

RELIGIOUS USE OF LOUDSPEAKERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES IN JOS METROPOLIS: A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

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Abstract

The study delves into the persistent phenomenon of religious use of loudspeakers in both public and private spaces within Jos metropolis. The study aims to critically examine the multifaceted impact of the use of loudspeakers by Christians and Muslims on the community, questioning whether the widespread use of loudspeakers is perceived as a blessing or a curse. It explores the implications of the amplified religious activities in public spaces. The researchers employed the use of qualitative research approach in which oral interviews and observation methods of data collection were used. The study found out that the use of loudspeakers by Christians and Muslims is perceived as both a blessing and a curse, depending on how one views it. Those who view the religious use of loudspeakers as a blessing argued from the perspective of its usefulness or positive impacts. The positive impacts include: the usefulness of loudspeakers in propagating religious messages that are against social vices in the society, the usefulness of loudspeakers during Muslims' call to prayer (*adzan*), during religious worship or public assemblies or gatherings to reach large audience and how proper use of loudspeakers foster good and cordial relationship. On the contrary, those who view the religious use of loudspeakers as a curse argued from the perspective of noise pollution, especially when used at high volume. The negative impacts of the misuse of loudspeakers by Christians and Muslims include: sleep disturbance, loss of concentration, annoyance/inconvenience, and potentiality of fueling religious crisis. The study recommends that there should be proper education on the religious use of loudspeaker at moderate level or volume in such a way that it would not affect people's peace and comfort.

Keywords: Religious use of Loudspeakers, blessing or curse, public and private spaces.

Introduction

Jos, the capital of Plateau State is prone to religious activities due to the multi-religious and diversified nature of the city. These activities mostly take the form of congregational worships in Churches, Mosques and other non-conventional locations such as motor-parks and residential buildings in the daytime and sometimes throughout the night. The aim of these religious activities is to bring people closer to God, their Maker. The dominant religions in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. These two religions dominated the religious landscape as most Nigerians converted and become adamant in their practice. There is intense competition between Christians and Muslims over the use of space as both fix loudspeakers on religious buildings with loud sound that advocate religious activities. This can also be seen from the point of view of competition for dominance between the two groups, an ideology that projects that dominating the atmosphere shows how powerful a religion is within the religious landscape of Nigeria. In carrying out religious activities in public and private spaces, the religious adherents make use of loudspeakers to reach out to both those who are near and far away from the religious centres. This paper highlighted both the blessings (positive impacts) and the curse (negative impacts) from the religious use of loudspeakers in public and private spaces within Jos City.

This exploration of the religious use of loudspeakers finds its significance within the broader landscape of existing literature on the intersection of religion, technology, and societal impact. As societies become increasingly technologically interconnected, the amplification of religious practices through loudspeakers has emerged as a focal point of scholarly inquiry. Existing literature has delved into different dimensions of implications of this phenomenon, considering its effects on religious experience, community dynamics, and the broader social fabric. While some works emphasize the positive aspects of loudspeakers as tools for fostering the spread of religious messages and outreach, others critically examine the potential disruptions and conflicts arising from the amplified dissemination of religious messages. This study contributes to this discourse by providing analysis that navigates the balance between the blessings and potential curses associated with the religious use of loudspeakers, offering insights that contribute to our understanding of the evolving relationship between technology, religion, and society.

Overview of the Use of Loudspeakers

The loudspeaker is an electronic instrument or device used for the amplification of voice; however, it is considered a source of noise pollution, especially when its volume is too high above the normal acceptable limits. In that sense, loudspeaker is defined in this paper as a mechanical or electronic device used in Churches and Mosques to amplify voices to extend religious messages beyond the space that could be called 'religious space'.

The use of loudspeakers in worship by Christians and Muslims has a rich and multifaceted history that spans several decades and involves technological advancements, cultural influences, and religious practices. While it is challenging to pinpoint a single origin for the use of loudspeakers in worship, the development of this practice as in both Christian and Muslim communities can be traced back to the early 20th century (Encyclopedia, Science News ... 1-2).

Brian Larkin commented on the use of loudspeakers by Christians and Muslims in Jos that the kind of sounds mosques and churches emit are diverse, coming from different origins and for varying reasons. "The key issue, for Christians, is the commitment to witnessing and evangelizing, rooting sound in a specific religious purpose. For Muslims, sound is used as part of *da'wa*" (Larkin 1005). He explained further that depending on where one lives in Jos, one hears sounds emitting from several mosques and Churches during worship services, revival meetings, all night prayer vigils, and religious processions all make extensive use of loudspeakers, often at times when the rest of the city is still. He concludes that the religious use of loudspeakers is thus ubiquitous in Nigeria and it is only one way these tools are used in a country where musicians, shopkeepers, civic meetings, and politicians continually use loudspeakers. The consequence of this for ordinary Nigerians is that urban streets are technologized and everyday life emerges in relation to the machine of the loudspeaker (1006).

Regarding the use of loudspeakers in Christian worship, the Encyclopedia, Science News and Research Reviews has it that initially churches relied on natural acoustics and the vocal projection of clergy to reach large congregations. However, as congregations grew and church buildings became larger, there was a need for amplification. The use of loudspeakers in Christian worship has become ubiquitous in modern times. Churches of all sizes and denominations employ sophisticated audio-visual setups to cater to the diverse preferences of their congregations. Concert-style worship experiences, with amplified music and dynamic preaching, are common in many Christian communities (2-3).

Loudspeakers or public addresses systems are designed to help the congregations hear the spoken word, sermons, readings and testimonies (Butler 2).

Concerning the use of loudspeakers in Islamic worship, it was also stated that loudspeakers were introduced into mosques in the 1930s, and used by the Muaddin for adhan (“call to prayer”) and sometimes for khutba (sermons). As with Christianity, technological advancements played a significant role in the use of loudspeakers in Islamic worship. Initially, this technology was incorporated to amplify the Adzan (Islamic call to prayer), making it audible to a larger audience. This practice is rooted deeply in the desire to ensure that the call to prayer reaches as many people as possible (Encyclopedia, Science News ... 3).

To sum it up, the adoption of loudspeakers in Christian and Muslim worship has been a gradual process influenced by technological innovations, changes in religious practices, and the desire to reach larger audiences. The use of amplified sound has become an integral part of the worship experience in both traditions, contributing to the communal and spiritual aspects of congregational gatherings.

The Blessing of the Religious use of Loudspeakers in Public and Private Spaces

The result of this research is an extensive overview of the views of the informants in Jos, which represent the discourse on loudspeakers in the streets of Jos, the capital of Plateau State especially among the adherents of the two dominant religious traditions in Nigeria, i.e. Christianity and Islam. Below are some of the arguments or reasons why the religious use of loudspeakers is considered a blessing:

The Usefulness of Loudspeakers in Propagating Religious Messages

Loudspeakers play a significant role in propagating religious messages by enhancing the reach and impact of the messages in various ways. The primary purpose of loudspeakers in religious setting is to ensure that religious messages, sermons, prayers, and hymns are heard by everyone present in the assembly. In large places of worship such as cathedrals, Mosques and temples, it can be challenging for people at the back rows to hear without amplification. Loudspeakers help overcome this issue, ensuring that the message reaches all attendees, regardless of their seating location. Christians and Muslims argue for the use of loudspeakers in the public, private or religious spaces as a medium of spreading religious messages to the general populace so as to bring about

repentance in the lives of the hearers. The spreading of these religious messages could be done by preachers/scholars of the two religions to the people directly during physical gatherings or through the use of cassette sermons, in which loudspeakers are used to reach both those near and far. Many times, within Jos City, cassette sermons are played through the use of loudspeakers that are attached to vehicles/cars that move within the town. Through this means, religious preachers convey their messages to the populace easily (Interview).



Loudspeakers Mounted on Vehicle for Evangelism

Source: Researchers, 10/3/2022.

Concerning cassette sermons in Islam, Hirschkind explained that Islamic cassette sermons are commonly associated with the underworld of militants and radical preachers, especially in the Egyptian Muslim society. Talking about its significance, he explained that insomuch as the cassette sermon conjoins an ethical exercise with political debate and popular entertainment, it is an exemplary form of modern mass communication and social discipline (10).

Hirschkind further explained the importance of cassette sermons that sermon tapes have provided one of the means by which Islamic ethical traditions

have been recalibrated to a new political and technological order, to the rhythms, noise, its forms of pleasure and boredom, but also to its political incitements, its call to citizenly participation. “Those tapes now play a key mediatory role within an expanding area of popular Islamic organization and deliberation among ordinary Egyptian Muslims”, what he described as an *Islamic Counterpublic* (11).

Loudspeakers are useful during *da'wah* preaching. Egdunas explained that the word *da'wah* covers lots of meanings ranging from addressing, calling, appealing, requesting or demanding to worship; and that the practice of dawah as a religious invitation in the Qur'an is directed primarily to non-Muslims (34-36). On whether all Muslims engage in dawah or not, he mentioned that some Muslims actively study and engage in *da'wah* as an ongoing practice, while others choose not to speak openly about their faith unless asked. He adds that the practice of *da'wah* varies considerably from region to region and from group to group; most modern movements regard *da'wah* as a universal invitation within the faith, rather than a practice aimed at conversion of non-Muslims (36).

In the same manner, during Christian open-air preaching, loudspeakers are often used for wider coverage so that both those closer to the place and those far away can hear the voice of the preacher; hence the importance of the loudspeaker for such cannot be overemphasised. Christian open-air preaching is the oral presentation of biblically-informed conviction, with the purpose of effecting or implementing some sort of change in the lives of people in the society; and it is sometimes referred to as “field” or “street” preaching because of its specific historical context or physical location (Blythe 8).



Pictures of Street / Open-Air Preaching

Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/search/church-speakers>

Open-air preaching is therefore the act of evangelising a religious faith in public places. The essence of open-air preaching in Christianity is to evangelise people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In discussing the rationale for open-air preaching, Ogunewu stated that evangelisation is a key factor in Christianity because Christ desires that His Church will continually expand or grow both quantitatively and qualitatively through His disciples or followers (3). Those who are in support of open-air preaching in Christianity are of the view that it is the most used method for biblical evangelism; and that Jesus was an open-air preacher (sermon on the mount) and likewise, John the Baptist (who preached in the wilderness) as well as Paul (Duncan 1).

The Usefulness of Loudspeakers during Muslims' Call to Prayer (Adzan)

Some Muslims argued for the use of loudspeakers saying that it is very important during the *adzan* so as to ensure that the *adzan* reaches far and wide, possibly for Muslims to hear, and prepare for prayers, which is one of the pillars of Islam. Some Islamic scholars, during the interview, were however of the view that it is not mandatory to use loudspeakers to call for prayer if one is not expecting worshippers from far away. That is, if the worshippers are close-by, then there is no need for the use of loudspeakers for *adzan* (call to prayer). Dagan,

Lifshitz and Stern explained that *adzan* is the call outside the Mosque, and it is associated with the *igama*, the beginning of the prayer inside the Mosque and that the *adzan* is considered a demarcation between the sacred and the profane, and it serves to unify the community (389).

Gottheil commented on the importance of *adzan* or pronouncement of the call to prayer in the ear of a newly born child based on a Muslim custom associated with the birth of a child thus:

When a child is born in a Muslim family, after the midwife has completed her task, the adzan or call to prayer is pronounced in the child's right ear and the iqama or the establishment of prayer is pronounced in the child's left one, so that the first thing the child hears is the attestation of faith and the call to worship its Creator (152).

Gottheil acknowledged that although this may not always be the case, the tradition has evolved so that a Muslim man calls from a tower of a Mosque known as a minaret (153). He also stated that historians contented that the *adzan* was inspired by other religious traditions; meaning, that the *adzan* itself was copied from the Christians and the Jews. "Ibn Hisham tells us that when the first Moslems came to Medinah, they prayed without any preliminary *adzan*. But the Moslems heard the Jews use a horn, and the Christians, the *Nakus* or clapper and they wanted something similar for their own use" (Gottheil 154).

On how amplification of voice and the subsequent use of loudspeaker in the Mosque started, Dagan, Lifshitz and Stern concluded that in the past, *adzan* was accompanied by the human voice alone, but in the mid-twentieth century, amplification was used, most likely so as to reach a wider range of followers; after, loudspeakers began to be employed in the early 1950s (389). They also admitted that the debate over this custom (the use of loudspeakers) became even more heated from 1950s; and that when individuals lived in residential communities mainly with those who belonged to their own faith, this was less likely to be a problem. As people migrated to live in pluralistic societies, however, the sound of the *adzan* has sometimes been startling to others because of its frequency and volume (Dagan, Lifshitz and Stern 390).

As a consequence, during the field work, other interviewees were of the view that loudspeakers can be used for *adzan* but at limited or low volume so as not to affect other people negatively. As an example, Iman Ommar Farouk of

Nasco Mosque (Anglo-Jos) during the interview on 28th March, 2022, explained how loudspeakers in his Mosque were used for both *adzan* and during worship. He emphasised the use of loudspeaker at lower volume and not high volume which disturbs peoples' peace and comfort(Interview).

The Usefulness of Loudspeakers during Religious Worship or Public Assembly

This section had to do with the indoor use of loudspeakers within worship centres during worship period. Some Christians and Muslims argue for the religious use of loudspeakers in their religious or sacred places (Churches and Mosques) during their worship services in making sure that everyone in the assembly hears and understands the message, especially in a large hall or building. To them, this does not affect anybody and is never a noise pollution, for instance, during the interview for this research, Izang Markuscategorically mentioned that the use of loudspeakers in the Church helps people in the Church to hear the message, especially those who sit far away from the sermoner or the preacher (Interview).

Loudspeakers therefore, play a crucial and versatile role during public assemblies or gatherings, enhancing communication, safety and the overall experience in various ways. Loudspeakers ensure that religious messages are heard clearly by a large audience. When dealing with large gatherings, loudspeakers ensure that everyone in attendance can hear and participate in the event or religious programme. Loudspeakers also help to accommodate those that may have difficulty hearing from a distance.

Loudspeakers are indispensable tools for facilitating effective communication and ensuring the overall experience during public gatherings or assemblies. Their ability to reach large audience, relay important religious information or messages and create immersive environments makes them a valuable asset in various contexts. In the same way, George Thomas, when interviewed, also emphasised the need for loudspeakers at the religious places of worship owing to the fact of the reality of the size of the worship halls that are erected today (Interview). He argued that because of the size of the halls, which are usually bigger this day, hence the use of loudspeakers becomes necessary (Interview 2/3/2022).

In the course of an interview, Rev. Yusuf Alfred and Canon Daniel Rotshak Lar of Chapel of Transfiguration in Nabor Gwong, Jos, also agreed to the usefulness of the loudspeaker inside worship buildings because it amplifies the

voice of the speaker. They added that since not everyone has loud voice by nature, the use of loudspeakers to amplify the preacher's or teacher's voice becomes necessary, however, both of them stressed the fact that, loudspeakers should only be used within the worship auditorium or hall for the purpose of helping the congregation to hear the message from the speaker or teacher, but not to mount the loudspeakers outside of the worship hall because it will disturb other people within the environment (Interview).

Proper Use of Loudspeakers Foster Good and Cordial Relationship

Good use of loudspeakers among the adherents of Islam and Christianity can foster good and cordial relationship. A good case study is that of the Mosque and the Church at Adebayo Street in Jos that share the same land space as earlier mentioned. Despite the fact that the Mosque has loudspeakers attached to its building, however, the speakers are used only during the prayer times, and at low or moderate volume in such a way that it would not disturb the peace of other people. In a similar manner, the Church uses her public address system inside her building at moderate volume also.

In fact, during the interview, the Reverend in-charge of the Church (First Baptist Church, Adebayo Street), Rev. Sunday O. Jabunmi, mentioned that both the members of the Mosque and his own members have good rapport. He explained that whenever the members of the Mosque have a programme and are in need of space, they (Muslims) do request for the space in front of the Church for their use and the Church does allow them make use of it. In the same way, when the Church has a programme that requires enough space, they (Christians) will also approach the leaders of the Mosque for the use of the space in front of the Mosque, and the Muslims equally allow them too. That is how both of them have coexisted for years. This was also confirmed by the Vice-Chairman of the Mosque (Nurudeen Society of Nigeria) in the person of Alhaji Nasiru Hamza, who told the researcher during the interview that the Mosque and the Church have coexisted peacefully for many years. In fact, he added that it was the same person that gave the land for the Mosque and the Church to build places for their worships, hence, both of them erected their religious buildings on the same land space and have lived together since then (Interview).

Using loudspeakers or public address systems effectively to foster cordial and good relationships between adherents of different religions requires sensitivity, respect, and commitment to fostering understanding and harmony,

therefore, the use of loudspeakers, in religious context, particularly in Christianity and Islam, can indeed foster good and cordial relationship between adherents of these two religions. At the same time as it is important to recognize that the impact of loudspeakers can vary depending on the specific cultural and social context, there are ways in which this technology can contribute to harmony between the two religious communities.

The Curse of the Religious use of Loudspeakers in Public and Private Spaces

The proliferation of loudspeakers in public and private spaces has undoubtedly enriched our lives, however, this technological advancement has its share of negative consequences. The increasing use of loudspeakers has given rise to a range of issues that span from noise pollution and disruptions of health concerns and social discord. Therefore, from the findings of this research, below are some of the arguments against the use of loudspeakers as given by Christians and Muslims in Jos City by considering its negative effects on people, especially when they are tuned at high volume.

Sleep Disturbance and Disorders

Sleep is a basic human need and is critical to both physical and mental health. Sleep is one of nature's balms or comforts to humanity after some hectic hours of work or other physical exertion. Despite that, whether by the day or night, one who is about to sleep or is already asleep will be disturbed and inconvenienced as soon as noise is produced especially when sustained over a time. This leads to mood changes and may have some other health effects on the individual concerned for example, Eberechi reported the court case between Abiola and Ijeoma where it was stated that the defendant introduced poultry farming in a purely residential zone occasioning noise from the birds in the early morning hours coupled with foul odour emanating from it and thus interfering with the plaintiff's sleep. On the suit of the plaintiff, the court granted abatement to such nuisance forthwith (Eberechi 272).

Sleep disturbance is a common complaint of noise generated through various sources (loudspeakers inclusive) and it has the potential to affect health and quality of human life. For this reason, some people view the use of loudspeakers, especially during the odd hours of the day as having serious negative effects on people's sleep for example, the use of loudspeakers in the midnight for Christians' night vigils, or the playing of sermon cassettes in the

night by either Christian or Muslim ministers, or even still, the use of loudspeakers early in the morning when all people are still sleeping, which may result in sleep disturbance (Egyegini and Danfulani 251).

In the same manner, Benjamin A. Kwashi, the Archbishop of Anglican Diocese of Jos, during an interview session on the 13th April, 2022 stressed the fact that blaring of loudspeakers, especially from the Pentecostal Churches and the early call to prayer by Muslims do affect people's sleep and health greatly. He further explained that even music in the Church, when it goes beyond its limit, it becomes unnecessary (Interview).

Again, Alam Arshad also complained about the loud use of loudspeakers in the Mosques and how it affects people's sleep and peace of mind. He explained that in most of the mosques, two or three big loudspeakers are tied to the *minar* facing different directions so that the Muslims of the area could hear the *adzan* unmindful of the fact that this high volume of *adzan* disturbs the sleep or the peace of mind of non-Muslims who have nothing to do with *adzan* (1-2).

In addition, it is recently reported that even flushing of toilet in the night is considered noise pollution in Switzerland because it disturbs people's sleep. The *Daily Mail* has it that it is illegal to flush the toilet after 10pm in an apartment building in Switzerland as the government considers it noise pollution. It is common for landlords to impose house rules whereby residents are not allowed to flush their toilet between the hours of 10pm and 7am as it may disturb their neighbours (De Boer 3).

Loss of Concentration (Impedes Effective Learning)

Noise generated through the use of loudspeakers at high volume has serious effect on the concentration of people, especially students who are studying for their academic tasks. Loud noise and sounds disrupt learning process. It hampers wholesome concentration by students just as it destabilises the teacher from effective delivery and thus constitutes serious environmental malaise (Eberechi 273).

Noise affects the cognitive learning because, for one to assimilate, there is need for conducive environment devoid of noise. Noise distracts, hence making learning difficult. Cognition is the process of learning that includes thinking, understanding and remembering; this is however affected by noise. Research has shown that noise pollution has effect on cognitive task performance at school and at work, increases errors and decreases motivation. Reading attention, problem

solving, and memory are most strongly affected by noise (Egyegini and Danfulani 254).

In addition, during the interview, Jeremaih Sina Monomiye (an evangelist and barrister) expressed his dissatisfaction over the unpleasant sound from the loudspeakers from the two Churches within his vicinity. One of the Churches is just beside his house while the other is across the road opposite his house. He explained that the Church opposite his house used to have night vigils almost on daily bases and made use of loudspeakers throughout the night which brought discomfort to him in addition to sleep disturbance and lack of concentration whenever he wanted to study. He said the other Church, which has just few members, makes a lot of noise through their heavy public address systems for their weekly programmes, which also affects his comfort and concentration (Interview).

Jeremiah Sina Monomiye also narrated the bitter experience of his friend with a Church near the friend's house which disturbed him with the sound from the Church's loudspeakers. The friend resides in the same area as a particular Church that uses heavy public address system for their programmes, especially the frequent night vigils. The friend got annoyed because he could no longer cope with the noise from the loudspeakers; so, he went and bought a big speaker and faced it towards the Church's building with which he played music at high volume whenever the Church started blaring the place with loudspeakers during her programme. The noise of the music from his newly-bought speaker was so loud that the Church members got offended and reported the case to the appropriate authority for settlement. In the end, both were advised to limit the volume of their public address systems, and that if possible, they should use it only inside the building in such a way that it would not affect the comfort and peace of mind of other people within the environment (Interview).

Annoyance/Inconvenience

Annoyance is a feeling of displeasure associated with any agent or condition believed by an individual to adversely affect him or her. Annoyance increases significantly when noise is accompanied with vibration or low frequency components. The degree of annoyance produced by noise may vary with time of the day, especially during the odd hours. The unpleasant characteristics of noise, its duration intensity, the meaning associated with it, and the nature of activity that the noise interrupted are all essential when determining the degree of annoyance.

In addition, Zakpala et al explained that sleep is an essential behaviour that provides physical and mental restoration and sleep disturbances are considered deleterious to mood, performance, and health. Concerning religious noise, he adds that religious noise has become a major source of sleep disturbances and this situation will worsen with increasing Church and Mosque density within the forthcoming years and here more during the night than during the day. Night-time environmental noise exposure is an issue of enduring importance to urban planners, policy-makers, and researchers (2-3).

Ademiluyi explained how the Christian itinerant preachers who preach on the streets within Jos City in the early hours of the morning can annoy people by inconveniencing their sleep. He added that in most cases, you don't need an alarm clock to wake you up as these self-appointed missionaries scream on top of their voices and in some cases with a microphone to preach the Gospel of 'Salvation.' They don't care about the well-being of the residents of the areas where they preach in. They sometimes share tracts indiscriminately not caring to find out the religious inclination of the proposed beneficiaries of it. He then commended the initiative of the Lagos State Government to register all Churches and Mosques within the state so as to regulate noise from religious worship centres (Interview).

Adebayo also stated that there are many Churches which use powerful loudspeakers and other musical instruments during night vigils, open-air crusade service, Sunday service and others causing disturbances and inconvenience for those living in the vicinity of these Churches. He further explained that this has forced some people, especially the tenants, to abandon their homes and relocate to other less-noisy areas (112). He reported an incident in Ibadan where a landlord abandoned his home and relocated to another area as he could no longer tolerate sleepless nights as a result of night vigil programmes of a nearby Church which used powerful public address system and musical instruments. Those who could not vacate their homes were forced to endure and tolerate the noise from places of worship (113).

Potentiality of Fuelling Religious Crisis and Hindrance of Peaceful Coexistence

Some Christians and Muslims argue that the use of loudspeakers by religious adherents could lead to religious crisis, especially when provocative or derogatory languages are used; thereby affecting peaceful and harmonious relationship between the adherents of the two religions. In the course of the interviews, Ibrahim Yusuf, Murtala Yakubu Alhasan, Corper Praise and Gabriel

Mnemsas were all of the view that if the preacher who uses loudspeaker insults or employs negative criticism of the other person's religion, it could easily lead to religious crisis; given the religiously-pluralistic nature of the Nigerian society.

For that reason, when loudspeakers are used by either Christians or Muslims in such a way that it will affect the religious programme and comfort of the adherents of the other religion, it can therefore lead to conflict, for example, during the interview for this research, Hon. Ahmad Muhammad of JIBWIS National Headquarters Jos, narrated an incident that nearly resulted to religious conflict due to the way a denominational Christian was playing sermon cassette in a Jeep car parked near Almohap Mosque along Bauchi-Farin Gada Road, Jos when the Muslims were praying in the Mosque.

The sound of the Christian preaching from the loudspeakers mounted on the car was interfering with the prayer of the Muslims in the Mosque. This made the Muslim youths who were disturbed by the religious sound from the loudspeakers to be provoked and wanted to stone (destroy) the car, which would have led to religious conflict; but with the presence of Hon. Ahmad Muhammad, the crisis was abated. He was able to calm the situation by reporting the issue to the police who came and told the man to leave the Mosque's space or area. Therefore, the wrong use of religious loudspeakers by the adherents of any of the two religions, especially due to derogative language or undue interference, could easily result to religious crisis (Interview).

In addition, the violent clash between the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic-Pentecostal Churches in Accra, Ghana was as a result of religious sounds considered as noise-making by the Ga traditionalists. De Witte explained that the Ga traditionalists need silence during their festival to seek peace and blessing from their deities, but Churches refused to comply with the ban on noise-making because the Churches like drumming, handclapping, using of loudspeakers; among others during their worship (690). As a consequence, as the Churches in Accra, Ghana refused to respect the ban on making of sound (noise-making) because of the claim of the freedom to worship and the right not to be involved in 'animistic' ritual, there was violent clash which led to "destruction of places of worship, worshippers were wounded and instruments seized, until in 2002 when a Task Force on Nuisance Control was installed to resolve the matter" (De Witte 690).

Conclusion

The examination of the religious use of loudspeakers reveals a multifaceted phenomenon that elicits both positive and negative aspects. The question of whether it is a blessing or a curse depends largely on the perspective one adopts, considering social, religious, ethical and health dimensions surrounding the issue. On the positive side, the utilization of loudspeakers in religious context has facilitated the dissemination of religious teachings and messages to a larger audience. This has played a crucial role in fostering a sense of community among followers and has contributed to the preservation and promotion of religious traditions. In addition, loudspeakers have been instrumental in enabling religious leaders to address congregations during large gatherings, festivals, and events, enhancing the accessibility of spiritual guidance.

However, the blessings associated with the religious use of loudspeakers are counterbalanced by the potential for adverse effects. The amplified sound can lead to noise pollution, causing disturbances to one's neighbours and provoking conflicts. This raises questions about the balance between religious freedom and the right to a peaceful and quiet environment for non-participants (propagators of religious messages using loudspeakers). It is evident that a careful consideration of the balance between religious practices and societal well-being is crucial in addressing the questions of whether the use of loudspeakers in religious context is a blessing or a curse.

The religious use of loudspeakers is a complex issue with both positive and negative implications. It is imperative for stakeholders to engage in open dialogue, fostering understanding and compromise to ensure that the blessings of amplified religious expression do not come at the cost of causing harm or discord within the broader community. This nuanced approach can pave the way for a more harmonious coexistence where religious practices and the well-being of society are mutually respected and upheld. Adherents of the two religions should have respect for each others' right to quiet time or hours to rest or sleep. Effort should be made to promote understanding and respect for different religious practices while also considering the impact on the larger community. Loudspeakers should be used at low or moderated volume in both public and private spaces. That sound limiters should be attached to public address system (loudspeakers) in the Churches and Mosque to reduce intensity.

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