

saturday story

MY DAUGHTER WANTED TO PAY OKADA RIDER WHEN TRUCK CRUSHED HER TO DEATH IN IBADAN MARKET —MUM OF POLY STUDENT



•Barakat

Olufemi Olaniyi

Family members, friends, neighbours and other sympathisers on Thursday thronged the residence of Alhaja Fausat Adediran to commiserate with her over the death of her daughter, Barakat.

The lady was among those

crushed to death by a tanker which suffered a brake failure and overran traders and others at Bode Market in the Molete area of Ibadan, Oyo State on Sunday. She will be 25 on August 15.

The woman, popularly known as Iya Ijesa, was surrounded by mourners and her eyes filled with tears as she looked lost in the midst of those consoling her and praying to God to give her the fortitude to bear the loss.

Some co-traders, family members and the bereaved mother described the deceased as hardworking and an enterprising young lady who was always ready to help her mother and family members.

The 24-year-old lady was said to have studied Mass Communication at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. After completing the National Diploma programme, she enrolled in a fashion institute and completed the programme with a low-key graduation on May 24. She was said to have applied for a Higher National Diploma before her death.

The bereaved mother in a brief interview with our correspondent said her daughter knew she was going to die but had it from her. But the sympathisers said she probably would not have gone out if she knew she would die in an accident that day.

The mother however said, "Barakat knew she was going and that was why she told a young child that usually visited her that she would travel. But she had no intention to travel anywhere except this journey of to return on Sunday. She was such a pleasant

and hard working girl. The traditionalists at Bode Market told us that we should not open the market for seven days because they foresaw a strange happening and I complied. Barakat told me that she would go to the market to help me on that day and I should stay at home. "I was told she got to the market and was paying the motorcyclist who took her there when the truck hit her and the motorcyclist. Both of them died."

Barakat's brother Adegoke Fajaye, who moved into the family house to console his grieving mother, said he was told that his sister saw the truck late and ran but she was electrocuted by the electric cable which dropped immediately the tanker hit the electric pole before veering inside the market. He said she was caught in the web of the cables and was crushed by the tanker.

He said, "She just got to the market and was paying the okada rider who took her there when she looked back and saw the truck which had lost control. She was said to have been caught in the web of electric cables that fell after the tanker hit an electric pole before crushing everybody and everything on its path into the market."

The brother said the family retrieved the corpse and buried her immediately according to Islamic rites. Asked if the owner of the tanker had reached out to the family, he replied that no one had got in touch with the family.

"We have left everything to God. We believe he counted us to be among the families affected by the tragedy. We cannot query God," he added.

Friends of Barakat on her Facebook page also expressed sadness over her death. "Those injured were said to have been taken to different hospitals. Some of the traders at the market who escaped the incident said traditionalists

warned of an impending disaster and asked the traders to shut the market and perform some rituals to avert any danger.

One of the traders at the market, Alhaja Kikelomo Afolabi, told *Saturday PUNCH* that she didn't open her shop for some days, adding that some people disobeyed the directive.

She said, "During the annual celebration of herb seekers, there was an instruction that the market should be closed for seven days. But to our surprise, some elderly ones said they would not comply with the directive. The market leaders discovered that since some traders opposed the directive, it was better to make compliance optional. Some closed their shops while others obeyed."

Afolabi, who expressed gratitude to God for sparing her life from the accident, said though she lost some goods to the accident, she would forever be grateful to God for not allowing her to die in the crash.

She said, "I can say disobedience of some was responsible for the disaster. But God demonstrated his love towards me and I will forever be grateful to Him. Some lost their lives not because they committed any sin but because some people decided to violate a directive to close the shops. The accident affected my shop but I was not around. But some hoxiluns broke into the kiosk and stole rice and few other items there but I was still able to recover some goods. Even if I lost all my goods, how much is that compared to a life. I pray God will comfort the families of those killed by the truck."

Another trader, Olade Adewolu, popularly known as Arabambi, told our correspondent how her son escaped being crushed to death by the truck. She said the vehicle destroyed her goods, thanking God for not allowing her, her husband and child to die in the accident.

Adewolu said, "My husband and I were at the side of the road talking on the day of the incident. My child was already at the shop. My husband just bid me goodbye and as I was about to cross, I saw a truck coming but I didn't know that the driver had lost control. I heard a bang as it hit the pole and before my eyes, the truck veered into the market and crushed everything on its path.

"My stalls were crushed and I realised that my 10-year old child was there attending to a customer. He saw the truck coming towards where he was and fled. He fell down as he was running away but fortunately for him, the truck fell before it got to where my child ran to. He heard the noise and was frightened. He stood up and started running again and that was when he sustained injuries.

"The vehicle did not get to where he was but he was afraid and as he jumped over tables and other things to escape, some objects cut his body. He is fine now and has resumed school. My son told me that he was attending to a customer when the accident happened. I can't say if the customer

survived or not because there was confusion."

Narrating how the accident happened, Bordon Omotola, who lives near the market, told our correspondent that the casualty figure would have been higher if the accident happened in the afternoon or evening.

He said, "The traders arrived one after the other. Some just opened while others were preparing to open when the gas truck crashed into the market. We were told that the vehicle suffered brake failure at Oba Oba area and crushed two persons to death. Some okada riders pursued the truck not knowing that it would still kill more.

"I think the driver also struggled to stop the truck but it was hard for him. A tricycle was parked beside a huge refuse bin and passengers were either alighting or entering when the truck rammed into it. The tricycle didn't but I cannot say what happened to his passengers. The lady that was killed just got to the market. She was paying a motorcyclist who brought her when the truck crashed both her and the okada rider."

About 72 hours after the crash, traditional worshippers were asked to perform rituals. Our correspondent saw one of the Ogun worshippers dragging and rubbing the severed head of a dog on the road in front of the market. The man rubbed the dog's severed head more at the spot where the truck crashed into the market. Some of the traders called on the man to rub the dog's head where their shops are located. After acceding to their requests, he burned the head of the animal.

Akrem Agwroba, who identified himself as Olawo, said with the performance of necessary rituals, the market, traders and their customers would not be free from disasters.

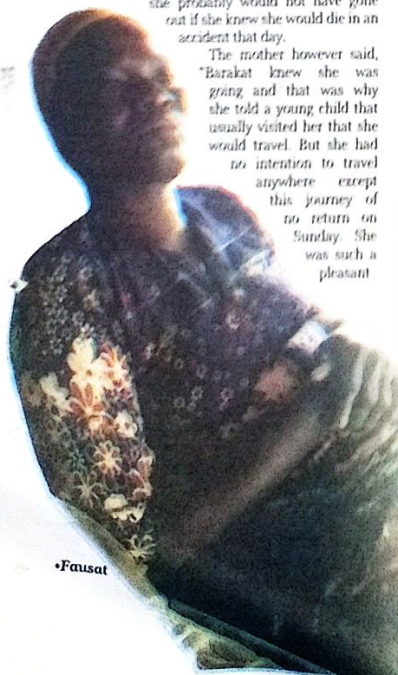
He said, "As you can see, we have sacrificed to Ogun. This was what was supposed to have been done before now and we are just doing it today. It is better than they agreed that we should do it. There will not be any disaster in the market again."

Though the accident happened in the morning, the rescue team could not remove the truck because of its weight and volatility of its content. The fire-fighters were seen spraying the tanker with water intermittently to cool to avoid possible explosion.

One of the residents, Nurudeen Ibrahim, who spoke to our correspondent on the issue, urged the government to equip allied agencies in charge of rescue operations.

He said, "One thing I observed about the accident is that our level of preparedness for disasters is grossly inadequate. The Oyo State Fire Services Agency, Federal Fire Service and the Federal Road Safety Corps came but they could not remove the gas truck from where it fell. I agree that they needed to be careful to remove it because it was loaded.

"The accident happened around 8am but they could not remove the tanker till late in the evening when I left. The fire-fighters were just spraying water on the truck to cool the temperature so that it would not explode. I don't know what would have happened if the weather was hot. God was so good to us because the weather was cool that day."



•Fausat