

Protest as poly student drowns in Bayelsa

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Federal Polytechnic. Ekowe

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A student of Public Administration at the Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, Bayelsa State, identified simply as Ade, has drowned in a river close to the institution.

Ade reportedly drowned in the river bordering the polytechnic on Sunday while trying to fetch water for domestic use due to lack of water on the campus.

As a result of Ade's death, aggrieved students of the institution went on the rampage, protesting against absence of potable water and alleged neglect by the school authorities.

It was learnt that lack of potable water on the campus forced students to rely on the river and other unconventional means for water.

Tragedy was said to have struck when Ade and an unnamed friend went to the river to fetch water.

A source said Ade fell into the river and drowned because he could not swim.

"The two of them could not swim. So, when Ade fell into the river, all his friend could do was to raise the alarm. Before people could get to him, he had breathed his last," the source said.

It was learnt that the situation was worsened by lack of presence of the school management on the campus located in Ekowe, in the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of the state.

The Rector of the polytechnic, Timi Seiyaboh, and staff members of the school, reportedly operated from the liaison office in Yenagoa, the state capital.

The protesting students alleged that all attempts to call the attention of Seiyaboh to the incident proved abortive.

It was gathered that a team of police operatives was sent to the school to avert breakdown of law and order.

A human rights activist, Alagoa Morris, faulted the school management on its handling of the matter.

Morris said, "It is interesting to hear that the police arrived on the campus which is situated along the River Nun, while the authorities of the institution remained in Yenagoa and invited the students to come to meet them.

"Even if the transport fares of the students will be borne by the school authorities, it is unacceptable. The school should not be managed from Yenagoa.

“The rector and other management staff have to go down to Ekowe and justify their pay and engagement by the Federal Government.”

When contacted, Seiyaboh said he was on the ground to handle the issues on the campus.

He denied allegations that he was managing the school from Yenagoa.

“I am always on the ground and I have been here to handle the problem. There was no time I asked the students to come to meet me in Yenagoa,” he said.

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