

OKO-OBA in Agege area of Lagos State is essentially popular because of the abattoir, meat market, located within the settlement. The abattoir is also home to traders of different ethnic backgrounds. A part of the community falls under the control of Agege Local Government Area while the other side belongs to Orile-Agege Local Council Development Area (LCDA).

Residents of the community in the Orile-Agege LCDA may not be having the best of time at the moment. This is because the canal from the abattoir that passes through their settlement is posing a serious threat to lives of residents. The canal it was gathered leads to Iyana-Ipaja and Aboru areas of the state. In fact, the section of the canal besides Mogaji Market where traders sell pork meat and animal feeds has been washed away by water. The erosion has eaten deep into the canal and has made the bye-pass beside it a death zone.

It was learnt that on many occasions, un-

canal and many have lost their lives in the process. Our reporter's visit to the place revealed that the erosion has really washed off the affected portion and almost encroaching into the fence of Ladoje Primary School and Alexandra Estate in the area.

The canal is filled with water and other sewage emanating from the abattoir. Blood of slain animals also flow freely inside it as well as other waste products from the abattoir. Investigation showed that residents, both adults and children prefer to pass through the bye-pass because it is a short cut to get to Ladoje in Okooba and other streets in the environ.

It was also gathered that a teenage girl fell into the canal three weeks ago. Ironically, when officials of the Lagos State Fire Service came on rescue operation, they dug their double ladder inside the canal but were unable to carry out any rescue operation because the ladder could not touch the ground due to the depth of the canal. Residents told Daily Independent that the rescue team had to

able to bring out the remains of the girl who was incidentally, dead.

The residents claimed that they had reported the threat the canal is posing in the area to the local council without commensurate action.

"Three days ago, a man narrowly escaped death when he fell into the canal. He was able to escape because he could swim. Many occasions, people had fallen inside the canal and before help could come their ways, they had died. This canal is very dangerous. In fact, there are fishes and other dangerous reptiles inside that eat up human beings. The life of residents is in danger," said Mr. Gbolahan Ibikunle, a resident.

Residents declared that when the rate at which people were falling into the canal was becoming incessant, they dug a bamboo tree with a red cloth to barricade the place so that they (residents) would not be able to pass through. However, the recent rain fall in the state had washed away the pillar leaving just a bamboo tree by the side of the canal. They also complained that when-

overflowing posing serious danger even to the lives of traders in the Mogaji market.

"If you had come to this place when it rained, you won't be able to stand like this because the canal would overflow. On several occasions we have barricaded the place to tell residents about the danger but rain always washed the pillar away," said Sobalaji Olakunle, a trader in the market.

"On many occasions we have sent people away including children. Even some of the pupils of Ladoje Primary School do pass here because it is a short cut. This place is bad. We are calling on the government to help us rehabilitate the canal and lift the sides up so that water will not disturb us again whenever it rains", added another trader who failed to disclose his name.

Residents also complain about stray animals from the abattoir which according to them, have injured people on several occasions. They allege that every evening, cows from the abattoir are allowed to move out looking for pasture and in the process have

caused several accidents in the area.

"We have complained to the cow traders in the abattoir but they still allow their cows to move about on the road. In fact, every evening from 4pm, the cows will be on the road and they move as far as Abule Egba. It is the LASTMA officers that always send them back from getting to the Abeokuta Expressway because they can cause accident there.

"Many residents have been injured by cows. In fact, our neighbour Mrs. Taye Sule popularly known as Mama Elewa was knocked down and injured recently when she wanted to buy beans that she would cook to sell at the Abattoir. She is currently at home with broken leg receiving treatment," said Temilade Mustapha, who lives in the area.

Residents are calling on the Orile-Agege LCDA, the abattoir police to assist them call the traders to order for their safety.

At press time, efforts to get reaction from the local council proved abortive as the chairman was not on seat. Also, the council manager was said to be in a meeting.