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Five-year-old girl dies after father beat her for defecating

By TOYOSI OGUNSEYE

Sunday, 30 May 2010

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Abolore Akintunde

TOYOSI OGUNSEYE writes that a five-year-old girl, who lost her mother when she was three months old, died soon after her father beat her for defecating in their one-room apartment

While young ones all over the world celebrated Children's Day on May 27, Saidat Akintunde, five, lay stone cold in her grave. She died on May 7, after her father beat her with a wooden cane for urinating and defecating in the room the family of five shared.

A day before, her father, Abolore Akintunde returned from work and found her playing with her younger ones. Her step-mother was sleeping.

According to Akintunde, who sells engine-oil at Idumota, Lagos, he asked his first child if she had done her school assignment and she said she hadn't. So he asked her to bring out her

homework. Shortly after that, the one-room apartment that is located at Omolodege Street, Ogolonto, Ikorodu, was enveloped in acrid odour.

He says, "It was a Friday and I had just returned from work. My wife was sleeping, but Saidat and her two younger ones were awake. I asked her to bring out the assignment that was given to her in school because I wanted her to do it before going to bed.

"It is only at night that I have time for my children and I always seize the opportunity to help them with their schoolwork. I leave my house in Ikorodu very early in the morning and return very late at night. I just noticed that the room smelled.

"I checked Saidat where she was doing her homework and noticed that she had urinated and defecated on herself while sitting on the floor. I beat her hand with a small wooden cane. I was angry because the whole room smelled and she knew where her potty was.

"I spanked her on her hand so that she would not do that again. She started crying and said, 'Daddy, don't beat me again.' My wife also asked me to leave her alone. We all ate eba that night and went to bed."

Though 32-year-old Akintunde claims that he did not beat her heavily, what happened in the midnight points to the contrary.

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The Ibadan, Oyo State indigene says that his wife woke him up after they had all gone to bed that the little Akintunde had a high temperature.

He says, "My wife noticed that Saidat's temperature was abnormally high and her teeth were clenched as if she had convulsion. We poured water on her, but that did not help. So I rushed her to the nearest hospital, but she was confirmed dead. She was not sick before then."

That was how the five-year-old girl, whose mother died three months after she was born, stopped living. Her parents buried her immediately in Ibadan, but unknown to them, their neighbours had reported the matter at the Ikorodu Police Station.

Her father says, "Saidat's mother died when she was three months old. She was always falling ill, so Saidat's grandmother took her to Ibadan to take care of her, but she did not recover. I married another wife three years ago after my mother told me that I could not stay without a wife and she has given me two children: a three-year-old and the last is just over a year old. Saidat was with my mum since she was a child and she only joined me two months ago to continue her education.

"After my daughter's death, we took her to Ibadan where my relatives and her mother's people live. She was buried next to my father's grave at Mota, Asolo, Ibadan. My mother could not come for the burial because she was mourning her younger wife.

"Immediately we returned to Ikorodu, we met policemen outside our house. One of my neighbours whom I had a disagreement with in the past was the one that reported to the police. We had not even entered the house when the policemen said I was needed at the station."

The public relations officer of the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Frank Mba, says that though only an autopsy can reveal the cause of the little girl's demise, her father's beating could not be isolated from the incident.

Mba, a superintendent of police says, "Though we were not there when the incident happened, we gathered from intelligence reports that Akintunde beat his daughter to the extent that her hand was swollen. When the girl's stepmother woke her up in the midnight to urinate, she discovered that Saidat had a very high temperature. Shortly after, she died."

A medical doctor, Dr. Tunde Okewale, is of the opinion that Saidat must have had malaria, which was not properly treated by her parents.

He says, "Only beating cannot result in death. A post-mortem needs to be done to know the actual cause of her death. Everything you've told me sounds like the little girl had cerebral malaria, which has the symptoms of high temperature and convulsion.

"She might have had malaria and her parents did not treat her well. In fact, malaria, which weakens the body, might be the reason why she defecated on her body because a five-year-old ordinarily should not do that."

Just last week, SUNDAY PUNCH exclusively reported how a five-year-old girl, Uchechi Odu, died after her mother beat her for not knowing how to write ABC. She fainted after the beating and was confirmed dead in a general hospital. Uchechi's mother, Hope Odu, told our correspondent that her daughter had no food in her stomach that day because she cooked beans and Uchechi did not like beans.

What must have made Akintunde and Odu react the way they did? A psychiatrist, Dr. Adeoye Oyewole, provides the answer. Oyewole, who is the head of the Psychiatry Department at the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, says, "First, we need to find out if the parents of these children are normal. That is, are they under the influence of drugs or alcohol? Do they have a previous record of psychiatric challenges or did they have head injuries in the past? If the answer to all these is no, then they did not intentionally kill their children.

"Usually, it can be attributed to transferred aggression – a form of immature defence when you are facing social, economic or emotional problems. People who are related to them are usually the victims of their frustrations.

"It even happens in offices, you will just see a boss being harsh or shouting at his subordinates for no just cause when his wife upset him at home that morning. Some of them are kind enough to apologise afterwards."

Comments :

- Its a pity. Something else must have killed the girl. I dont think it was the beating. Thank God it was not the stepmother that beat her.



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Posted by: Favour , on Sunday, May 30, 2010

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- Waah another within a week of one another. This is the story of Nigeria, it is a clear case of how battered and traumatized men and women have become psychologically. This man apparently is just striving to ensure that his child will not end up the way he ends up likewise that other woman. Poverty, hunger, anger, stress (they were living in one room!!), confusion, ignorance and such like, the picture of our nation is what killed these children. The senators demanding for N100million and reps ask

Posted by: Gabriel , on Sunday, May 30, 2010

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- Beating a five years old who defeacated on herself will not be uncommon or unreasonable in Nigeria. While I agreed with Dr. Adeoye Oyewole, then we will have to send majority of Nigerian parents to the psychiatrists. I believe the child has an undiagonised ill health, probably malaria and some kind of stomache bug which could have caused her death anyway. We cannot afford to spear the rod, and spoil our children. It is the excessiveness that turns into abuse we cannot accept.

Posted by: enitan onikoyi , on Sunday, May 30, 2010

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