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Delta community leader drowns

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From PAUL OSUYI, Asaba

Community leader in Abala-Unor community, Ndokwa East Local Government Area of Delta State had allegedly drowned in River Ezuten when he plunged into the river four days ago.

The sudden disappearance of the chief said to be in his eighties, stunned the largely agrarian community who instantly constituted a search party made up of young men as soon as the alarm over the drowning of the octogenarian was raised.

Trouble was said to have started when the victim left his home on the fateful day to farm but while he was walking on the edge of Ezute River which had overflowed its banks as a result of daily rainfall, he misstep and plunged into the river.

A source said the victim's case was made worse due to the water hyacinth that had overtaken the river of late which prevented the aged man from swimming to safety.

According to the source, a few persons who were around saw him struggling against the tide and raised alarm which prompted the constitution of a search party to comb the river for the drowning chief.

However, four days after the search party went into exploration, their efforts were yet to yield results as at the time of filing this report yesterday.

People in the community have practically abandoned their economic activities as they anxiously await the outcome of the search team who come back with disappointing result every evening since the search started.

Chairman of Abala-Unor Development Union (AUDU), Mr. Onyekoeli Omordi confirmed the incident and blamed the water hyacinth that had taken over the river, for the inability of the aged man to swim to safety.

He said the chief was the third victim in recent time to cave into the river covered by water hyacinth and called on the government to come to the aid of the community in clearing the hyacinth.

“Hyacinth has taken over the river and it is made worse in this raining season that the river always overflows its banks. It is very difficult to know which area is deep and which part is shallow, they are all covered by hyacinth. We are appealing to the relevant authorities to come to our aid in clearing this grass,” another source stated.
