

# Rain of Ruin

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*One of the houses affected by the rain*

**For some residents of Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, the rainfall of a night has become a problem. Hammed Shittu writes**

The desire of the people of Ilorin in Kwara State to have rainfall came through on a recent week, but not without the troubles that came with it.

The downpour left tales of woes in the mouths of residents, when it subsided. For instance, properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed.

Before the incident, the people of the state had been having special prayers in mosques and churches while the traditionalists in the state were not left out in the special prayers for rainfall that would add values to the socio-economic development of the state.

Really, farmers and those in the agro-allied businesses in the state were also not left out in the special prayers having been affected by drought which hitherto had affected the production of food crops in most of the farms across the three senatorial districts of the state.

However, on August 21, 2015, the rainfall started around 4.00 p.m in some areas like Omosebi, Offa- Garage, Gaa- Akanbi, Pipeline, Royal Sekinat among others, and rapidly turned the joy of the residents into sorrow.

THISDAY checks revealed that the downpour which lasted for almost three hours in the city destroyed shops, houses, cars and other household goods and services.

A report said four people lost their lives in the incident.

It was also gathered that most drainages along major roads and streets in the areas were flooded, just as the flood entered into nearby houses and shops where properties were destroyed.

Some of the residents in the affected areas who spoke with journalists on condition of anonymity over the incident bemoaned the attitude of the state government since last year when the first flood happened in the affected areas without any prompt action to reverse the trend.

The residents said that, the inability of the state government to open channels of river banks in the areas led to the perennial cause of the flood and thereby affecting the free flow of water during the rainy season.

They claimed that the state government had promised to work on the channelisation of river banks along Omosebi, Pipeline, Royal Sekinat, among others, now over a year.

Speaking with journalists, some of the residents appealed to the federal government to intervene in the perennial flood occurrence in the affected areas of Ilorin metropolis, saying that the past efforts of the state government at solving the problem had not yielded any solution.

Alhaji Abdulwaheed Adigun, who owns an engineering company, Adisco Nigeria Limited, along Offa Garage Road said the area started to experience perennial flood disaster since the dualisation of the Unity-Offa Garage Road.

"The road was in single lane with about six-foot wide and deep drainage on both sides of the single lane road. We were not experiencing this annual flood then. But since government constructed the dual express road, the drainage on both sides of the road was reduced to about three feet. It's now narrow! So, it cannot contain the volume of water from such areas like Offa Garage, Gaa Akanbi, Omoseebi and the rest. And so we have this flooding.

"Whenever it rains and the drainage is filled up, it spreads to our houses, shops and pulled down our fences, destroyed our roads and other valuable property.

"For instance, with the assistance of the Ilorin West local government and the complementary efforts of members of this community, the road linking about 50,000 population of the area was done with construction of concrete culverts and stone filling. Unfortunately, this flood has destroyed the road and broke the culverts.

"The local government had given us a sum of N800,000 from the sum of N2 million we requested to do the culverts and the road. I had to get the stones from my sight to fill the road. It is now destroyed", he said.

Alhaji Adigun, therefore, called on the federal government to come to the aid of the people of the affected areas and end their suffering by taking up the challenge. He said the problem had gone beyond the capacity of the state government since it had not been able to fulfill its pledge at finding lasting solution to the perennial flooding problem.

Also speaking, Mr. Sunday Alabi, a community leader at Omoseebi area of Ilorin metropolis said the concerned authorities should assist the people of the area with the dredging of rivers and streams in the affected areas, adding that this should be complemented with channelisation of the rivers.

"We thank the state government for this bridge. But this our bridge at Omoseebi community linking us with other areas of the metropolis is narrow. More especially, it gathers refuse easily making it difficult for water to pass under freely. When refuse block the water flow it spreads to houses nearby. Government should do channelisation of the river and give us bigger and stronger bridge to contain this flood challenge. At least, we support the government with our votes, they should come to our support too in this our time of need", he said.

Innocent Ibe, who lives at Royal Shekinah area of the metropolis also said that residents of the area are usually apprehensive and frightened whenever it rained because of usually attendant flooding.

Ibe, who said that widening of the drainage on both sides of the Offa Garage-Challenge road would solve the perennial problem of flooding in the area, cautioned residents on their attitude of dumping refuse inside drainages.

"People are in the habit of dumping refuse into the drainage and that blocks the drainage and the result is flood, which often leads to destruction", he said.

In a swift reaction, the Kwara State governor, Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed, has directed the permanent secretaries in the ministry of Works and Environment to inspect the areas affected by the flood.

Speaking on the development, the Senior Special Assistant on Media and Communications to the governor, Dr. Muideen Akorede, said the state government is saddened by the incident.

He said the government officials directed to inspect the affected areas are expected to report on the damages, those affected and prevent a re-occurrence.

"You will recall that the state government set up a committee headed by the immediate past Commissioner for Works, Hon. Amuda Kannike, last year to come up with a recommendation on the affected areas and the people with a view to relocating them. Meanwhile, de-silting of drainage and construction of drainages opposite Royal Shekinah and other roads along the axis were planned for. Unfortunately, funds have affected our ability to complete the work because we could not give the contractor all the necessary money to complete the work on the road. Nevertheless, the governor has asked for reports on the incident with a view to implementing remedies and resettling those affected.

"Also, the KWARTMA officials have been drafted to the areas for on the spot assessment, control the traffic and get back to the state government with report", he said.

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