



MARINE ACCIDENT REPORT

Marine/2024/04/10/P/001

Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau

Preliminary report on a Boat Accident that occurred at one nautical mile from Onono jetty in Anambra West LGA, Anambra State en route Asaba jetty in Asaba, Delta State on 10 April 2024 at about 12:30 h.



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SYNOPSIS

On 10 April, 2024 an outboard engine fibre boat conveying 12 Nollywood movie production crew and one boat driver departed Onono Jetty in Anambra West Local Government Area with destination, Asaba Jetty.

The outboard engine fibre boat on high speed crashed into a crossing local fishing canoe. The speed boat capsized and all occupants were flung into the Anam River. Five passengers were fatally injured and 7 were rescued alive.

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) was not officially notified but got to know about the accident through social media. Investigators from the Enugu Regional office of NSIB were dispatched to the accident site on 12 April, 2024.



1.0 FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 Narrative

On 10 April 2024, a crew comprising of some Nollywood actors and other production staff had concluded shooting a movie in Anam, a riverine area of Anambra West LGA of Anambra State and were to travel back to their base in Asaba, Delta state. The crew comprised of 12 persons. They boarded an outboard engine fibre boat with one driver for the journey back to Asaba.

At about 12:25 h, the crew departed from Onono boat jetty for Asaba. At about 1 Nm five minutes from Onono Boat Jetty the Boat collided with a wooden local fishing Canoe. It was reported that a wooden fishing canoe was crossing the boat's path. The Nollywood production crew were excited and there was rowdiness in the boat. The rowdiness in the boat distracted the driver and he did not look out as required. The boat was on high speed and the crossing canoe was moving much slower. The only occupant of the fishing Canoe was a 16 year old male.

Upon seeing that the boat was approaching fast, the fishing Canoe occupant jumped into the river and escaped.

The boat at a high speed collided with the canoe. This resulted in speed Boat capsizing and all twelve passengers and the Boat driver were flung into Anam River. Five passengers on the Boat were fatally injured while the remaining seven passengers and the Boat driver survived the crash.



Figure 1: A view of the shore from the location of the accident



Figure 2: Approximate scene of the accident



Figure 3: Outboard engine Boats at Asaba Jetty

1.2 Boat particulars

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Boat name: | Not available |
| Registered owner: | Not available |
| Niwa numbering: | Not available |
| Construction: | Made from fibre |
| Year of build: | Not available |
| Length of boat: | Not available |
| Gross tonnage: | Not applicable |
| Minimum safe manning: | One driver/operator |
| Authorised cargo: | Not available |



1.3 Voyage particulars

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Port of departure: | Onono boat jetty |
| Destination port: | Asaba boat jetty |
| Type of voyage: | Passenger transport |
| Cargo information: | Not available |
| Manning: | One boat driver/operator |

1.4 Marine casualty information

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Date and time: | 10 April, 2024 at about 12:30 h |
| Type of marine occurrence: | Accident |
| Location of occurrence: | 1 nautical mile, NE Onono jetty |
| Injuries/ fatalities: | 5 fatalities |
| Damage/environmental impact: | The boat sustained minor damage to the front deck and the fishing canoe sank into the Anam river |
| Persons onboard: | 12 passengers and one boat driver/operator |

1.5 The outboard engine fibre boat

The boat is constructed from synthetic fibre and is fitted with a Yamaha outboard engine to propel it. The boat was not registered with the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), the regulator of inland waterway transport in Nigeria.



Figure 4: The outboard engine fibre boat

1.6 The outboard engine fibre boat driver

The boat driver is an adult male Nigerian. The driver was not licensed to operate the boat.

1.7 National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA)

The National Inland Waterway Authority was established by NIWA Act, CAP N47LFN 2004 with following objectives:

- a) To improve and develop inland waterways for navigation.*
- b) Provide an alternative mode of transportation for the evacuation of economic goods and persons*
- c) To execute the objectives of the national transport policy as they concern inland waterways.*

The Authority has among others, the following functions:

- 1) Provide regulations for inland navigation.*
- 2) Ensure the development of infrastructural facilities for a national inland waterways network connecting the creeks and the rivers with the economic centers using the river-ports as nodal points for intermodal exchange.*
- 3) Ensure the development of indigenous technical and managerial skill to meet the challenges of modern inland waterways transportation.*
- 4) Issue and control licenses for inland water crafts and shipyard operators.*
- 5) Grant licenses to private inland waterway operators.*

1.8 Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

According to information from NIWA, all boat passengers must be provided with and wear, personal flotation devices (PFDs). It further stated that a PFD should be a life jacket.

Compulsory Provision and Wearing of PFDs must always be adhered to in accordance with Manufacturers' instructions, which should be displayed in a prominent place.



Figure 5: Personal flotation device (Life jacket)



1.9 Search, Rescue and Recovery

On 10 April, 2024, at about 14:00 h, Nigerian Police Marine force received a distress call about an accident between an outboard engine fibre boat conveying some Nollywood production crew on their way back to Asaba and a local wooden fishing canoe along the Anam River. It was reported that some persons were missing.

Some local fishermen and other boats near the accident sighted the capsized outboard fiber boat from a distance. It took between 20 to 30 minutes to reach the scene and rescue of the victims commenced. The boat operator's union, local fishermen and officials from the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) searched for, rescued and recovered the accident victims.

On the same day at about 18:00 h, two bodies were recovered from the river, and seven survivors were rescued and brought ashore. Among the two bodies initially recovered was a famous Nollywood actor. The remains of the two bodies were handed over to the president of the Nollywood actors association in Asaba who then deposited them in the morgue. Three passengers were still missing at close of search and rescue operations on that day.

On 11 April, 2024 at about 19:00 h, two more bodies were afloat in the river and they were recovered.

The next day, 12 April 2024, the body of the last passenger was recovered at about 01:00 h. These three bodies were buried on an Island in the middle of the river.

The outboard engine fibre boat was taken to the Marine Office in Onitsha and the Boat driver taken into police custody.

2.0 ANALYSIS

2.1 The Accident

On 10 April 2024, some Nollywood actors and production staff had concluded shooting a movie in Anam, a riverine area in Anambra West Local Government Area of Anambra State and were to travel back to their base in Asaba, Delta state. Twelve passengers and one Boat driver boarded the outboard engine fibre boat.

A local fishing Canoe with one male occupant was on the waterway. It was reported that the occupant was a 16 year old male who had been sent on an errand by his parents. The fishing Canoe was being paddled; hence, the canoe was moving at a slow speed.

Evidence available to NSIB indicated that the occupants of the Boat were rowdy. In a boat of this size carrying this many people, it is expected that every passenger should be calm and seated in accordance with the seating arrangement. Also, any form of noise or rowdiness is capable of distracting the Boat driver and potentially resulting in catastrophe.

This rowdiness in the boat might have distracted the driver and he was not looking as required hence, did not notice a Canoe crossing his path. The Boat was on high speed and the crossing Canoe was moving much slower. Upon seeing the Boat was approaching fast, the fishing Canoe occupant jumped into the river and escaped unhurt.

At about 12:30 h, the Boat crashed into the crossing Canoe at high speed. This resulted in the Boat capsizing and all twelve passengers and the driver were flung into the Anam river.

Out of the twelve passengers and one driver, only one person was wearing a Life Jacket as required. This passenger survived the accident.

Five passengers on the boat were fatally injured while seven passengers and boat driver survived.

2.2 Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

A life jacket (or personal floatation device) is one of the most important pieces of safety equipment on a boat.

More than two thirds of all boat fatalities are drowning incidents and 90% of these victims did not wear life jackets. Life jackets save lives, they are part of the requirements for water transportation.

The purpose of a life jacket is to keep the user afloat in water, allow the wearer to be seen and to alert rescuers or witnesses that a person is in water, especially in low visibility situations, greatly increasing their likelihood of survival.

A life jacket should be worn by everyone in open water when; in a boat or sailing and when using watercrafts such as canoes, or paddle boards.

If all the passengers in the boat had life jackets on, this would have kept them afloat in the river for some time before being rescued.

However, out of the twelve passengers, only one person was wearing a life jacket and was among the survivors. If all the passengers in the boat had their life jackets on, they could have stayed afloat in the river for some time before being rescued.

2.3 Search, Rescue and Recovery

Some local fishermen and other boats near the accident sighted the capsized outboard engine fibre boat from a distance. It took between 20 to 30 minutes to reach the scene and rescue of the victims commenced. The time that rescue came was not early enough. However, if there had been effective communication with and between the departure and arrival jetties, more passengers could have been rescued alive from the river.

The search, rescue and recovery of the accident victims was done by officials from the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), boat operators union and local fishermen.



2.4 National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA)

The National Inland Waterways Authority was established by NIWA ACT, CAP N47LFN 2004 with some objectives and functions as contained in the act.

The evidence available to the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) shows that NIWA has been conducting public enlightenment and sensitization to educate boat owners, operators and passengers using the nation's waterways on the importance and need to adhere to safety codes and precautions on the waterways.

This public education of users and operators on the nation's inland waterways has evidently not been adhered to.

If the safety advocacy carried out by NIWA had been adhered to, this accident would not have occurred and if it had, there may not have been fatalities recorded.

3.0 FINDINGS

1. The boat driver was not certified.
2. The fibre boat was not registered with the National Inland Waterways Authority
3. The outboard engine fibre boat was carrying 12 passengers and one boat driver.
4. There was only one person on the wooden fishing canoe.
5. This rowdiness in the boat distracted the driver and he was not looking out as required.
6. The boat was on high speed and the crossing canoe was moving at a much slower speed.
7. The only occupant of the canoe, on sighting the fast approaching boat jumped into the river and escaped
8. The boat collided with the canoe at a high speed which resulted in the boat capsizing and all persons onboard were flung into Anam River.
9. Five passengers on the boat were fatally injured while the remaining seven passengers and the driver survived the crash.
10. Only one passenger on the outboard engine fibre boat was wearing a life jacket.
11. The only passenger wearing a life jacket came with it and was not provided by the operator.
12. The passenger wearing the life jacket was one of the survivors.
13. The boat was fitted with an outboard engine.
14. There was no manifest of passengers and persons onboard the boat.
15. Rescue operation was not timely and there were no trained divers around to assist in the operation.



4.0 SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) should:

4.1 Safety Recommendations 001-2024

Ensure that all boats involved in commercial activities (goods and passengers) within the national inland waterways are registered.

4.2 Safety Recommendations 002-2024

Ensure adequate safety measures are implemented and enforced in our inland waterways

4.3 Safety Recommendations 003-2024

Increase the sensitization and enlightenment of boat operators on safe operations and security along the Anam river and our inland waterways.

4.4 Safety Recommendations 004-2024

Provide training to local fishermen and boat association members as rescue divers so as to provide prompt rescue in the event of an occurrence in our inland waterways.

4.5 Safety Recommendations 005-2024

Increase regulatory oversight to ensure adequate insurance for the boat, drivers and passengers operating on inland waterways.