

# Landslide buries 11 alive

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**N**O fewer than 11 persons, among them children, have been buried alive by a landslide in Agwagune in Cross River State.

The disaster, which occurred in the night in the riverside community, also destroyed millions of invaluable property and cut the community from other neighbouring towns.

It was the worst landslide in the area as the community witnessed a similar calamity in 1970.

As at Saturday, most parts of the community located in Biase Local Government still remained deserted as the residents had fled to avert further calamities.

The Head of the community, Chief Onun Bassey, took journalists round the scene of the incident on Saturday.

He said the entire community lost property worth millions of Naira including human lives.

According to him, since 1970 when a landslide first hit the area, it has been a periodic occurrence which has cut Agwagune community off from its neighbouring communities in the area.

He added that the incident happened in the night and it buried the unsuspecting victims alive including young children.

Our correspondent gathered that in December 2006, the community recorded landslide twice within a week leaving behind tales of woes and painful memories in the hearts of the residents.

The Director, National Geo-Hazard Monitoring Centre, Awka, Mr Nwegbu Ndubuisi, who was at the scene with his team on research trip, collected soil samples from various scenes of the disaster for laboratory test in order to ascertain both the remote and immediate causes of the disaster and proffer solutions.

He said the purpose of the visit was to checkmate future

occurrence of landslide, among other earth tremor in the area.

Ndubuisi, however, advised the villagers not to build houses very close to the river banks in order not to be submerged by water.

It was gathered that similar incidents happened in three different parts of the community which also claimed some lives.

Cracks were seen on most of the buildings in the community which experts described as 'unfit for human habitation' when our correspondent visited the area.

Ageologist, Prof. E.S. Esu of Geology Department, University of Calabar, said the landslide was as a result of climatic change.

He also blamed it on human pressure on the land.

He appealed to the residents to cooperate with the Federal Government in its efforts to relocate them, just as he advised the government to develop the beach into a tourist centre.