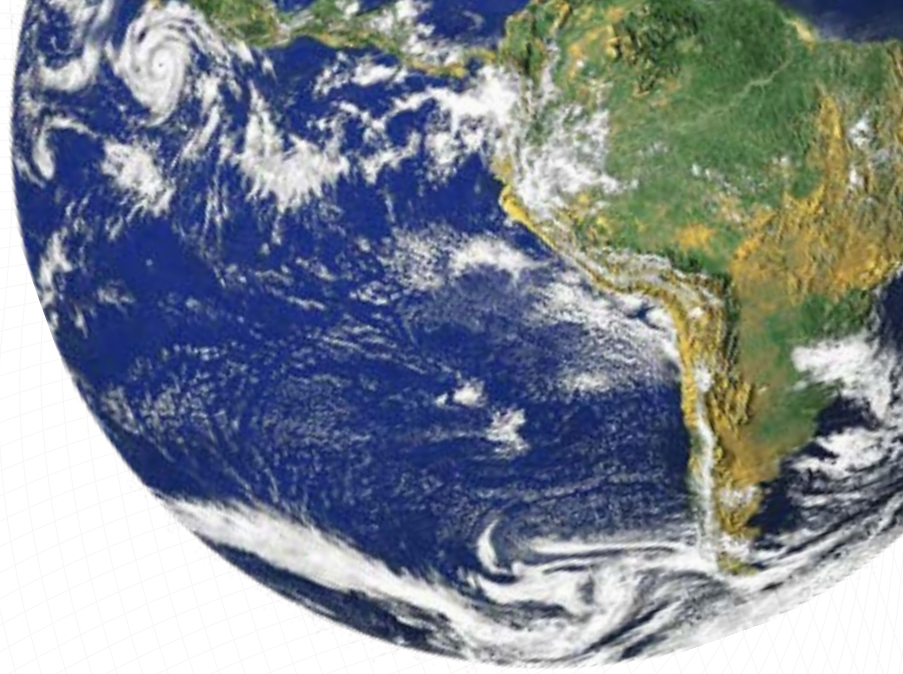


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WORD FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A NEW INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL IS BORN

Nkumba University launched this First Issue of the First Volume of a new international journal on 16th July 2021. It has been baptized “**Nkumba International Research Journal**” and it is to be abbreviated as “**NIRJ**” in citations.

The NIRJ is an Online Open Access Academic Journal that provides a platform for presenting, discussing, and documenting research findings and other important academic concerns in a multi-disciplinary approach. It has been designed to disseminate research findings, latest discoveries and developments, and future research prospects to the public in a manner easily understood. Articles to be accepted for publication include formal reports of original research, re-analyses of others’ research, reviews of the literature in a specific area, proposals of new but untested theories, and opinion pieces.

This initiative is in recognition of the fact that journal articles, in academic life, are the final output of most research. A researcher’s

performance and productivity are judged largely on the number of publications, leading to the adage: “either you publish or you perish”. It is through publications that research findings are disseminated to others in a particular discourse. Journals are known to offer a wide selection of scholarly articles that can be used for understanding the progress of knowledge in a research field and for developing ideas for further research. Nkumba University is, therefore, committed to enhancing the reputation of the NIRJ through accepting quality manuscripts, selecting reputable reviewers, and having an experienced calibre of the Editorial Board and Editorial Team to increase the visibility and credibility of the contributing researchers as well as their career opportunities.

The articles to be published in this research journal will be peer-reviewed and approved by experts in the respective fields to ensure the reliability of the resources for referencing and use by researchers, policymakers, and the general public. Prospective authors can send their original manuscripts via e-mail to the journal for peer review and possible publication. The NIRJ will expect article contributions from wide expertise such as Education, Humanities, Social sciences, Business, Law, Natural and Applied Sciences, Languages, Art and Design, Psychology and Security Studies. The journal will bring together expertise from universities and the wider civil society worldwide and facilitate communication and collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and educators. Manuscripts from authors are, therefore, welcome. Instructions to authors appear on the inside cover of the journal.

The frequency of publication of the journal will, until further notice, be biannual. Its functional focus will be on well researched and useful information, education on various issues of national and global importance, and guidance on the latest innovations and developments.

Prof. F.L. Orach-Meza
NIRJ, Nkumba University
P.O. Box 237, Entebbe, Uganda
T: +256 708 571 005
E: orachfl@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Journal

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Faustino L. Orach-Meza
Nkumba University
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: orachfl@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Managing editor

Assoc. Prof. Asiimwe Solomon Muchwa,
Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda,
E-mail: sasiimwe@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Copy editors

Dr. Simon Peter Ongodia
Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: songodia@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Mr. John Baptist Imokola
Nkumba University,
P. O. Box 237 Entebbe, Uganda
E-mail: jimokola@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Layout editors

Dr. Nandala Mike
Nkumba University,
mnandala@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Collins Nuwagaba
Nkumba University,
E-mail: cnuwagaba@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Joseph Lwevuze
Nkumba University,
Email: jlwevuze@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Content editor (s)

Barasa Patrick
Nkumba University,
Email: pbarasa@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Webmaster

Hakim Mulinde
Nkumba University,
E-mail: hmulinde@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Journal

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The Role of The Environmental Protection Police Unit in The Protection of Wetlands: A Case of Kajjansi Peri-Urban Areas in Uganda.

Authors: Kalukusu Amos Ronald¹, Alex Barakagira²

Nkumba University

Abstract

The study explored the roles of the Environmental Protection Police Unit towards wetland protection in Uganda. Specifically, the study aimed at examining the provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting functions of wetlands and critically looked at the roles played by the environmental protection police unit in ensuring that these wetland values are protected. The specific objectives of the study included (a) to identify the factors that force people to degrade wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban areas, (b) to evaluate the roles, gaps, and challenges of the environmental protection police unit, (c) to determine the relationship between levels of education and wetland resource use by different stakeholders. The study employed a correlational research design and data was triangulated in a mixed-methods research approach. Key findings indicate that house construction, brick, and tile manufacturing were the leading causes of wetland degradation. The roles of the environmental protection police unit, predict variations in wetland resource use given their P and F -values ($P=0.000$, $F=50.134$). The results indicate that the Environmental Protection Police Unit's roles and responsibilities explain only 50.1% variations in sustainable wetland use revealed by the adjusted R square ($R=0.39$). A regression value of 186.823 compared to the residual value of 290.665 was obtained, meaning that although the unit plays a significant role, other factors also strongly influence the proper use of wetlands. The relationship between wetland misuse and level of education was a moderate positive evidenced by ($r=0.626$, $P\text{-value}<0.01$). The level of education of the respondents and sensitization by the police accounted for 63% for proper wetland use, while the remaining 37% which is unaccounted for is explained by other factors. The study recommended that the government through the Ministry of Water and Environment should increase funding to support the environmental protection police unit and also increase their manpower to monitor ongoing activities in wetlands to ensure their sustainable use.

Keywords: Environmental Protection police unit, protection of wetlands, wetland degradation.

¹ Amos Ronald Kalukusu is a lecturer in the School of Sciences at Nkumba University and a PhD candidate at UNICAF university at Longacres, Lusaka Zambia.

² Alex Barakagira (PhD) is a lecturer and Dean - School of Sciences at Nkumba University | abarakagira@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug

Introduction

An area of land that is permanently or seasonally saturated with water is known as a wetland. These include marshes, swamps and bogs. The primary factor that distinguishes wetlands from other landforms or water bodies is the characteristic vegetation of aquatic plants, adapted to the unique hydric soil (Butler, 2010).

Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peat-land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters” including areas which “may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six meters at low tide lying within the wetlands (Rashed, 2005).

The specific objectives of the study included (a) to identify the factors that force people to degrade wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban areas, (b) to evaluate the roles, gaps, and challenges of the environmental protection police unit, (c) to determine the relationship between levels of education and wetland resource use by different stakeholders.

The lead agency for the management of environmental affairs in Uganda is the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) which is responsible for the overall oversight roles in environmental management. To strengthen the capacity of NEMA, the government of Uganda created the National Forestry Authority (NFA) to manage forest affairs, and the Department of Wetland Inspectorate Division (DWID) to manage wetlands. However, the Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda expressed the need to further strengthen NEMA and created the Environmental Protection Police Unit (EPPU) which does the policing role to ensure that the environment is not degraded and among the key areas of their concentration are the forests and wetlands.

The study was driven by the need to maximize sustainable wetland management by controlling human activities and adopting sustainable wetland management practices. Bintooro, *et al* (2015) suggested that to realize the condition of the wetland before disturbance, it is important to first, establish the pre-disturbance aquatic functions and related physical, chemical and biological characteristics. Second, it is crucial to remove the factors that are causing wetland degradation or loss, thus renewing the wetland functions. The Ramsar Convention Secretariat (2012) considers the removal of the stressors on the ecological character of the wetlands as the best practice to prevent further degradation. In the case of Kajjansi peri-urban area wetlands, the passive and active restoration approaches which were suggested by Bintooro *et al.* (2015) are crucial, however, it is also important to include the forceful eviction of the wetland users who do not comply with the wetland laws.

History of Environmental Policing

The concept of environmental policing started in the European countries especially in the United Kingdom where the environmental police found themselves engaging in investigating and prosecuting serious offences involving the illegal storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous, toxic and solid waste (McKenna, 1993).

Enforcing environmental laws and regulations is an important ingredient in protecting the environment and reducing environmental harm. This is generally achieved by various environmental law enforcement agencies operating from a global to a local level. For instance, some

environmental law enforcement agencies operate only at an international level whereas others only operate at the local level. Furthermore, environmental law enforcement agencies utilize various enforcement methods to ensure compliance with environmental legislation. In some cases enforcement agencies rely on coercive powers to demand compliance to environmental laws, generally labelled ‘command and control’ strategies; others rely on conciliatory and educational strategies to persuade individuals, organizations and governments to comply with environmental laws and regulations.

Panton et al (1972) noted that the police role in regulating the environment is not peculiar to the United States of America alone. Recent concerns with environmental issues have prompted a great deal of reflection about the problem of enforcing anti-pollution legislation in all countries of the world. They noted that the concept of police involvement in monitoring the quality of the environment is neither a new nor startling re-thinking of what the police role is or should be. Historically, Panton et al further observed that local environmental dislocations have always been a matter of concern to American local governments and were directed towards protecting the purity of municipal water supplies, planting beautifying shade trees and developing parks. However, as the public became more aware of the effects of environmental degradation, environmental protection laws were enacted.

In the early days, the first line of environmental protection was by necessity at the local level and was effectuated by the efforts of the local police. Panton et al (1972) noted some challenges affecting environmental police. They observed that in the local government structure in New York State, it is the municipal codes that contain the majority of the environmental proscriptions. They also observed that there is much unevenness from community to community, in the substantive provisions and the severity of the fines for violations found in those codes. As a result, two contiguous municipalities may share a common environmental problem while one may not have the provisions necessary to enforce an infraction. Therefore, there is an incentive for industries to move to an area where provisions and enforcement are minimal to minimize overhead costs.

Wunderlich (2017) observed that in China, it is the Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB) that has the task of establishing, implementing, and enforcing the environmental law. But due to the fragmented structure of environmental governance in China, the limited power of the EPBs local branches, e.g., when other laws overlap with the EPL, low level of public participation, and lacking capacity and personnel of the EPBs, they are vulnerable and have no effective means for law enforcement. An Environmental Police (EP) could improve this by being a legal police force. Different approaches have been implemented on a local basis, e.g., the Beijing or Jiangsu EP, but they still lack a legal basis and power. Although the 2014 Environmental protection law (EPL) tackled many issues, some implementation problems remain: The Chinese Environmental Police (EP) needs a superior legal status. Moreover, the implementation of an EP is not further described. The already complex police structure likely impedes inter-departmental cooperation. Thus, it was proposed to unite all environment-related police into one environmental police.

Occurrence of Wetlands in Uganda

According to the State of the Environment Report for Uganda (1996), wetlands occur all over Uganda and cover an area of 11 per cent of the land area. There was a wetland mapping exercise of 2008, where wetland resources were reported to have reduced from 15% in 1994 to 10.9% of Uganda’s area. Wetlands are a source of livelihood to the majority of Ugandans and hence

directly contribute to the National Development plan, vision 2040 and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in the post-millennium development agenda. However, wetlands are under a lot of pressure from conversion for industrial development, settlements, agriculture, sand and clay mining. Most of these degrading activities are perceived to be of greater importance than wetland conservation itself.

It is against this backdrop that between May 2017 and May 2018, a study was conducted to establish the role of the environmental protection police unit in the protection of wetlands in Uganda. It was framed in the context of a peri-urban setting that is currently experiencing rapid population growth, urbanization, industrial and infrastructural growth; such as the Kajjansi peri-urban area in Wakiso District, Uganda. Key areas of the study required identifying the major activities, roles and responsibilities of the Environmental Protection Police Unit, the challenges they face and major gaps that exist. In Kajjansi peri-urban areas, anthropogenic activities are quite evident. Kajjansi is a township situated on the tarmacked; all-weather Kampala - Entebbe road and it is located approximately 16 kilometres (9.9 mi), by road, south of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. This location is approximately 25 kilometres (16 miles), by road, north of Entebbe International Airport, Uganda's largest civilian and military airport. The coordinates of Kajjansi are: 0°12'54.0"N, 32°33'00.0"E (Latitude: 0.2150; Longitude: 32.5500).

Values of Wetlands

Wetlands play several roles in the environment, principally water purification, flood control, carbon sink and lake, river or shoreline stability. Wetlands are also considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, serving as home to a wide range of plant and animal life, and they occur naturally on every continent except Antarctica. The largest includes the Amazon River Basin, the West Siberian Plain, and the Pantanal in South America (Fraser & Keddy, 2005). The water found in wetlands can be freshwater, brackish, or saltwater. The main wetland types include swamps, marshes, bogs, and fens; and sub-types include mangrove, pocosin, and varzea. According to Davidson et al (2005), the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment determined that environmental degradation is more prominent within wetland systems than any other ecosystem on Earth. International conservation efforts are being used in conjunction with the development of rapid assessment tools to inform people about wetland issues. Constructed wetlands can be used to treat municipal and industrial wastewater as well as stormwater runoff (Okurut, 2000). They may also play a role in water-sensitive urban design. Wetlands are one of the crucial natural resources. It is increasingly realized that the planet earth is facing grave environmental problems with fast-depleting natural resources and threatening the very existence of most of the ecosystems. The wetlands are sometimes described as the kidney of the landscape, for the functions they perform in hydrological and chemical cycles and downstream receivers of wastes from both natural and human sources.

Example from Uganda's Context

According to Muzaale (2018), it was observed that in a bid to restore the degraded Musamya wetland in Kayunga district, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) officials in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Police successfully evicted at least 300 encroachers from the natural resource. It was reported that the encroachers had since 2004 claimed sections of the wetland, despite warnings from NEMA officials in both Kayunga and

Mukono districts to vacate. The encroachers were using the wetland to grow rice, yams, bananas, vegetables and maize and the most depleted sections of the wetland were in Nazigo, Ntunda, Kayunga, and Kasawo sub-counties of Kayunga district of Uganda.

The farming activities had greatly destroyed some sections of the wetland, turning it into open land, with a stream from the hitherto marshland. Research has it that the Kayunga District Senior Environment Officer at the time said in the past that they tried to evict the encroachers but were frustrated by local politicians who spoke ill of the exercise. The encroachers come from as far as eastern Uganda, to grow rice in the wetland. Available records indicate that the wetland, which measures about 80 miles, had shrubs, reeds; woodland and natural grasslands, but the growing demand for agriculture and sand mining have left it depleted. In 2016, Kayunga District leaders went up in arms, protesting the proposed giveaway of the wetland by the Uganda Land Commission (ULC) to an investor for sugarcane growing. The authorities of the Uganda Land Commission wrote to Kayunga District leaders requesting to lease the wetland that covers four districts of Mukono, Kayunga, Nakasongola and Luweero to M/s Fakhri Enterprises Limited. The protests later forced ULC to back off. It was established through this study that some of the encroachers said they were forced to cultivate in the wetland due to lack of arable land and asked the government to allow them to continue using the wetland.

Hypotheses

The study was guided by two hypotheses as shown below.

First Hypothesis:

- **Null (H01):** The Environmental Protection Police Unit has no significant contribution to the reduction of wetland mismanagement in Kajjansi peri-urban areas.
- **Alternative (HA1):** The Environmental Protection Police Unit has a significant contribution towards the reduction of wetland mismanagement in Kajjansi peri-urban areas.

Second Hypothesis:

- **Null (H02):** The level of education of the wetland users does not significantly influence the reduction of wetland degradation.
- **Alternative (HA2):** The level of education of the wetland users significantly influences the reduction of wetland degradation.

Guiding Research Theory for the Study

The theory of Access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003)

Gaining and maintaining access to a resource has always been statistically tied to property ownership and rights by property and social theorists. Recognizing this limitation, Ribot & Peluso, (2003) defined access as the ability to benefit from things; bringing attention to cultural and political as well as an economic strand of powers embodied in and exercised through various mechanisms and social relationships that in addition to property rights control access.

However, Myers and Hansen (2020) argued that Ribot & Peluso did not explore in detail how a resource itself (in this case wetlands) affect access and called for consideration of the physical composition of the resource. Ginger et al. (2012) added that this theory needs to consider bio-physical factors that affect the material presence and quality of the environmental resource and their influence on users' access.

Calpin (2010) extended the theory to cater for the continuous flow of benefits and thus redefined true access as the "ability of users to continually benefit from a basic level of use of that service within the influence of various social, political and environmental changes." Cardozo (2013), Besta (2013), Milgroom (2012) showed that geographic distance, topography and climate factors influence access and utilization of an environmental resource. In the authors' opinion, this theory was the best fit to explain the findings.

Methodology

The research was carried out with the assistance of 80 respondents and it involved mainly two categories of participants i.e., the residents of the area and the key informants in relevant government departments. Out of the 80 respondents, 11 were key informants and they included; the officer in charge of Kajjansi police station (OC), the District Police Commander (DPC) of Wakiso District area, the Operations Officers of the Environmental Protection Police unit, area police officer, Senior Wetlands officer, police officer at the rank of a sergeant (SGT), Assistant Inspector of Police (AIP), Security Consultant, and the Information Communications officer Environmental Police. The other respondents were residents of Kajjansi who live in and around wetland areas. The size of the respondents was determined using Slovin's (1960) formula given below.

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where N = population, n = sample size, $e = (0.05)^2$ = is the sampling error. The selection of the respondents was conducted using a simple random sampling technique. The key informants were selected purposively. The study employed mixed research methods to generate data. This method was preferred because it allows the integrating of quantitative and qualitative research designs. The qualitative paradigm offered a complete description and analysis of the research output, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participants' responses. The collection of the data was guided by standardized self-administered questionnaires, and observation on the other hand was paramount. The required data was collected into two types, namely, primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaires because of the anticipated busy nature of the respondent. Many participants and other stakeholders needed some time to give their considered opinions. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data because they would accommodate both closed and open-ended questions as suggested by Amin, (2005). Secondary Data Collection Involved Obtaining Literature From Various Secondary Sources In Both Electronic And Print Forms.

Results And Discussions

Provisioning, Regulating, Cultural, and Supporting Use Values of Kajjansi Wetlands

Table 1: Summary Statistics of the Provisioning Functions of Kajjansi Wetlands

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Provisioning Functions of Wetlands in Kajjansi Wetlands	Food	7	9.5%	11.7%
	Water	59	79.7%	98.3%
	Raw materials	8	10.8%	13.3%
Total		74	100.0%	123.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Kajjansi wetlands are more important in terms of providing water for both domestic use, cattle and goats than being used as a source of food and raw materials as seen in table 1.

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Regulating Functions of Kajjansi Wetlands

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Regulating functions of Kajjansi Wetlands	Prevention of soil erosion	4	2.7%	5.3%
	Sediment trap	8	5.5%	10.5%
	Climate modification	33	22.6%	43.4%
	Maintenance of water table	18	12.3%	23.7%
	Moderating extreme water of flood flows	42	28.8%	55.3%
	Habitat for wildlife and other bio-diversities	41	28.1%	53.9%
Total		146	100.0%	192.1%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Statistics on the regulating functions of Kajjansi peri-urban wetlands were summarized in table 2 and findings reveal that climate modification and moderating water tables are the two main contributions on that aspect as seen in table 2. Other key regulating functions included being a habitat for wildlife and other biodiversity and climate modification while prevention of soil erosion and trapping of sediments were viewed as insignificant.

Table 3: Summary Statistics of Cultural Use values of Kajjansi Wetlands

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Cultural use values of wetlands in Kajjansi	Spiritual use values	30	14.3%	37.5%
	Recreational use values	77	36.7%	96.3%
	Educational use values	80	38.1%	100.0%
	Aesthetic use values	23	11.0%	28.7%
Total		210	100.0%	262.5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 3 summarizes the statistics on the cultural values of wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban areas and results show that education takes the most valued cultural aspect (38.1%) followed by recreation (36.7%) accompanied by spiritual use (14.3%) and the least aesthetic functions (11.0%).

Table 4: Summary Statistics of the Supporting Functions of Kajjansi Wetlands

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Supporting soil formation	33	20.0%	41.3%
Supporting nutrient cycling	56	33.9%	70.0%
Supporting hydrological cycle	57	34.5%	71.3%
Other	19	11.5%	23.8%
Total	165	100.0%	206.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

The study reveals that wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban areas like any other wetland system in Uganda play vital supporting functions in all aspects. The responses showed that they are mainly important in rainfall formation, supporting hydrological processes of the environment (34.5%) followed by supporting nutrient cycling (33.9%) and also supporting soil formation (20.0%). Therefore, from table 4, it is important to protect the wetland ecosystems if we are to continue harnessing these benefits by minimizing their continued degradation.

Human Activities Contributing to Wetland Degradation in Kajjansi Peri-urban Areas

The study identified six major practices that greatly contribute to wetland degradation in Kajjansi peri-urban area wetlands as seen in Table 5. These included; dumping of municipal waste and sewage discharges from surrounding institutions, sand mining for commercial purposes, commercial fishing, house construction, road construction, brick and tile manufacturing

Table 5: Human Activities that have affected Kajjansi peri-urban area wetlands

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Dumping of Municipal waste and sewage discharges from surrounding institutions	11	13.8	13.8
Sand Mining for commercial purposes	6	7.5	7.5
Commercial Fishing	3	3.8	3.8
House Construction	26	32.5	32.5
Road Construction	19	23.8	23.8
Brick and tile manufacturing	15	18.8	18.8
Total	80	100.0	100.0

The study further reveals from table 1 that Kajjansi peri-urban wetlands are a host of a number of human activities which include among others; dumping of municipal waste and sewage discharges from the surrounding institutions, sand mining most especially for commercial purposes, commercial fishing on a very minimal scale by the residents, house construction most especially peri-urban housing, road construction and brick laying to support the fast-growing

housing infrastructure. This is evidenced in Kajjansi most especially by the Kajjansi clays industry. By the time the study was conducted, house construction accounted for 32.5% (n=26) road construction 23.8% (n=19) brick and tile manufacturing 18.8% (n=15) and were the major human activities being observed at Kajjansi peri-urban wetlands. Though the study reports fewer responses on sand mining 7.5% (n=6) and dumping of municipal waste in wetlands 13.8% (n=11), their effects are quite eminent and they call for some intervention from relevant departments.

Table 6: Regression Model with the role of Environmental Protection Police Unit as the dependent variable

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.626 ^a	.391	.383	1.930

Predictors (constants). The independent variable is the Level of Education of the Respondents.

To determine the role of the Environmental Protection Police Unit in protecting wetlands and their involvement with the communities which utilize these wetlands in the Kajjansi peri-urban area, a simple linear regression test was done and the model predicted 38.3% of the variance in education. The results revealed that the level of education (awareness) of the community especially those who utilize wetlands is a significant predictor of the performance of the Environmental Protection Police Unit in the protection of wetlands. This suggests that while the Environmental Protection Police Unit implements its mandate through sensitization and other methods such as enforcing evictions of encroachers (as seen in table 6), individuals with higher levels of education are more influenced than the lesser educated.

Ministry of Water and Environment (2018) statistics show that Uganda has lost more than 30 per cent of the wetlands in the last 23 years. This trend indicates the country is at increased risk and vulnerability to natural disasters and other effects of climate change. Section 36 of the National Environment Act for Uganda provides for the protection of wetlands and prohibits reclamation, erection of illegal structures and empowers authorities to demolish any structure that is fixed in, on, under or above any wetland.

The Act also empowers local leaders in districts to manage wetlands within their jurisdictions and ensure that their boundaries are clearly demarcated so that even as water levels and wetland vegetation recedes, the communities are clear on where the boundaries lie. Evidence suggests that in many areas where the NEMA police have evicted wetland encroachers, there has been a remarkable improvement in wetland vegetation growth and an increase in the water table in comparison to where people are still habiting. It has been established under this study that in many areas where wetland encroachers have been evicted, authorities in-charge of wetland management in the Ministry of Water and Environment, urged the encroachers to surrender their land titles and land sales agreements to the ministry for verification.

Table 7: ANOVA testing the role of the Environmental Protection Police Unit in preventing wetland mismanagement

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	186.823	1	186.823	50.134	.000
Residual	290.665	78	3.726		
Total	477.487	79			

The independent variable is the Level of Education of the Respondents. $R = 0.626$, $R^2 = 0.391$, Adjusted R Square 0.383.

The results in table 3 show that the roles of the environmental protection police unit predict variations in wetland resource use by the locals in Uganda given their P and F-values

($P = 0.000$, $F = 50.134$). Further the results indicate that the Environmental Protection Police Unit roles and responsibilities explain only 50.1% variations in proper and sustainable wetland use among residents revealed by the adjusted R square ($R = 0.39$). This is also supported by the regression value of 186.823 compared to the residual value of 290.665, meaning that although the Environmental Protection Police Unit can influence proper wetland use in Uganda, through their roles and responsibilities, there are other factors such as (income, level of education, increased awareness etc.) other than the environmental protection police unit which also strongly influence proper use of wetlands.

Table 8: Relationship between the level of education and proper wetland use: Regression Analysis, Coefficients

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Level of Education of the Respondents	1.933	.273	.626	7.081	.000
(Constant)	.005	.719		.007	.994

Dependent variable: Sensitization by the Uganda Police Force

As can be read from table 4 above, the findings of this analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between the level of education and proper wetland use. This is shown by the standardized coefficients of beta value equal to 0.626 while the P-value is less than 0.01 suggesting that either proper use of the wetlands or mismanagement are significantly dependent on the level of education. The relationship between either proper use of wetlands or mismanagement and level of education was a moderate positive evidenced by ($r = 0.626$, $P < 0.01$). The level of education of the respondents and sensitization by the police accounted for 63% of better or proper wetland use, while the remaining 37% which is unaccounted for is explained by other factors. The effect was significant to proper wetland use in the sense that, the result is partly explained by the fact that people living near wetlands fear being arrested, interdicted of fear to act illegally. As a result, the study, therefore, confirms that although some individuals are still mismanaging wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban area, their activities are carried out either due to fear or because they feel that the wetlands belong to them and nobody can stop them from utilizing wetlands.

Table 9: Roles Played by the Environmental Protection Police Unit in the protection of Kajjansi Peri-Urban Wetlands

Variables	Responses	Percent (100%)
Eviction of people from wetlands	18	7.3%
Halted commercial sand mining activities	58	23.7%
Sensitized people about the proper use of wetlands	13	5.3%
Issued warnings to unlicensed wetland users	64	26.1%
Issued permits and licenses to wetland users	63	25.7%
Other	29	11.8%
Total	245	100.0%

The roles of the Environmental Protection Police have been summarized in table 5. It can be revealed that the unit has managed to work with relevant government departments to issue halt wetland mismanagement in Kajjansi peri-urban area. Key among these include issuing warnings to unlicensed wetland users 26.1% (n=64), issuing permits 25.7% (n=63), halted commercial sand mining 23.7% (n=58). Other key roles have been the eviction of people from wetlands 7.3% (n=18), and the study found out that they have done this in collaboration with Uganda Wetlands Inspectorate Division (UWID) and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). While sand mining cannot be halted completely. It can be revealed that most of the projects involving infrastructural development in the country demand sand extraction. In Kajjansi where the study was carried out, it was observed that sand mining besides supporting infrastructural growth, is a very lucrative business that continues to provide gainful employment for the uninformed class of Ugandans. Stopping or halting sand mining activities completely is likely to render some of the class of the uneducated people jobless, which would ultimately aggravate crime in the area. House construction activities that support urban growth would also slow down development in the area.

Table 10: Major Challenges Faced by the Environmental Protection Police Unit in the Protection of Kajjansi Peri-Urban Wetlands

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Low level of staffing	12	15.0
Conflicting land use values	9	11.3
Corruption within government and private wetland users	8	10.0
Low level of enforcement of government laws	25	31.3
Poverty among local residents	25	31.3
Insufficient funding resulting in institutional failures	1	1.3
Total	80	100%

In-focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the respondents showed that the Environmental Protection Police Unit faces a number of challenges in implementing its environmental duties as seen in Table 6. Key among the challenges they face was the existence of a

low level of (adherence to) enforcement of government laws 31.3% (n=25) and poverty among the local residents who are the direct wetland users 31.3% (n=25). Other important challenges included a low level of staffing of the Environmental Protection Police Unit, 15.0% (n=12) and conflicting land uses 11.3% (n=9) while corruption within the government and private wetland users accounted for only 10% (n=8). These results are similar to those in the literature review as suggested by Matovu (2006) who observed that

“....there is the problem arising from failures at different institutional link-ages for environmental management. Whereas for example wetlands are held in trust by central government or local government for the common good of the people of Uganda, recent examples of wetland abuse have included cases where local authorities have been the very violators of these constitutional and legal provisions...”

Where this has happened, local authorities have indicated that they converted wetlands for the sake of providing their communities with economic growth opportunities and for fighting poverty. It is therefore a dilemma that the very institutions such as the Environmental Police entrusted with the protection of wetlands have in some cases not assisted the crusade for their conservation.

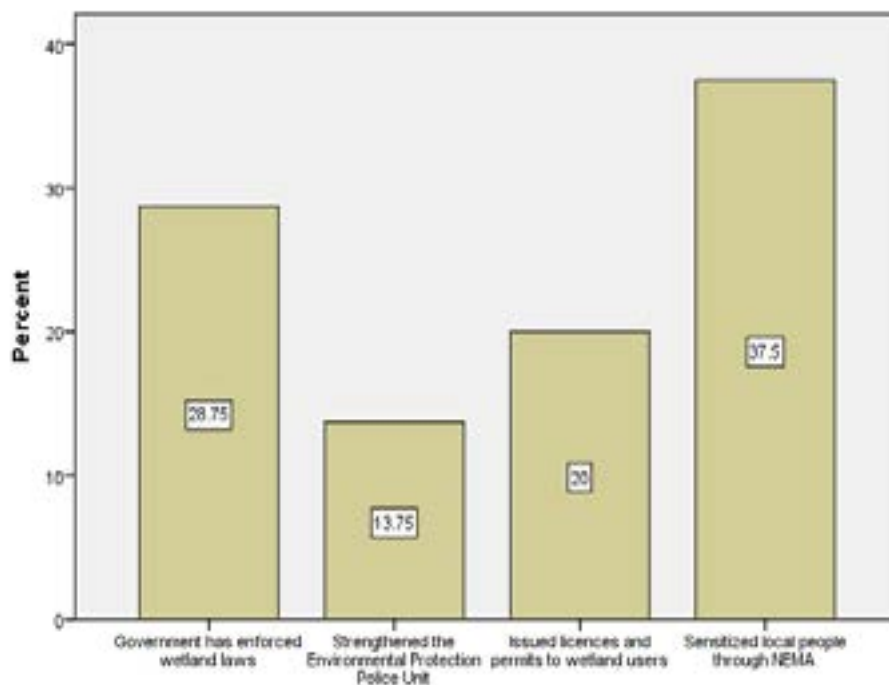


Figure 1: Strategies being implemented to reduce wetland degradation in Kajjansi peri-urban areas.

The study found out that, there are quite a number of strategies being fronted to reduce wetland mismanagement in Uganda and Kajjansi in particular. These have been explained in Figure 1 above, however, sensitization of the local people and enforcement of laws by the government departments and institutions seem to be the most outstanding avenues accounting for 37.5% and 28.75% respectively. Other strategies such as strengthening the environmental protection police unit and issuing licenses and permits to wetland users seem to be yielding little outcomes.

Table 11: Analysis of Categories of key Informants, N=11

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
OC Station Kajjansi	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
DPC Kajjansi	1	9.1	9.1	18.2
Operations officers of environmental protection police unit.	3	27.3	27.3	45.5
Police officer	1	9.1	9.1	54.5
Senior Wetlands Officer	1	9.1	9.1	63.6
SGT	1	9.1	9.1	72.7
AIP	1	9.1	9.1	81.8
Security Consultant	1	9.1	9.1	90.9
IC Environmental Police Kajjansi	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows the category of key informant respondents who participated in this study. Among the respondents included the officer in charge of Kajjansi police station, the District Police Commander (DPC) Kajjansi, three operations officers of the environmental protection police unit, one police officer, the senior wetlands officer, a police officer at the rank of a sergeant; SGT, the assistant inspector of police, one security consultant and the IC environmental police Kajjansi. The respondents were asked to inform this study about the status of Kajjansi peri-urban wetlands. They gave their responses as indicated in table 8 below.

Table 12: Analysis of Responses from Key informants on activities being carried out at Kajjansi Peri-urban wetlands, N= number of responses. N= 55

Variable	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Sand Mining	10	18.2%	90.9%
Clay Mining	8	14.5%	72.7%
Settlements (Building Houses)	11	20.0%	100.0%
Agriculture (Crops, animals and Horticulture)	9	16.4%	81.8%
Growing of eucalyptus trees	8	14.5%	72.7%
Brick Making	9	16.4%	81.8%
Total	55	100.0%	500.0%

Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Results in Table 8 show that a number of activities are being carried out at Kajjansi peri-urban wetlands. Key informants reported settlements (20%, n=11) and sand mining (18.2%, n=10) as

the most common in the area. Other activities are also common. These included clay mining (14.5%, n=8), growing of eucalyptus in the swamps (14.5%, n=8), agriculture involving crop growing, rearing of animals and horticulture (16.4%, n=9) are also evidenced. It can further be noted that brick making is also taking another twist of events within Kajjansi peri-urban area wetlands. Respondents (16.4%, n=9) reported that the activity is not regulated.

The results, therefore, are in agreement with the literature review according to Egwal (2017) and Namakambo (2000) who in their studies investigated that brick making is a threat to Uganda's wetlands and they noted that the activity affects the environment through clay extraction, dust from material handling and processing as well as gas emissions from fuel combustion.

The respondents reported that the major roles of the Environmental Protection Police Unit in the protection of wetlands in Kajjansi peri-urban area include the following among others, community policing, prosecution of wetland law offenders, investigations in wetland degradation and mismanagement cases, formation of wetland committees in liaison with Wetland Management Department at Ministry of Water and Environment, protection of civilian staff/inspectors in charge of wetland surveillance and protection. The police force has also organized seminars to educate residents on proper wetland use. They have also reported that fines have been slapped on trucks that pour marram in wetlands as well as enforcing wetland laws by arresting wetland encroachers.

Other key informants revealed that the Environmental Protection Police Unit has been able to carry out routine inspections in partnership with the National Environmental Management Authority who are responsible for averting degradation of wetlands by demanding that each developer undertakes a complete Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and gets approval papers and also enforcement of the legal regimes to protect the wetlands. The Environmental Police, under the department of NEMA has enforced orders for evicting people encroaching on wetlands as well as prevented many people from getting land titles within wetlands.

The study reveals that they have further done sensitization of people on all media about the dangers of encroaching on wetlands and as such, they have fostered the cancellation of many land titles through investigations into land matters affecting wetlands. The study further revealed that the major challenges faced by the environmental protection police unit in executing their mandate include political interference, existing gaps in environmental/ wetland laws, institutional challenges such as separation of powers or differentiation of roles between the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE). They also reported a lack of knowledge about the prosecution of environmental offenders by the resident attorneys and presiding magistrates.

One key informant revealed that lack of knowledge by the common man about wetland laws is still a major challenge for both the police officers and the wetland users. Lack of adequate funding is also still a challenge. In the pursuit of their duties, the study found out that there are quite several important strategies that can be proposed to alleviate wetland mismanagement. Harmonization of institutional roles and duties between NEMA, Ministry of Water and Environment and the Wetlands Inspectorate Division can yield good fruits in the management of wetlands in Uganda. Key informants suggested that there is a need to increase funding for environmental monitoring especially in wetland protection and the need to form special environmental courts ready to handle wetland degradation cases as well as increase the level of staffing of the Environmental Protection Police Unit and also ensure that all wetlands in Uganda are owned and managed by the government for easy protection.

Results from Test of the Hypothesis

On the grounds of the results presented in Tables 6 and Table 7 and 8, all the null hypotheses have been rejected and the alternative, which states that the Environmental Protection Police Unit significantly contributed to the reduction of wetland mismanagement in Kajjansi peri-urban areas has been accepted. The second alternative hypothesis which stated that the level of education of the wetland users significantly influenced the reduction of wetland degradation was also accepted.

Major Gaps

Although Uganda has several laws and policies geared towards conserving the environment, natural resources in particular water catchments continue to be encroached upon. The study found out that there is a lack of separation of powers between the environmental protection police unit, the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) when it comes to resolving wetland issues. According to the constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Chapter 15, Clause 245), the parliament shall by law provide for measures intended to (a) protect and preserve the environment from abuse, pollution and degradation, (b) manage the environment for sustainable development and (c) promote environmental awareness. The alarming rate at which wetland resources are being depleted shows that these laws and policies are not enforced effectively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Kajjansi peri-urban area wetlands have been affected negatively due to multiple use-values by the residents and development projects. The Environmental Protection Police Unit has played a major role to try to reduce wetland mismanaging, however, they face several challenges which need to be addressed. A number of these challenges have been highlighted in the previous chapter and the strategies to avert wetland mismanagement have also been reported. The key strategies to alleviate wetland degradation were identified as being the need to increase funding for wetland protection, increasing the level of staffing among the Uganda police force, the establishment of special environmental courts to handle wetland degradation cases among others. The Environmental Protection Police Unit however can only contribute a certain fraction to wetland protection while the remaining fraction depends on other factors. It was suggested that there is a need to harmonize institutional roles between NEMA and other environmental departments to bridge the gaps in existing wetland laws.

The study recommended the following;

- i. The government through NEMA should evict people from wetlands to encourage ecosystem restoration.
- ii. The Environmental Protection Police Unit also requires monitoring compliance of wetland users to the existing guiding laws and principles. They can also be assisted by having periodic inspections by National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and wetlands inspectors.
- iii. The Environmental Protection Police Unit should consider having a timely response to violations by developing a hierarchy of enforcement responses consistent with its socio-economic and cultural situation. This may involve taking administrative, civil,

criminal actions against violators of environmental laws; returning violators to compliance and imposing sanctions; withdrawing the economic benefit of non-compliance; correcting environmental damages, and correcting internal facility management problems.

- iv. The Environmental Police Unit should enforce monitoring compliance of wetland users to the existing guiding laws and principles by having periodic inspections by National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and wetlands inspectors.
- v. The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) should bring on board the police officers who have qualifications in environmental management to work with them as environmental police officers so that they can perform duties such as sampling of environmental conditions like air, water, and soil quality in the vicinity of facilities that are utilizing wetland resources.
- vi. The parliament of Uganda in conjunction with the Ministry of Water and Environment should establish environmental courts to handle matters specifically related to the environment.

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Social Benefits of Religious Camps Along Lagos-Ibadan ExpressWay, Nigeria

Oyetomi, Adesola Oyewunmi¹

Taiwo, Babawale Solomon² (PhD)

Abstract

Many religious institutions begin to proliferate and expand their tentacles as they grow. This expansion and need for a bigger space of worship led to the acquisition of an expanse of land in choice areas among which is the Lagos-Ibadan expressway corridor. Many religious institutions have their campgrounds along the axis, which is over 120 kilometres long. The effects of the activities of these campgrounds have made scholars criticise them and fault their mode of operations. Hence, the need to consider the social benefits of the religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, which is what this paper tries to survey. Max Weber's Social Action theory is adopted in the analysis of the study while employing a simple sampling method of survey. The findings of the survey show that religious camps are socially beneficial in enhancing social relations and interaction, improving the standard of living, and improving the availability of social amenities. The paper recommends that religious camps should employ means that will not put worshippers at health risks in their camps.

Keywords: religious institutions, social benefits, religious camps, expressway.

1 Oyetomi, Adesola Oyewunmi is a postgraduate student of the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. He is presently a part time Tutor with the School of Foundation Studies, University of Lagos. **Tel:** +2347069718553 | **Email:** oyetomi_adesola99@yahoo.com

2 Taiwo, Babawale Solomon is a senior lecturer with the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, Lagos. **Tel:** +2347039394265 | **Email:** taiwobabawale@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a wild turnout of religious institutions along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway corridor. Contemporary Nigerian Christianity and Islam have seen a drastic change in recent times within their spheres. As rightly pointed out by Mepaiyeda (2011), Falako (2017), and Lawanson, Yadua & Salako (2012), what is in vogue in recent times among the religious institutions is the acquisition of landmass in choice areas along the expressway. This behaviour or action is not limited to just the Lagos-Ibadan expressway only, as the same is being noticed across other parts of the country, especially in the Southwest region.

The over 120-kilometre long Lagos-Ibadan expressway that connects Lagos, the heart of Nigeria's economy with Ibadan – the third-largest metropolitan area in the country – is considered the most important and busiest road in Nigeria. It was opened in August 1979 at the peak of the oil boom; the road became one of the most accident-prone highways in Nigeria with the popular label 'Highway of Death' (Janson 2013).

Since the late 1980s, numerous Christian and Muslim movements have cropped up along the expressway. With this, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway has become famous as a stage for the performance of public religiosity (especially between kilometre 12 and kilometre 60) to the extent that one can describe it as a *Spiritual Highway*. The occupation of the expressway by various religious institutions has made them the major flashpoints for seasonal traffic congestion (Lawanson et al, 2012).

Historically, camp and religious camping in Nigeria started in the 1930s with a group of zealous Christians, which later became the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) (Ajani, 2013). The focus was to give room for retreat and spiritual protection in the wake of the scourge of that period; particularly, when the mission Churches appeared to be incapable of providing answers to the menace in the perception of the public. The idea of religious camp meetings began to gain popularity by the mid-1970s and early 1980s as the camp meetings were also becoming part of reactions of Christian groups to the twist in the nation's economy.

By the mid-1990s, religious camp meetings have become very popular especially among the

Pentecostals, with Deeper Christian Life Ministry being one of the earliest to host such periodic camping programmes which started as a retreat in December 1975 (Gaiya 2002). The idea of religious camp programmes took a new dimension by the late 1990s when religious institutions began to acquire an expanse of land in a choice area in the outskirts of Lagos, particularly on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, with the Redeemed Christian Church of God leading such move in 1982.

As noted earlier, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is unarguably the busiest Federal highway in Nigeria today because it is the only highway that links the other states of Nigeria to Lagos – the commercial capital. The expressway which covers a total of 127.6 kilometres (79.3 miles) spans through three states in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo. Due to the influx of religious organisations to the corridor, the road has often been regarded as the “Heavens Gateway”. It is the religions’ highway or faith haven (Oshitelu 2001). Religious camps that occupy the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway corridor from the old Ibadan toll gate to the Ojodu-Berger end of the road in Lagos include:

1. SAT Guru Maharaji Village, Ibadan;
2. Foursquare Gospel Church Camp, Ajebo;
3. Gilgal Interdenominational Prayer Camp, Ajebo;
4. The Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT);
5. Celestial Church of Christ Golden City;
6. The Church of the Lord (Aladura), Ogere-Remo;
7. The Methodist Youth Village;
8. Nigeria Baptist Convention Camp Ground;
9. Upper Room Baptist Church, Camp Ground;
10. Gideon’s Village;
11. New Testament Assembly Success Camp, Mowe;
12. The Youth Camp of the Assemblies of God Church, Loburo;
13. Christian Pentecostal Ministry (CPM) Camp City;
14. The Prayer City of Christ Apostolic Church;
15. The Redeemed Christian Church of God Redemption Camp;
16. Deeper Christian Life Ministries Conference Centre and Camp Ground;
17. Believers Love World (Christ Embassy) Camp, Aseese;
18. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) Prayer City, Ibafo;
19. Cherubim and Seraphim Church (Unification) Camp;

20. Nasrullahi Fatihi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) Praying Ground.

The activities of these religious institutions around and within these areas and their consequent experience warranted the need to consider their social benefit to the life of the people. It is against this background that this paper is written to amplify beyond what is available. For the purpose of this paper, attention will be given to the Redemption Camp of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Prayer City of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) and Conference Centre and Camp Ground of Deeper Christian Life Ministries.

2. Literature Review

Many scholarly works have been brought forward over time in relation to the religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway. Most have argued from the perspective of environmental pollution and degradation. According to Mepaiyeda (2011), religious camps on the highway constitute an environmental nuisance. He stated that religious institutions create noise pollution through the use of loudspeakers during their various spiritual programmes. The observance of vigils and open-air crusades are sources of noise pollution. Noise pollution has the consequences of deafness, low level of efficiency, physiological changes and deterioration in health status. People are increasingly going through a gradual process of deafness as their eardrums are being bombarded with a barrage of noise from loudspeakers from churches and mosques. He posited that due to a noisy environment generated by religious institutions, people stand the risk of partial or permanent deafness with a rise in blood pressure, increase in heartbeat rate, and the presence of fatigue which hampers efficiency at work (Mepaiyeda, 2011).

Falako (2017) argued that the occupation of farmlands and thick forests by religious institutions leads to environmental degradation and poses an ecological threat. Thick forests paving way for religious enclaves are on a continuous increase and endanger the ecosystem which contributes to climate change and global warming. Such occupation endangers the survival of plants and animals. Supporting Falako's argument, Adebayo (2013) submits that the proliferation of worship centres (churches and mosques) contribute to the exploitation of the natural environment, especially in terms of deforestation to meet their objectives. He maintained that the felling of

trees, which help in sustaining a balance in global temperature and climate by absorbing carbon dioxide, gases and releasing oxygen for human consumption and serve as wind speed breakers, by various religious institutions have climatic implications.³ Environmental hazards that are detrimental to the ecological setup are also caused by religious festivals where filths from human wastes are created.

In the view of Abolade, Falaye & Anibijuwon (2014), religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway are waste generators and environmental pollutants. The scholars observed that there is a high level of solid waste generation in the religious camps with inadequate means of collection and disposal which constitutes a serious health hazard to the residents, worshippers and passersby. Food, paper, wood, metals, tin/can, glass, nylon and fabric/clothing were the solid wastes identified as being generated by religious camps. Food wastes constitute the highest percentage of solid waste generated by religious camps while metal waste is the least generated. Many attendants of these camps depend on food vendors for their daily consumption, they observed. Waste bins or wastebaskets are mostly used to store and collect waste while burning and open space dumping are mostly used in waste disposal. The scholars assert that the processes of burning waste in the open air often “release obnoxious smells, the residue of leachate, encroachment and disruption of biotic components like flora and fauna” have serious implications on the environment and sustainability of the ecosystem (Abolade et al 2014). Wastes generation, storage and disposal in the religious camps bring about water, air and land pollution.

The perspectives aforementioned only depict the possible bias of the scholars discussed. Nevertheless, the identification of these problems is also a pointer to the fact that there lie some benefits in the presence and activities of these religious camps which is the crux of this paper.

3. Materials and Methods

The study is a holistic overview of the subject matter where many methods were employed. The methods employed include Structured and unstructured interview methods to elicit information from our respondents. A total of four respondents were interviewed, where two were specifically selected due to their position and two were randomly selected. Another method used was the

³ R.I. Adebayo, 2013. “Abuse of Religion and Environmental Pollution in Nigeria: An Islamic perspective.” *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 112-114.

observation method and in specific terms the participant observation method. The researchers visited the campsites to participate in their programmes. The observations made in relation to the study are expressed in the discussion of findings. A simple sampling method of survey was employed. All these methods helped in no small way to gather enough information on the study. They also served as the primary sources of data collection, while books, publications, articles in learned and recognised journals and other relevant literary materials were used as secondary sources of information. While information/data gathered through these media were carefully and consciously analyzed and interpreted, suggestions, as well as recommendations, were made. The paper employs Max Weber's Social Action theory in its theoretical analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Social Benefits of Religious Camps Along Lagos/Ibadan Expressway

Religious institutions being social institutions are not without benefits to the society, especially to their host community. Among these social benefits are:

1. *Enhancement of Social Relation and Interaction*

Social relation and interaction are very important and fundamental features of the social life of any group of people in any given society. The convergence of different peoples from different tribal, ethnic and national affiliations for a singular or collective, purpose and experience, in a particular location for some time is a textbook definition of social relation and interaction (Azeez 2019). People from all walks of life and different social classes gather together in the name of God to have religious experiences at these religious camp meetings. Among the people in attendance at these camp meetings are professionals in various fields/disciplines; bureaucrats, technocrats, politicians, artisans, businessmen and women, traders, clergies, and even the jobless/unemployed.

The religious camps play a level playing ground for all classes of people, especially during camping programmes. Olumuyiwa (2019) affirms that "the 'class' created among worshippers in their various environments is relegated to the barest minimum as everyone is treated the same way, and undergo the same experience on the camp". According to him, "the camp is a leveller

for everyone here. All my church members including the children relate with one another like mates on this camp. We all eat the same food and bath at the same place. No special preparation for anybody”. He is of the view that camp meetings create an avenue for people to express themselves and interact freely with other people without fear or favour. Religious camps give room for people who are strangers to one another to interact based on the opportunity afforded them by the various activities put in place during these camp meetings. Camp programmes afford people to meet and make new friends with whom they share ideas and areas of common interest.

Social interaction is engendered through specific religious rituals at these camps. Many religious activities such as dancing to praises, singing hymns, during the period of worship and prayers are avenues for social interaction. For instance, it was observed at Prayer City and Redemption Camp that the congregation were asked to hold their neighbours during a prayer session and pray for them the way they would love to be prayed for.

The implication of this is that the love for one’s neighbour is reinforced. One would be compelled as a result of the perceived reciprocating effect(s) of the prayers that are being said, to show compassion and affection towards one’s ‘neighbour’ while the programme lasts. In addition, other factors such as shared responsibilities that are associated with camps make way for social contact, relation and interaction. It was observed at the Redemption Camp that people from different provinces were put together to serve in the sanitation unit. Some members of the unit have customized shirts with appellations such as “Edo 5”, “Lagos Province 29”, and “Region 1” amongst others. The names on their customized shirts show their different cultural backgrounds from different states. In the course of discharging their duties, they interact and make social contacts that last beyond the camp meeting.

Social relations breed good interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships in religious camps are possible because the camps are a community of religious worshippers and pilgrims from different geographical and cultural backgrounds. Interaction is inevitable as worshippers and pilgrims would ask questions about locations, engage in business/financial transactions with service providers and vendors, ply routes together, share vehicles, share or struggle for

seats in the prayer auditorium amongst other things. Interpersonal relationships can go a long way in shaping the character and remoulding the social life of an individual (Oyetomi 2019). In another instance, people who are travelling from different locations to these camps meet at bus parks, exchange pleasantries and board the same vehicle heading to the same destination. Nwite (2019) a Redemption Camp pilgrim affirms her social contact and relation when she said, “I made a new friend inside the bus from Lagos. It all started when our bus got spoilt on the road.” As a result of travelling to the Redemption Camp, they all enjoy or endure the experiences of the road while they journeyed.

2. Improvement of Social Amenities and Infrastructure

By social amenities, we mean those facilities or infrastructures that are put in place for communal use and to serve as converging spots for local and surrounding communities. According to Green (2001), they are things that make life enjoyable in a given environment by “providing benefits or utility to people through the direct consumption of specific aspects of lands, natural resources and human activity.” Social amenities, otherwise called basic amenities include safe and potable water, electricity, good road networks, recreational centres, health centres, etc. The availability and accessibility of social amenities drive local economies. The presence of religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan has brought about the provision and use of social infrastructures to the communities on that axis, and the government’s attention has been drawn to those areas. For instance, Loburo, a community directly opposite the Redemption Camp was once a hamlet in the bush (not close to the road) but has today become a town with a paramount king of a kingdom, Igbein Land. This is due to the developmental strides taken by the RCCG in the development of her own camp. According to Oluwaleke (2019) who led a team to Ofada, “there was no electricity in Mowe and its environs until May 1988 when RCCG made a move to connect electricity to the Redemption Camp by connecting from Ofada where the national grid of electricity stops”. According to him, “the electricity lines were moved through the villages of Ofada, Daluwon, Arugbawo, by-passing Loburo and crossing the express road to the camp”. The electricity lines afforded these communities to tap from and supply for their uses. It was observed that some of the religious camps, especially Redemption Camp and Prayer City

contributed to lighting the streets of some communities (Oyetomi 2019). For instance, it was observed that a side of the express road covering from Lotto community to the main gate of the Redemption Camp were equipped with floodlights to light up the road.

Also, no access roads were linking the villages and towns in the hinterland of Ogun State with the Redemption Camp. Religious worshippers and pilgrims coming from villages and towns such as Ilaro, Owode-Egba, Ibese, Magbon, Ifo to the camp would have to go through Abeokuta to link the expressway through the Shagamu-Interchange of the road. The camp authorities “constructed a motor-able road, which is now called ‘Lokiti Road’ through Loburo-Mowe-Ofa-da for easy access to the camp for our members coming from those towns and villages” (Oluwaleke 2019). Before the construction of the road, there was only a footpath route cleared/created by the RCCG team that was to bring electricity to the camp.

The construction of the road opened up the towns along the road for government attention and intervention which were adequately supplied with primary health centres. Also, RCCG in 2010 constructed an alternative road from the Redemption Camp to Lagos through Ogijo-Ikorodu to serve those coming from and going to Lagos, and reduce the traffic congestion on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway (Osamolu & Atuluku 2016). The provision of social amenities brings about development and helps to maintain the local economy. Local farmers were able to access markets quicker through the use of these roads. Traders alike were able to have easy access to these communities to ply their trades.

In addition, the presence of religious camps has also contributed to the provision of health care delivery in those communities. Primary health care service delivery is one of the basic social amenities that are required to enjoy the beautiful things that nature has to offer. These communities before the coming of the camps were without health centres. The presence of the religious camps along the expressway “made way for a public primary health centre in one of the communities” (Oluwaleke 2019).

Religious camps like the Redemption Camp that have health centres or hospitals in them are also open for public use. Odojin (2019) attested to the fact that the Redemption Camp Health Centre’s healthcare delivery is quicker, more accessible, qualitative and affordable to the public

than the government-run and other privately owned facilities. The facility is state-of-the-art since it was equipped with an ICU in 2019 (Oyetomi 2019). Odojin (2019) declares the health care delivery is “almost free, as their charges are as low as seven hundred Naira (₦700.00), compared with state-owned health centre where I pay three thousand Naira (₦3,000.00) and above to treat malaria”. In other words, it means that many people in the neighbouring communities prefer to go to the health centres within the camp than to go to government facilities or other privately owned facilities.

3. Provision of Security of Lives and Properties

As a result of the presence of religious camps along the expressway, there is a security of life and property. The highway is one that was known for highway robbery and kidnapping, as the sites of these camps were formerly forest hideouts for criminals to perpetrate and perpetuate their evil enterprises. Travellers and commuters going to or coming from Lagos using the expressway are usually at risk of being robbed, kidnapped or killed by the highway robbers. In Oluwaleke’s words, “motorist usually pray their vehicles don’t develop any fault along the road, as they are at risk of being robbed and never getting help”. Due to the presence and continuous development of the religious camps, safety and security of lives and properties have increased along the expressway, owing to the fact that there are no longer bushes and forests to serve as hideouts for these criminals. Their hideouts have been turned to religious centres. The religious institutions with these camps also contribute to the security set up within the communities to help secure lives and property, maintain peace and social order. Odojin (2019) mentioned that “RCCG, MFM, Deeper Life and others make huge contributions in terms of funding, intelligence and logistics to keep and maintain security within the communities”. For instance, “MFM in our community gave a contribution of four hundred thousand Naira (₦400,000) when the community needed a new transformer” (Odojin 2019). These contributions to security measures in the communities are different from the ones put in place within the premises of the camps.

4. Improvement of Standard of Living

Another social benefit of the religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway is the im-

provement of the standard of living of the communities. These communities were villages and hamlets that have turned to towns due to the presence of the religious camps. Standard of living here refers to the level of wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class or a particular geographical area. In other words, it is the material wellbeing of the average in a given population, which is typically measured using the GDP per capita as it entails factors like income, life expectancy and economic opportunity (Investopedia 2019). Based on the employment opportunities, entrepreneurship drive, trade and investments that the religious camps through the population they attract, have brought to the communities on the axis of the expressway, the standard of living has improved. A determinant of standard of living data is the Human Development Index (HDI), which uses many factors from life expectancy and education to homicide rate. The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2020 puts Nigeria's HDI value for 2019 at 0.539 – which put the country in the low human development category – placing it at 161 out of 189 countries and territories. The report reveals that, between 2005 and 2019, Nigeria's HDI value increased from 0.465 to 0.539, an increase of 15.9 percent. Also, there is an increase in life expectancy at birth by 8.8 years between 1990 and 2019, with mean years of schooling increased by 1.4 years and expected years of schooling increased by 3.3 years. Nigeria's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by about 58.0 percent between 1990 and 2019. Table 1 below shows the reviews of Nigeria's progress in each of the HDI indicators. How does this relate to religious camps and the communities? By way of providing access to health facilities, schools and financial facilities, the standard of living of the people is improved and their social life is made better.

Table 1.

	Life expect- tancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2017 PPPS)	HDI value
1990	45.9	6.7		3,109	
1995	45.9	7.2		2,776	
2000	46.3	8.0		2,739	
2005	48.3	9.0	5.2	3,675	0.465
2010	50.9	8.4	5.2	4,636	0.482
2015	53.1	9.7	6.2	5,356	0.526
2016	53.5	9.5	6.3	5,160	0.526
2017	54.0	9.7	6.4	5,032	0.531
2018	54.3	9.7	6.5	4,929	0.534
2019	54.7	10.0	6.7	4,910	0.539

The table shows Nigeria's HDI trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts by the United Nations Development Programme.

Many of the dwellers of these communities before the emergence of the camps were “peasant farmers, traditionalists, and old retirees” (Oluwaleke, 2019). This set of people has a low standard of living going by the level of their social and economic productivity. However, thirty-six years down the line, there are civil servants, doctors, businessmen and women, teachers, artisans, civil, “electrical and mechanical engineers, and a paramount king living and/or working in these communities” (Odofin 2019).

The presence of the camps allowed non-indigenes with affiliation to the camps to come into the communities to buy land and build houses and business corporations that serve the needs of pilgrims and even the communities. Oluwaleke (2019) added that the camps have allowed sales of plots of land of the community have added value. According to him, “in the 80s and early 90s, a plot of land in Mowe, Ibafo, Ofada and other areas was sold for less than a thousand naira (₦1,000.00), but the same plot of land in the areas today will not sell less than one and a half million naira (₦1,500,000.00)”. This claim is supported by Lawanson, Yadua & Salako (2012:477) who reported that the land value in the axis has increased by 55.7%. This is as a result of the influence the camps have had on the communities with the population they have attracted. Therefore, landowners (*omo onile*) and sellers and their families live large on the largess provided them.

It must be said as well that, the improved standard of living in these communities also translates into an increased cost of living. As hinted earlier, goods and services that should be sold or offered for lesser prices are given out for an inflated price. Prices of goods are usually sold at doubled prices in these camps and their neighbouring towns and villages during camp activities. Odojin (2019) claimed that “the house and shop rents around these communities have increased immensely in cost”. This is a result of the increasing population that the religious camps attract to their communities. Even though some of these communities have farm settlements, it was observed that the prices of local food items such as vegetables are not different from that of Lagos metropolis.

5. *Improved Level of Literacy and Education*

Education is a very important factor when involved in discussions of social life. Education is an essential tool for the social and economic development of any given society. Stating the importance of education, Bhat (2005) says it is an “asset which makes an individual able to compare the positive and negative things in life.” It is by means of acquiring an education that one can shape one’s social life and society in a better way. With quality education, better decisions can be made and good steps can be taken towards the development of a society. Education makes people understand themselves better and discover their qualities as human beings that exist within a socio-physical circle (Bhat 2005). The presence of religious camps in the axis of the Lagos-Ibadan expressway has brought about tremendous improvement in the level of literacy and education of the surrounding communities. Residents of these camps need to put their children in schools that can supply access to quality education.

This foreseen need make way for private schools to be opened for operation. The different people of different social classes that the camps attract give room for different classes of schools to operate and cater for the differing needs. Oluwaleke (2019) and Odojin (2019) in separate interviews both attested that the presence of religious camps helped communities such as Mowe, Loburo and Ofada get additional public schools. “These communities in the 1980s and early 1990s only had one local public primary school each” (Oluwaleke 2019). But many years after, “these communities all have secondary schools each with modern infrastructures and qualified

teachers” due to the openness of these communities (Odofin 2019). Different secondary schools (including the ones with boarding facilities) and tertiary institutions have opened up along the express road as a result of the activities of the religious camps. Some of these schools also use affiliation or nearness to the camps to promote their schools. The schools (both public and private) that have been established to cater for the growing population of residents and visitors of these camps go a long way in helping to shape and direct the social transformation of these communities. They play an important role in the social reformation process and eradicating anti-social elements (Abdulghani 2014).

The opening of these educational institutions in these areas has increased the access to education of the people. It has also improved the level of literacy in these areas drastically. A pointer to this fact is that it was observed that most of the traditional chiefs and rulers of these areas are university or polytechnic graduates who can speak fluently in English, and have a good understanding of western education and civilization. Odofin Tunde who was one of our respondents is a good example of this fact. Abdulghani (2014) affirms that having institutions that provide education in an area “assist people to think, feel and behave in a way that contributes to their accomplishments, and improves not only their personal satisfaction but also their communities”. Lawanson, Yadua & Salako (2012) put the increase in literacy level of these communities at a high of 26.0% going by the United Nations standards, having completed a minimum of secondary education. The easy access to education in the communities hosting or surrounding these religious camps along the expressway has aided the speedy growth and development of these communities. In an economy and dispensation that is driven by knowledge, access to quality education and the chances for growth and development are flip sides of a coin.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Religious institutions do not only perform a spiritual function; they have also in many ways benefited human beings such as in the areas of health, politics, sports, social life and as well as economy. Religion’s interaction with other institutions of society brings us to the connection between it and social life. Religion seems inseparable from man who is a social animal. To a very large extent, religion defines the way of life a person, especially Africans who are said to

be “notoriously religious”. Religious activities are social in nature, both in terms of personal (private) or corporate (public) practices. That is, the observance of religious tenets, practises, activities or liturgy has social undertones or factors. From the foregoing, it is obvious that religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway have social significance. However, it is not to say that these benefits do not come with some disadvantages. Some of these disadvantages include; risk of the spread of viral diseases and infections as a result of over-crowdedness, cough and catarrh due to dusty roads within the camps, traffic congestion, hike in cost of living and accommodation, stress and larceny. These negative implications can undermine the significance and activities of the religious camps.

Therefore, we recommend that the religious camps should put in measures that will not expose worshippers and pilgrims to health hazards. Hence, religious camps should tar the roads within their camps; provide safe and potable water and toilet facilities to reduce the exposure of worshippers and pilgrims to health risks. Finally, programmes held at these religious camps should be decentralised for the convenience of worshippers. This will help to reduce the stress of the worshippers and also reduce traffic congestion on the expressway which has been one of the major challenges of the road users.

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