

50 feared drowned in Bayelsa boat mishap

By Samuel Oyadongha

YENAGOA — NO fewer than 50 persons including children are feared drowned in a boat mishap along the Angiama axis of the Nun River in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The official number of occupants of the ill-fated wooden cargo boat which departed Yenagoa, Monday, carrying traders and merchandise could not be ascertained but sources said between 40 and 50 passengers were on board.

The vessel was on its way to Korokorosei in the Southern Ijaw LGA when the incident occurred at about 2 p.m. Sources attributed it to excess weight and bad weather.

It was gathered that the ill-fated boat sank shortly after departing the Angiama jetty where some passengers had disembarked, and then ran into turbulent waves occasioned by bad weather.

The source said it was difficult for anyone to survive because once the sky got cloudy, all the passengers on

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the top deck including the boat deckhand were forced to relocate to the ground deck to take cover from the windy rain that lasted just a few minutes.

Rescue workers have recovered three bodies and are still battling to retrieve the remains of the other trapped passengers.

Chairman of the State Maritime Workers Union, Mr. Sylvanus Egele, who confirmed the incident yesterday was unsure of the number of persons on board the boat. He said more divers had been deployed in the area to help recover the trapped bodies.