

•Two pupils killed, others injured, as water tank falls on classroom

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SHARES VIEWS

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The pain and agony that have engulfed Nkpor-Agu, a community in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, over the tragic death of two pupils of Royal Kings Foundation Nursery and Primary School in the town, are yet to abate.

Staff and pupils of the school, as well as the families of the deceased children, are still in mourning over a tragedy that occurred on Wednesday, February 5, when an overhead water tank fell into a Nursery 1 classroom in the school. Two pupils were killed instantly, while two others were injured.

Daily Sun gathered that the 800-gallon capacity tank, filled with water in a house adjacent to the school, fell from its high stand onto the roof of the classroom.

When the correspondent visited the school, the school was under lock and key. Even the four-storey building where the tank that fell on the kids was mounted had been deserted by the tenants due to fear of attack by aggrieved families of the victims.

It was observed that the base pan where the tank rested was weak and a part was rusty, which might be the possible cause of the accident.

It was gathered that when the incident happened, the parents of the pupils rushed to the school to withdraw their wards, while those injured were rushed to the hospital for treatment.

Also, the proprietress of the school, Mrs. Ngozi Ebugosi, was hospitalised after suffering a nervous breakdown following the incident.

Her husband, Mr. Chigozie Ebugosi, who said she was responding to treatment at an undisclosed hospital, expressed shock at what happened in the school.

“I was in my shop when I received a call that a water tank had fallen on kids in my wife’s school. I rushed to the place and saw the extent of damage and that two kids were killed in the incident. We thank God that the whole part of the tank did not fall into the school, it would have been more disastrous because more kids would have been injured. The main impact was on the fence. That was why the casualties were less.

“Until now, we have never experienced such a tragedy since we started the school many years ago. The school has been existing before the building where the tank was mounted. The four-storey building was built four years ago while the tank was constructed later. I wonder why a tank built about three years ago would fall just like that.

“I want to commiserate with the families of the deceased, the injured, entire staff and pupils of the school. I want to enjoin them to take heart. We shall come out of this shock stronger and better, believing that no other tragedy will befall the school again.”

The father of one of the victims, Mr. Godswill Ezewudo, from Nnobi community, was still in shock and agony when the reporter visited him. He was in tears and could not be consoled. He said that the school management called him when the incident happened and, when he rushed there, he saw his son lying lifeless.

He said sympathisers had been pouring into his house to console the family, describing the child as very intelligent and articulate.

“My boy, Wisdom, was my last son, among the three children that I have, one daughter and two sons. All of them were in the same school. He was in Nursery 1. His corpse was immediately taken to my town, where he was buried. I have handed everything over to God, although it is painful to bury a child. Such a thing has never happened in my family before now.

“My own father and mother are still alive and since the incident happened, they have been crying uncontrollably over the loss of their grandchild. The children waved me bye-bye in the morning and left for school and Wisdom did not return home alive but as a corpse. There is nothing we can do rather than take solace in God,” he said.

The owner of the house where the water tank was situated, Chief Goddy Ekezie, a septuagenarian, was in police custody at Ogidi Police Division where he was said to be crying all through the day over the incident.

But his brother, Chief Okechukwu Ekezie, had led some other people to the families of the deceased to appeal to them to accept what happened as the Devil’s handiwork, an accident.

Some occupants of the house where the water tank was mounted described the landlord as a good man, a man with large heart who put smiles on people’s faces. They said the man singlehandedly maintained the road and culvert leading to the place, making the road motorable.

Anambra State police public relations officer, Mr. Haruna Mohammed, who confirmed the incident, said the children were rushed to the hospital where they were confirmed dead by the medical doctor on duty.

Said he: “On February 5, an overhead tank filled with water fell into a classroom of Royal Kings Foundation Nursery and Primary School, Nkpor-Agu, in Idemili North LGA of Anambra State.

“A police patrol team, led by DPO Ogidi Division, CSP Mark Ijarafu, rushed to the scene. On arrival, it was discovered that the overhead tank of about 800 gallons capacity, filled with water, fell from its high stand from a neighbouring house adjacent to the school onto the roof of the pre-nursery class and directly into the classroom. As a result, four children sustained various injuries and were rushed to Idemili Hospital, Nkpor, for medical attention. Unfortunately, two of the children, Wisdom Ezewudo, male, aged about three years, and a female pupil of about two years, whose identity is yet to be ascertained, were confirmed dead on arrival by a medical doctor. Two others, Chimelumeze Obelenwa, male, aged one year seven months, and Kosisochukwu Anthony, male, aged one year, 10 months, are responding to treatment.

“Meanwhile, Commissioner of Police John Abang has commiserated with the parents of the victims and ordered a discreet investigation to ascertain circumstances surrounding the incident.”