

Oshiohmole And Ambrose Alli University Killer Wells

On Friday March 23, seven girls, female students of Edo State owned Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma were swept into an archaic well that caved in while they were drawing water from it to prepare for the day's activities.

While one died instantly, others were in critical conditions when they were bailed out by rescuers. Two later died bringing the number of casualties to three.

The world was aghast to learn that a tertiary institution in a state whose former governor and visitor, Lucky Igbinedion parades a world class university in the same state, supported while he was in office for eight years by state fund, lacked such a basic amenity as potable water and in a Millennium age.

More appalling is the fact that the current governor, Adams Oshiomhole known for having a penchant for progressive change allowed such a lapse which is today causing the families of the dead students, deep agony and regrets for seeking advancement for their children.

Investigations revealed that wells are all over the hostels yet not even the government nor the school deemed it fit to sink boreholes in the school to alleviate the sufferings of students whereas lecturers draw supply from tankers.

Some are wondering why even the Education Trust Fund did not address this deplorable state of affairs. Surprisingly, rather than apologise to Nigerians for this show of shame and poor leadership act, the Edo State commissioner for Education pushed the blame to past administrations for failing to update development in the school.

He however, said the Oshiomhole government has been doling out a monthly subvention of N350million to the Ambrose Alli University authority which we would like to ask if the commissioner has monitored its usage as students still speak of lack of basic amenities in a fee paying institution. Pray what do universities do with student fees which run into billions of naira?

Ekpoma is not the only university lacking basic amenities in the country. They abound in universities as well as polytechnics and other tertiary institutions. The country has become so corrupt and uncaring that students are seen as mere money making machines rather than creatures to groom for a better future society.

Now that government establishments are being looked into, Oshiomhole needs to set up a panel to investigate the Ekpoma disaster, tell the world who built the 10-year-old well that lacked reinforcement and who failed to upgrade facilities there. This is also a clarion call to all school heads to do the expected by keeping the welfare of students under their care above board to prevent avoidable deaths.

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Letter

Attention Rivers CP: Your Boys Are Still On The Road

When the new inspector general of Police announced an end to police blocks on Nigerian roads as part of plans to give the Nigeria Police an improved image, many cheered while some vowed that the Nigeria Police is too enmeshed in corruption to kill the lure of daily collection of illegal tax in the name of toll fees.

But determined to prove that it is no longer going to be business as usual, ordered all road blocks dismantled with a pledge that there will be no return to toll collection in the envisaged force describing road blocks as colonial and outdated.

The IG told journalists in Abuja recently that rather than restore road blocks which are archaic security measures, patrol teams are being stationed at strategic points to monitor and ensure safety,

He said that the new police commissioners have been told that they will account for any robbery in their areas of jurisdiction but he pleaded with governors to assist with the provision of patrol vehicles to make the assignment less burdensome.

However, police men in Port Harcourt are devising another way of collecting toll fees. In the evenings at the Mile 3 market end police men pour out into the road blocking where commercial vehicles normally park and silently collect from N200-N500 from any driver they like before allowing them to load passengers. Even on Sunday afternoon, I again saw a bus load of police men in a navy blue commercial bus at Whimpey Bus Stop. One of the officers asked my bus driver to come down to see him a few yards away. Result? The driver who was well parked in the allotted spot for their business paid N500. He said he did it to avoid the new act of being dragged to the station on cooked up charges. My friend paid N5000 for not agreeing to give them N1000 or N500, you know police men are now hungry', he told us as passengers challenged his interception.

This is definitely working against the IG's vision for the country but I am confident the Rivers State Police commissioner is not aware of this malpractice.

May I therefore urge the commissioner who has started well, to halt this wrong move.

Yours for a better Nigeria,

-Onyemenem Joseph, Orazi, Port Harcourt.

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