

Nasarawa community mourns as boat accident claims four siblings



Linus Oota, Lafia November 11, 2023



The Ubbe community in Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area of [Nasarawa State](#) is in sorrow over the sudden death of four members in a mysterious boat accident on a river in Awe Local Government Area of the state. Particularly distressed is the Dauda family of which the deceased graduates and undergraduates were members.

The victims were crossing River Awe to Wuse village in a boat on Monday evening to harvest rice from their farm when their canoe capsized. Among the deceased were Shedrack Dauda, 29, who had just graduated top of his class at the Nasarawa State University in Keffi, Akolo Moses Dauda and Meshach Dauda, who are also undergraduates of the university, and Alkali Congo Dauda, 39, who had just graduated from the College of Education Akwanga.

It was gathered that the tragic incident occurred on Monday while they were travelling to their rice farm in Wuse for harvesting. Although there are different accounts of the incident, the most popular is that the river's tide forced the boat to hit a tree, culminating in the accident.

The entire Ubbe community has since been thrown into mourning over the death of four educated members of the same family.

A witness, Mr Ibrahim Abu, said the deceased victims had barely boarded the boat for three minutes when the accident occurred.

Abu said: "The four young men came with their bags and boarded the boat. Three minutes after take-off, the boat capsized and all the four young university graduates in the boat died.

"I don't know what happened when they took off, but the boat broke inside the river.

Abu lamented that the people of Wuse resort to water transportation because there are no access roads leading to the community.

"Our problem is that there is no access road that connects all the Wuse communities. We have no choice but to travel on water.

The aged mother of the siblings was far from getting over the disaster when our correspondent visited as she grappled with an experience her fragile posture could hardly bear. In a short speech amid tears, Mrs Dauda said her children had planned to pursue their academic programmes to master's level.

The entire Dauda family was in pensive mood when our correspondent visited. It took the reporter some time to get them to speak about the death of their four grown up loves ones.

Sitting dejected in a corner of the house was a relative of the deceased victims, Joseph Congo Dauda.

Tears rolled down his cheeks before he could utter a word. But after gaining some composure, he sat back, clear his throat and declared that he would speak only briefly about the lives and times of the victims and the misfortune that befell the family.

Dauda said the entire family was living happily before tragedy struck on November 6. He said the deceased young men were workaholics who had chosen to assist their parents by engaging in farm activities to support the home front and support their education and other family needs. Consequently, he said, they acquired some lands in Wuse where they farmed rice.

Dauda said: "They were actually travelling to the farm to harvest their rice ahead of the Christmas celebration and school resumption in January

“We were in constant communication throughout the trip, even at the point of boarding the boat. Little did they or we at home know that they were on a journey of no return. A few minutes after they boarded the boat, we received the sad news that the boat capsized in the middle of the river and consumed them.

“We raised these children ourselves. The parents are not well to do people, but with their strong determination, they were able to make it through secondary school and up to the university and college of education.

“We never thought the four of them could die in one swoop. In fact, they died while working to build their future. I said so because they were going to harvest their rice farm to help them clear their educational needs.

“They were already laying a foundation for themselves to be self-sustained. They were so obedient, calm and focused on pursuing their dreams in life. I still can’t believe the pain of this whole loss. My heart is broken.

“I cannot believe that I will never see them again. I literally can’t bear it. The four young university graduates were already thinking of pursuing further studies to build a solid future. Sadly, death sneaked in, in a mysterious and cruel manner, killing not just one but the four of them in one swoop.

“We are going to accept what has happened, and I’m not blaming anybody for this. But I am appealing to both the state and federal government to construct a bridge, not only across the Awe River but other rivers around the country to avoid boat mishaps.

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“Our plan for Shedrack, who was the first to graduate from the University before the other ones, was to support them in their educational pursuit to, at least, master’s level, so that in the future, they will have a great impact on the society

“We wanted them to be financially stable so that they would help the underprivileged in the society and contribute to the growth of Nasarawa State. Unfortunately, man proposes, God disposes.

“The four of them are no more. Sometimes it is ideal to question God’s work, but because He is invisible, you don’t see Him to question. Taking four graduates away in a family at a time is painful, to say the least.

“The children were very peaceful. They never had issues with people even in school. Throughout their period in primary, secondary to tertiary institutions, they never had any disagreement with anybody. They loved God so much and they were very mindful of how they relate with people because they did not like having misunderstanding with anyone.”

Asked what he and the family would miss about them, Dauda said: “We will miss so many things about them. Shedrack was a very good young man to the family. While he was growing up, especially after his graduation from the university in Keffi, he decided that he would learn some craft in Lafia and also assist his brothers to achieve their academic programmes, which was why he went with them to Awe to help them harvest rice.

“It is always his wish to assist his siblings. He supported us greatly even while in school. We will continue to miss and be proud of him. He was indeed a good young man.

“The death of four graduates in one fell swoop is a big tragedy and the entire Ubbe community has been crying since Monday when the news was broken. Their death came to us as a shock. The situation is really hard for us but we just cannot question God. He knows best, so we have to accept our fate.

The distraught mother Mrs Dauda explained amid tears that due to the difficult times, training four children in the higher institution at the same time was actually a difficult task, but the “committed and determined” young boys decided that they would return to the farm to assist their parents in settling some of their educational needs.

She said: “They farm rice yearly in far away Awe Local Government Area, and during holidays, they collectively travel there to harvest it to assist themselves in settling their school fees when they are resuming in January so as to save their parents the stress of catering for their school needs alone.

“Losing them in their prime is a lifetime scar; it will never heal. It is traumatic.”

She said their mysterious death was a bad dream she wished she could wake up from to hear it never happened.

“Why didn’t God take away my life? These children are the ones to bury me and not me burying them. What then is the meaning of life?

“I was already feeling fulfilled in life when Shedrack graduated from the university. He didn’t even wait to enjoy the fruit of his labour. He left alongside his brothers. What a world!

“Despite the difficulties, the boys kept encouraging me not to lose hope in life; that the future was bright. They had all the hope that the days/years ahead would be better. “They had good plans for me and the entire family, and they never foresaw death in the near future.

“Before their trip to Awe, the boys and I were inseparable. They gave me true love, cared so much about me and were constantly in touch with me even when they were in school.

“They meant well for the entire family. They always encouraged me to endure the hardship; that it was a matter of time. Now the time has not come and they are no more.

“God is not fair to the entire family. He has inflicted a permanent wound in my entire life. There is absolutely no point taking them away at the same time in their prime. What is their offence? My joy has been stolen, my expectations were to see them grow up to become men in the society, but God took them back.

“It is only God that can console us for we don’t have much to do to console ourselves. I will miss them so much. No one on earth can fill the space they have left in my life. My children were easy going people, good and dutiful, always committed to achieving whatever they wanted to achieve by leaving no stone unturned.

“We are badly touched by this whole loss. Their untimely exit from this sinful world has left us all distraught.”

A pastor, Rev. Solomon, who was friends with the deceased graduates, urged the family members not to query God over the incident, saying Christians should know that living and dying are in God’s control.

He advised Christians to emulate Christ, adding that because Jesus submitted himself to God's authority, though He died, He later rose on the third day

According to him, Christians should know that the death of the four was of God and not of man. He said if the people understood life's mystery, it would help them to correct and discard things denying them of God's glory.

"It is God alone that can console the family for we don't have much to do that will console them. The Daudas are for God and so, only God will console them.

"Jesus was for God and He died for God and because of that, we have life. It is therefore true that those who died in God will return to life as Jesus did, because He lives. May God enable those living to realise this and give God thanks in all things."

Rev. Solomon said he was heartbroken over the incident, commiserating with the family in its moment of grief.

"I'm deeply sad because of this incident. We are together in it. The word of God is peace and in anything, he says there is peace.

"Our prayer for the Dauda family is that God will give them peace. We know what the people recorded in the Bible suffered and in the end, God repaid them."

He prayed that such calamity would never be repeated in the land.