

Tragedy: Boy drowns in school's fish pond

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A 16-year-old Junior Secondary School Two (JSS 2) student of Oke-Ona Grammar School, Abeokuta in Abeokuta North local government area of Ogun state last Friday got drowned in the school's fish pond. The student, Wasiu Ojeleye according to investigation by *Daily Champion* was the only male of three children left with his father by his divorced mother three years ago.

Our reporter gathered that the boy in the company of his six other age mates were on firewood gathering expenditure that took them to odo-eleja (fish river) the fish pond created and managed by the agriculture students of the school, when he opted to prove his swimming prowess to his friends in the pond.

According to a 10-year-old female eyewitness (names withheld), the youngsters who live in Ilugun-Titun, a border village between Odeda and Abeokuta North local governments around the school premises, had gone on firewood gathering adventure when they got to the fish pond where late Wasiu sought their permission to swim, "we told him not to try it but he wouldn't listen to us."

She recalled further how Wasiu's endless journey started, "when we got to the pond, he threw a ball into the pond, he opted to retrieve it but we all shouted on him not to try it but he would not listen to us and because he was the most senior of us all, he threatened to beat us.

"He successfully retrieved it, it was then that we collected and hid the ball, but he collected the ball where it was hidden and threw it back into the pool, we shouted after him, but he told us 'I can swim, I am a good diver' and when we saw the determination in him, we went after him, but rushed back realizing the depth of the pond," she narrated, adding that till he was trapped, late Wasiu bragged that he was skillful in swimming.

However, realizing the seriousness of his situation, Wasiu while struggling for life in the pond, asked his friends to rush home and inform his father, "we saw him drowning and surfacing for three times after which he never came up again."

Meanwhile, a five-man team of the Ogun State Fire Service, Onikoko, Abeokuta led by one Mr. Fabiyi in a vehicle number: OG 084 A09, Saturday attempted a rescue mission but disappointed the late Wasiu's and villagers when they only visited the area and advised the sympathizers, villagers and parent to wait till yesterday when he would have floated for easier retrieval, adding that they couldn't ascertain the depth of the pond.

Realizing the futile attempt of the Fire fighters, the villagers led by the Chairman of Landlords Association, Chief Folarin however engaged the service of three local divers who after collecting N2,000 and a bottle of Schnapp for rituals, eventually retrieved his corpse which had since been buried, by the pond side, according to custom and tradition.