

Lagos pupil steps on abandoned well covered with sacks, drowns

Oluwatobi Akindele

RESIDENTS of Orepeju Close in the Akowonjo area of Lagos are in mourning following the death of a seven-year-old boy, Godwin Samuel, who fell into an abandoned well.

When our correspondent visited the area on Sunday, neighbours were seen gathered in groups and discussing the incident in hushed tones as the mother of the deceased was too distraught to talk.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Godwin left his parents' residence on Saturday to play on the street.

While playing, he reportedly fell into the well at 6 Orepeju Close, off Olasehinde Crescent, Akowonjo, Lagos.

It was learnt that at the time of the incident, around 5pm, the victim's mother and stepfather were not at home.

The stepfather, Isaac Okon, said by the time the boy was recovered from the well by officials of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, he had already drowned.

He said, "His mother and I were not around when the incident happened; I went to church and his mother went to the market to get the foodstuffs she needed to make dinner.

"I was still in the church when someone called to inform me that my boy had fallen into a well. As soon as the boy was recovered from the well, we rushed him to a hospital but it was too late.

"The well had been left

• The abandoned well

to meet the needs of his family. I cannot afford to make a case against the owner of the house, but I know God will fight for me."

The deceased's stepsister, Elizabeth Okon, said Godwin was a special kid, adding that the incident was an avoidable one if the landlords in the area had done the right thing.

She said, "Godwin was a Down syndrome pupil and was only trying to live like every other kid. The landlady is at fault for leaving the well unattended to and it seems to me like it was intentional, because a concrete slab had been constructed for the well but it was not fixed.

"The landlords in the area, who decided to turn a blind eye instead of reporting the situation of the house, are also at fault. My stepbrother's death was an avoidable one if everyone had done the right thing."

A neighbour, who identified



Photo: Oluwatobi Akindele

He stated, "We got a distress call about a boy that fell into a well around 6.38pm on Saturday. On getting to the scene, we found a boy of about seven years. We were told that he left his house and went to play on the street. Unfortunately, we learnt that he fell into a partially covered well and he was recovered dead. The Lagos State Fire Service and the LASEMA Response Unit were also on ground.

"Further investigation revealed that the building was under construction and the well was dangerously exposed. Beside the well is a septic tank, which is also partially covered. The building has been sealed off to avoid future occurrences. We sealed off the building because we discovered that the well was dangerously exposed. And we expect that other agencies like the police will carry out further investigations."

The general manager advised