

CHAPTER 1

THE EARLY PEOPLE OF EAST AFRICAN COAST BEFORE 1000AD

1. It's not very clear who the first people to live at the East African coast were.
2. There is a wide belief that the first people to live at the East African coast were Hunters and Food gatherers.
3. The Europeans called them Bushmen and Hottentots.
4. Modern Historians refer to them as the San and Khoi Khoi.
5. The San and the Khoi Khoi are believed to have lived in East Africa in areas of Kenya and southern Tanganyika.
6. They were displaced by stronger and more organised migrants; the Bantu and Cushites.
7. The Bantu came from central and west Africa as early as 500AD.
8. On their arrival at the coast, they settled at Mombasa, Kilwa, Sofala and Malindi.
9. They took up farming along the East African coast.
10. The Cushites on the other hand came from either North or North East especially from Ethiopia.
11. The Cushites were comprised of the Galla and the Somalis.
12. At the East African coast, they settled to the North and took up animal rearing.
13. They were then divided into Northern and Southern Cushites.
14. The earliest groups were joined by the Arabs and Persians around the 7th century.

WAY OF LIFE AT THE EAST AFRICAN COAST BEFORE THE COMING OF THE ARABS (BY 1000AD)

1. By 1000AD, the East African Coast had three groups of people namely: The Bushmen, Bantu and Cushites.
2. They were organised politically, socially and economically.
3. **Politically** the settlements were independent with independent leaders, for example the Bantu had chiefs.
4. The coastal settlements also had their armies though small.
5. The small settlements were not centralized.
6. They were organised based on clans and their leaders were therefore clan heads.
7. **Economically** the Bantu were cultivators, who grew crops like millet and bananas.

8. The early coastal settlers also carried out fishing.
9. Wild animals were also hunted by the coastal people for their meat.
10. They carried out trade on a small scale, where foodstuffs were exchanged for iron tools like hoes from neighbours.
11. Iron working was important too. Hoes for cultivation were made while spears and arrow heads were made for defense purposes.
12. The Cushites were animal keepers. They reared cattle, goats and sheep.
13. The coastal inhabitants also mined gold to exchange with neighbours.
14. **Socially** the Bantu at the coast lived in settled communities.
15. The Bantu built small huts.
16. Bushmen lived in caves and under big trees.
17. The Bushmen were mobile who moved from one place to another.
18. The coastal inhabitants worshipped small gods.
19. They believed in life after death.
20. Some of the early inhabitants were cannibals. They lived on human flesh since some of them had sharp teeth.

Revision questions

- i. Who were the earliest people at the East African coast?
- ii. Describe their way of life at the East African coast by 1000AD.