

CHAPTER 7

MIGRATIONS AND PEOPLING OF EAST AFRICA

Different groups of people migrated into East Africa and they included the Bantu, Luo, and Plain Nilotes among others.

THE BANTU MIGRATION INTO EAST AFRICA

WHO WERE THE BANTU?

1. The word Bantu is used to refer to a group of people who speak common languages with the root word “NTU”
2. Scholars are still debating the origin of the Bantu.
3. Bantu are believed to be the largest group of people in East Africa.
4. The Bantu of East Africa include several people such as Banyoro, Bagisu, Sukuma, Rufigi, Zaramo, Yao, Pogoro, Sangu Nyamwezi, Gogo and Baganda among others.
5. Bantu belong to the Negroid race that is believed to have come from the Niger Congo area.
6. They migrated to East Africa before 1000 A.D
7. The Bantu of East Africa however are believed to have had a common origin.
8. Still there are scholars who hold the view that Bantu migrated from West Africa around Cameroon Highlands.
9. The migration of the Bantu into East Africa was not accidental. They were propelled or forced by factors such as population pressure, need for fertile lands and so on.

CAUSES OF THE MIGRATION OF THE BANTU IN EAST AFRICA

1. Population pressure that resulted into shortage of land forced Bantu to migrate into East Africa.
2. Soil exhaustion that had been caused by overstocking and overgrazing in their cradle land led to Bantu migration.
3. Internal conflicts among the Bantu such as family quarrels caused the Bantu migration.
4. External conflicts and pressures impulse to the Bantu from neighbouring communities, for example the pygmies caused the Bantu to migrate.
5. Diseases and Epidemics such as small pox, Nagana that affected them with their animals.
6. The natural calamities such as floods especially for those who had been living around forested areas must have caused them to migrate.
7. Unsuitable geographical climate must also have caused the Bantu to migrate.

8. The need to expand and export their cultures like iron working to other areas.
9. Poor leadership in their cradle land must have caused the Bantu migration.
10. Peer pressure and group influence where some Bantu migrated simply because they had seen relatives or their friends moving.
11. The youth were escaping from the authority of the old. They needed independence.
12. The Southward extension of the desert which threatened and disgusted the Bantu forced them to migrate.
13. The search for water for their animals and for their own consumption forced the Bantu to migrate.
14. Search for good and better pastures in that having been animal keepers, they lacked pastures in their cradle land hence they migrated to get such pastures.
15. Adventurism whereby the Bantu simply migrated due to the love to know what was happening beyond their areas.
16. Occurrence of misfortunes like death of beloved ones made the Bantu insecure hence leading to migration.

THE COURSE OF THE MIGRATION AND THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BANTU INTO EAST AFRICA

1. It's not very clear as to when the Bantu started their migration into East Africa. However it is assumed that by around 1000 A.D, the Bantu had started migrating.
2. Their migration was gradual and seasonal.
3. They had both forward and backward migrations.
4. The Bantu did not move wholesomely but they moved in smaller units of either as families but not as tribes.
5. There were four clear migration movements of the Bantu into E. Africa namely: - Interlacustrine Bantu, Central and Northern Tanzania Bantu, Coastal and Highland Bantu then the Southern Tanzania Bantu.
6. The interlacustrine Bantu included: Baganda, Banyoro, Banyankole, Batoro, Bagisu, and Burundians. They moved from the Congo forest before 1000 A.D.
7. **The Interlacustrine Bantu** were attracted to settle north and west of Lake Victoria due to fertility of the land.
8. They included the Baganda, Bakiga, Baluya, and Bagisu among others.

9. The Bantu in this category were agriculturists and that is why they occupied areas with plenty of rainfall and fertile soils.
10. The Interlacustrine Bantu used the route between L. Albert and L Edward.
11. These Bantu at a latter stage were conquered by the Chwezi.
12. Another group of Bantu moved to Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya.
13. These gave rise to tribes such as Gisu, Luyia and Samia.
14. **The Central and Western Tanzanian Bantu** included Ha, Vinza, Sukuma, and Kamba and others.
15. These used the route between Lakes Edward and Tanganyika.
16. They first settled in central Tanzania.
17. At first these Bantu were farmers but changed to pastoralism and latter to trade like the Nyamwezi.
18. The central and Northern Tanzanian Bantu seem to have migrated through Karagwe, Toro, and Ankole and Bukoba areas before the Chwezi invasion.
19. The migration of central and western Tanzania Bantu was slow and gradual. It took place between 1000 and 1300.
20. From 1300, these Bantu migrants continued to live in small groups where their rulers were called “NTEMI” chiefs.
21. **The coastal and highland Bantu or the Eastern Tanzania** was another group of Bantu who migrated into East Africa.
22. These included: the Taita, Pokomo, Pare, Kamba, Kikuyu, Embu, Chuka and others.
23. This Bantu group crossed the Tanzania plateau between 1000 and 1300 A.D .From Taita, they dispersed to several areas.
24. The Taita dispersal was slow and took place between 1300 and 1500 A.D.
25. When other groups of Bantu were forced out of the Taita area, the Chagga and pare remained. The Chagga developed a centralised type of government.
26. The groups which were forced out between 1300 A.D and 1500A.D took two different directions.
27. The first group included Pokomo, Giriyana, Segeju and other related groups moved north wards along the coast to Shungwaya where they became known as the coastal Bantu.

28. The second group from the Taita dispersal was the Mount Kenya or High lands people. The Highland Bantu included the Chuka, Kamba, Embu and others.
29. The Chuka came up to the Tana River and arrived in about 1300 A.D. The Embu followed them and arrived in about 1450, and then the Kikuyu arrived in around 1500.
30. These highland people were confined largely to the forest areas by the Masai between 1600 and 1800 A.D. They finally got land from the Dorobo.
31. **The Southern Tanzania Bantu** were the last Bantu group. These included Mwera, Luguru, Makonde, Rufigi and Zaramo.
32. They had first moved to the coast and Southern plateau areas from west and south, where they established a strong coastal society mixing up with the earlier groups of hunters and Khoisan.
33. Another group of Southern Tanzania Bantu was agricultural in nature and included Bena, Ngindo, Pogoro, Hehe and so on.

EFFECTS OF THE BANTU MIGRATION UPON THE PEOPLE AMONG WHOM THEY SETTLED

1. The effects were political, social and economic in nature.
2. They were also both positive and negative.
3. The Bantu introduced the art of iron working in several parts of East Africa which improved agricultural production.
4. They took away the independence of the people they found.
5. They introduced centralized systems of administration in several parts of East Africa.
6. The Bantu introduced new fighting methods to the people among whom they settled.
7. Bantu displaced the original people from their areas as they were much stronger.
8. The Bantu led to evolution of new tribes like Baganda, Banyoro, Bagishu, Pokomo, Chagga, and so on.
9. Population increase was realised in several parts of East Africa.
10. Land pressure resulted into the areas where the Bantu settled in East Africa.
11. New crops were introduced by the Bantu into East Africa like Bananas, Beans and so on.
12. The Bantu absorbed the smaller communities like the Sanje.
13. Introduced crop growing on a large scale into East Africa.

14. New Bantu languages were also introduced, for example Luganda, Lutooro, Runyoro and many others.
15. They introduced construction of more permanent houses into East Africa.
16. Inter-marriages resulted so that new tribes similar to the Bantu were formed.
17. The Bantu grabbed land from the people among whom they settled in East Africa.
18. The Bantu developed trade in East Africa. They came with several trading items like bark cloth and iron implements.
19. Forested areas were cleared for agriculture by the Bantu wherever they settled.
20. The Bantu fought several wars over land and other needs which resulted into insecurity.

Revision questions

- i. Who were the Bantu?
- ii. What were the causes of the migration of the Bantu into East Africa?
- iii. Describe the migration and the settlement of the Bantu into East Africa.
What were the effects of the Bantu migration upon the people of East Africa?

THE Ngoni MIGRATION INTO EAST AFRICA

WHO WERE THE Ngoni?

1. The Ngoni were a group of Bantu who came from southern Africa to East Africa after 1850.
2. They left Southern Africa as a result of the “MFECANE”, a period of trouble and war in South Africa, caused by rise of aggressive leaders like Shaka of Zulu.
3. The Ngoni belonged to a larger Bantu family from Southern Africa who was known as the Nguni.
4. The Ngoni had relatives such as the Ndwandwe.
5. The Ngoni were a war like community. They were used to fighting and it is not surprising that they invaded the East African people.
6. The Ngoni like any other Bantu society had centralized authority, they were farmers and fisher men.
7. From southern Africa, the Ngoni settled in southern and central Tanzania dislocating the societies they found living in East Africa.

REASONS FOR THE Ngoni MIGRATION INTO EAST AFRICA

1. The “Mfecane” revolution, that is to say the period of wars in South Africa caused their migration. They were running away from trouble caused by Shaka’s wars of expansion.
2. Population pressure, that is to say an increase in population in their area of South Africa caused scarcity of resources that forced them to migrate to look for more.
3. Specifically, Shaka’s wars of expansion caused the Ngoni migration.
4. Internal conflicts among the Ngoni in Southern Africa forced them to migrate.
5. External pressure and conflicts caused the Ngoni migration into East Africa.
6. Adventure, that is to say need to know what lay beyond Southern Africa.
7. Search for pastures for their animals caused the Ngoni migration.
8. Search for water for both animal and human consumption caused the Ngoni migration.
9. White invasion in Southern Africa, the Boers, who came from Holland into South Africa forced the Ngoni to migrate.
10. Land and soil exhaustion must have led to Ngoni migration due to over stocking and over grazing.
11. Able leadership, that is to say the charismatic leaders like Zwangendaba and Maputo encouraged Ngoni to migrate.
12. Epidemic diseases like small pox and malaria also forced the Ngoni to migrate.
13. Need to establish independent communities into East Africa forced Ngoni to migrate.
14. Poor climatic conditions in several parts of Southern Africa forced the Ngoni to migrate to East Africa.
15. Group influence, that is to say some Ngoni simply migrated because family members or friends had migrated.

COURSE OF THE NGONI MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT INTO EAST AFRICA

1. The period of “Mfecane” revolution mainly caused the Ngoni migration.
2. The Ngoni left Southern Africa in about 1820.
3. Ngoni migrated from Southern Africa into two large groups.
4. The first and largest group was led by chief Zwangendaba.
5. As they moved North ward from Southern Africa, other people joined them and formed a large a large group with a large army.
6. Zwangendaba’s group crossed river Zambezi in 1835.

7. They travelled through Malawi and settled around Fipa (Ufipa) in around 1840.
8. The second and smaller group of Ngoni from Southern Africa was the Maseko- Ngoni.
9. The Maseko-Ngoni was led by a chief known as chief Maputo.
10. These moved through Mozambique and Eastern Malawi and settled at Songea.
11. In 1848, the courageous Zwangendaba died and upon his death, his group split into five different groups.
12. Three of the groups went back to Central Africa, where perhaps they settled in Malawi and Zambia.
13. The two groups that never went back were the Tuta-Ngoni and Gwangara -Ngoni
14. The Tuta Ngoni moved and settled in North Eastern Tanzania among the Nyamwezi in around 1850. It was this group that took the young Mirambo into captivity in Bugomba.
15. The Gwangara moved eastwards from Ufipa under the leadership of a man called Zulu-Gama; they defeated the Hehe and Sangu.
16. In around 1860, the Gwangara group had reached Songea where Maputo's group had settled earlier. At Songea, the Ngoni had fierce battles among themselves which led into further division.
17. In 1860, the Gwangara Ngoni settled at Songea after defeating the Maseko Ngoni and driving them away.
18. One of the split groups were known to be under chief Maputo, they moved backward and crossed river Ruvuma.
19. The other group that had split fled northwards to Morogoro and they came to be known as the Mbuga Ngoni.

WHY THE NGONI WERE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR INVASION AND SETTLEMENT INTO EAST AFRICA

The Ngoni registered success in their invasion and settlement upon the people of East Africa because of the following.

1. The Ngoni succeed in their invasion due to a number of factors some being intentional and others being accidental.
2. The Ngoni had acquired super military techniques from Shaka, the Zulu King.

3. The Ngoni were very experienced in warfare, resulting from the “Mfecane” revolution, that is to say the period of wars in Southern Africa had equipped them with better warfare.
4. The Ngoni were Fortunate to have got wonderful and charismatic leaders like. Zwangendaba and Maputo.
5. Their soldiers were better trained and better equipped than their counterparts.
6. They absorbed and conquered young people in their invasion, which enabled them to build a much more dependable force.
7. Full determination and courage that the Ngoni had led them to victory.
8. The disunity and lack of harmony among the East African people greatly assisted the Ngoni to succeed.
9. Ngoni had highly disciplined soldiers who respected their commanders and this automatically made them to succeed.
10. The Ngoni had numerical strength, that is to say they had come in large numbers.
11. Superior military tactics like cow-horn military formation in which they engulfed and easily surrounded their enemies led to their success.
12. The Ngoni fighters were very aggressive and ruthless. They could not spare their enemies who could not surrender.
13. The Ngoni met and encountered weak opponents who could not wage serious resistance against them.
14. The Ngoni fighters were very motivated, that is to say they were promised rewards after any victory.
15. Surprise attacks that the Ngoni organised against their opponents had to bring victory on to their side, because they found people who were not ready at all to fight them.

IMPACTS OR EFFECTS OF THE NGONI INVASION

1. The effects were destructive and constructive. Still they were political, social and economic in outlook.
2. The Ngoni superimposed themselves on to the people they defeated.
3. Strong leaders emerged out of the Ngoni migration, for example Mirambo and NyunguYa Mawe.
4. The Ngoni invasion disrupted and affected economic activities like agriculture. This resulted into famine.

5. They conquered and absorbed East African people and the East African people forgot about the culture.
6. The Ngoni invasion disrupted peace in several parts of East Africa.
7. Many East African people copied the Ngoni military organisation. They were able to use the same on the Ngoni invaders.
8. Slave trade activities increased in several parts of East Africa due to the confusion that was created by Ngoni invaders.
9. Property like plantations were destroyed hence famine set in.
10. Loss of lives due to deadly fighting with Ngoni invaders.
11. Depopulation was experienced in several areas, especially in Southern Tanzania due to serious fighting.
12. East African communities were looted and plundered by the Ngoni invaders, which led to untold poverty and suffering.
13. The Ngoni introduced a number of crops into East Africa, for example crops like Sorghum and pumpkins among others.
14. The Ngoni invasion prepared East African people for the challenge against imperialism, for example chief Mkwawa of the Hehe used the acquired military tactics from Ngoni against Germans.
15. The Ngoni displaced East African communities due to their strength, for example the Yao were highly displaced by the Ngoni.
16. Some societies faced the challenge of extinction or being wiped out example the Bena, Sangu and others.
17. The Ngoni invasion inspired or encouraged several East African communities to form protective armies. This was true of Mirambo who formed the Ruga Ruga.

Revision questions

- i. Who were the Ngoni?
- ii. Why did they migrate into East Africa?
- iii. Describe their migration and settlement into East Africa.
- iv. Why did the Ngoni succeed in the establishment and settlement of themselves into east Africa?

- v. What were the impacts of Ngoni invasion upon the people of east Africa?

THE MASAI MIGRATION INTO EAST AFRICA

ORIGIN OF THE MASAI

1. The Masai are referred to as Plain Nilotes because they settled on the plains.
2. They originally belonged to the same group with the Karamojong, Iteso, Turkana and Kumam.
3. Their cradle land is believed to have been in the Lake Rudolf areas where they separated from the Iteso.
4. They existed as several small groups but they spoke similar language, common way of life and follow the same customs and beliefs.
5. Presently the Masai are identified as the Uashin Gisu Masai, Laikipia Masai, Samburu, Iloikop, Purko and Kwavi Masai.
6. The Masai lived in Central Kenya although some spread in Northern Tanzania around mountain Kilimanjaro.
7. They Masai were great lovers of cattle which was their most important cultural activity.
8. Some of the Masai on settling in East Africa adopted agriculture especially those who lost cattle to raiders and animal diseases.

REASONS FOR THE MIGRATION OF THE MASAI INTO EAST AFRICA

1. The cradle land is believed to have been in the Lake Rudolf areas where they separated from the Iteso.
2. The Masai were referred to as Plain Nilotes because they settled on the plains.
3. Being pastoralists it is clear that the Masai suffered from overstocking and it is possible that they moved to look for space for their animals.
4. They must have moved to look for pasture and water for their animals.
5. Internal conflicts, that is to say quarrels and wrangles among the Masai could have caused problems within the families and clans leading to their migration from their motherland.
6. Overpopulation among the Masai in the Lake Rudolf areas must have also made them to disperse into different areas.

7. External attacks from among the neighbours like the Galla forced the ancestors of the Masai to move down into East Africa.
8. The Masai were naturally warriors hence it is possible that they moved out to exert pressure on the smaller groups.
9. Drought must have caused much suffering because it reduced on the out put of pasture hence leading to their migration.
10. Famine which led to starvation among the Masai groups forced them out.
11. They had a culture of moving from place to place given the fact that they were pastoralists.
12. Diseases among people and animals like small pox and Nagana respectively was yet another reason for the Masai dispersion to different parts of East Africa.
13. Adventure and exploration where the Masai especially the youth who wanted to know what was happening in other areas forced the Masai to move out of their cradle land.
14. Some of the Masai on settling in East Africa adopted agriculture an indication that they also needed fertile soils.

THE COURSE OF THE MASAI MIGRATION

1. The cradle land of the Masai is believed to have been in the Lake Rudolf areas where they separated from the Iteso and Karamojong.
2. The Iteso left first together with the Karamojong to the North Eastern corner of Uganda.
3. The tradition of the Masai reveals that they were led by their leaders from Rudolf areas to the Uasin Gishu plateau north of Kitale.
4. It is also advanced that about 1000 years ago, the ancestors of the Masai dispersed and moved to the eastern side of Lake Rudolf.
5. Masai migration was an invasion characterized by warfare on the tribes found in the areas they settled.
6. They broke up into six groups namely Uashin Gisu Masai, Laikipia Masai, Samburu, Iloikop, Purko and Kwavi Masai.
7. The groups spread in the Central part of the Kenya Highland.
8. Others moved down the Rift Valley into Tanganyika.
9. They furthest group to settle in the north was Samburu sub group who settled to the south of Lake Rudolf. They raided the neighbouring tribes like the Galla and Rendile in the North East. The Pokot and Turkana in the west were also raided.

10. Another group of the Masai settled at the Uasin Gishu plateau west of Lake Baringo where they fought and displaced the Kalenjin to the highlands. They also fought the Nandi.
11. Yet another Masai group settled on the Laikipia plateau on the Eastern side of Lake Baringo. They became known as Laikipia Masai.
12. More group of the Masai spread and occupied the Rift valley corridor and along the Lakes Natron, Naivasha and Elementaita. They formed two major groups, the Iloikop who became farmers and Purko who remained pastoralists.
13. Another group of the Masai settled in Ngong hills near Nairobi while others displaced the Nyika and Galla near the Kenyan coast.
14. The furthest group of the Masai moved to the south of Kilimanjaro in Northern Tanganyika but further expansion was blocked by the Hehe and Gogo Bantu groups.

EFFECTS OF THE MASAI MIGRATION

1. The Masai migration had both positive and negative effects upon the people among whom they settled.
2. Their effects of migration were also political, social and economic in nature.
3. The Masai migration led to the break up of some tribes, for example the Kalenjin broke into Pokot, Kipsigis, Marsabit and Tuken.
4. Other tribes were absorbed by the Masai community, for example some of the Kalenjin were absorbed. It was only the Nandi who challenged the Masai.
5. Yet others were displaced, for example the Totoga and Karamojong were displaced by the Masai.
6. The Masai traded with people among whom they settled, for example the Kikuyu from whom they got goods in exchange for their cattle products.
7. They also participated in the long distance trade with their neighbours.
8. The Masai wars of cattle raiding caused a lot of instabilities among their neighbours.
9. Many people lost their lives as a result of raiding of the Masai hence leading to depopulation.
10. The Masai were able to intermarry with the people among whom they settled peacefully, for example they intermarried with the Kikuyu and Chagga.
11. The Masai were also able to borrow some words from among some tribes like the Bantu.

12. The Masai introduced their culture among the people whom they settled, for example the Kikuyu and Embu copied the Masai culture of forbidding the women from eating the meat of wild animals and birds.
13. The Masai also introduced their fighting weapons among some Bantu tribes, for example large oval-shaped shields.
14. The Masai adopted the practice of circumcision of both male and female from the highland Nilotes.

Revision questions

- i. Describe the origin of the Masai people.
- ii. What were the causes of the migration of the Masai?
- iii. Describe the course of the Masai migration.
- iv. How were the people among whom they settled affected by their migration?

THE MIGRATION OF THE PLAIN NILOTES INTO EAST AFRICA

THE MIGRATION OF THE ITESO INTO EAST AFRICA

REASONS FOR THE ITESO MIGRATION

1. The Iteso belonged to Plain Nilotes.
2. The Iteso belonged to the Jie group that included the Turkana, Kuman, Karamojong and Iteso
3. Population increase which led to scarcity of essentials like land led to the migration of the Iteso.
4. External conflicts exerted onto the Iteso by the nearby communities especially from Ethiopia also forced them out of their motherland.
5. Internal conflicts, that is to say, quarrels and wrangles within the Iteso themselves like within families and clans.
6. Adventurism and exploration, where the Iteso wanted to know what was happening in other areas.
7. Overstocking and overgrazing that led to land exhaustion might have also forced them out.
8. Animal and animal Diseases like small pox and Nagana was yet another reason for the Iteso migration into East Africa.
9. They had a culture of moving since they were already pastoralists.
10. Famine that led to starvation forced them out of their motherland to go and look for survival.

11. Drought that caused much suffering because it reduced agricultural output also led to their migration.
12. Search for water for their animals and for their domestic use.
13. Search for pastures for their animals.
14. Other Iteso moved on seeing their friends moving. They were influenced by their friends and therefore some moved aimlessly.

COURSE OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE ITESO INTO EAST AFRICA

1. The Iteso came in from the direction of Ethiopia.
2. They belonged to the Jie group together with the Karamojong, Kumam and Turkana.
3. They were pastoralists and from their cradle land, they settled in the area of present Karamoja.
4. By A.D 1500, the Iteso had already moved to their present day Teso land.
5. They occupied Soroti, Kumi and Ngora areas.
6. The migration of the Iteso from Karamoja took place at the end of the 18th century.
7. By 1730, the Iteso were established on the shores of Lake Bisinia in Kumi and the Soroti area in Usuku.
8. By the beginning of the 19th century, the population of the Iteso had increased in Usuku and there was a further dispersal in all directions.
9. Some Iteso went to western Kenya where they mixed with the Bukusu.
10. During their migration from Usuku, those who remained in Uganda came into contact with the Langi.
11. Some Iteso displaced the Bamasaaba, Bagisu and Bakusu who were forced to the mountain Elgon areas.
12. The Iteso continued to expand to Tororo areas displacing the Banyala and the Bagwere.

EFFECTS OF THE ITESO MIGRATION UPON THE PEOPLE AMONG WHOM THEY SETTLED

15. The Iteso migration had both positive and negative effects upon the people among whom they settled.
16. The effects were also political, social and economic in nature.

17. Their arrival into east Africa led to population increase especially where they settled peacefully.
18. Their migration led to permanent settlements in Eastern Uganda and Western Kenya.
19. The Iteso were able to introduce a new language Ateso among the people whom they settled.
20. They were also responsible for the introduction of cattle rearing in the eastern part of Uganda and other parts of Kenya.
21. The Iteso introduced barter trade among the Luo and the Bantu. They exchanged hides, skins, goats and ivory for bark cloth, beads, iron implements and cooking utensils from the Banyoro.
22. As the Iteso settled in east Africa, they were able to introduce new weapons among the people whom they settled, for example introduced spears that they called “Emachar” used for defence.
23. They came with the idea of building grass thatched huts decorated with cow dung on both the floors and the walls. This practice was introduced among the people whom they settled.
24. Still the Iteso introduced the idea of brewing beer called “Ajon” brewed from millet and sorghum.
25. Crafts making where baskets were woven from plants and stools carved from wood was also introduced by the Iteso.
26. There was widespread raiding between the Iteso and their neighbours as a result of their migration. They raided the Bagishu and Karamojong.
27. The Iteso formed new decentralized societies in the Eastern part of Uganda and western Kenya.
28. The Iteso were also able to acquire the idea of practicing farming from the bantu among whom they settled although they retained their habit of cattle rearing.

Revision questions

- i. Why did the plain Nilotes migrate into East Africa?
- ii. Describe the course of their migration and settlement into East Africa.
- iii. Why did the Iteso migrate to East Africa?
- iv. Describe the course of their migration and settlement into East Africa.
- v. What were the effects of the Iteso migration into East Africa?

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF RIVER LAKE NILOTES OR THE LUO INTO EAST AFRICA

WHO WERE THE LUO?

1. The Luo were a group of people who were at times referred to as the River- Lake Nilotes.
2. They were also referred to as “Jonam” meaning the River- Lake People.
3. Their motherland was Bahr-el-Ghazel in Southern Sudan.
4. While in Sudan they were related to three other groups of the Nilotes. These were: the Nuer, Shilluk and Dinka.
5. The Luo were ancestors of the Alur, Acholi, Jophadhola and the Kenyan Luo.
6. The Luo were originally Pastoralists, that is to say they were animal Keepers.
7. They also carried out farming on a small scale.
8. They were sometimes fishermen because they lived along the banks of River Nile.
9. They arrived in East Africa around the 15th Century.
10. They were the founders of the Bito dynasty of Bunyoro-Kitara.
11. The Luo are now one of the largest tribes in East Africa.

REASONS FOR THE MIGRATION OF THE LUO INTO EAST AFRICA

It is not very clear why the Luo left their motherland, however the following reasons have been suggested to explain their migration.

1. Overpopulation caused the migration of the Luo.
2. Desire of getting pastures and water for their animals after all they were pastoralists.
3. Internal quarrels or conflicts within their families also forced the Luo into East Africa.
4. External pressure, that is to say the pressure from the nearby tribes and Ethiopian side caused the Luo to migrate.
5. Natural calamities like floods might have caused the Luo to migrate.
6. The need to export their political and social cultures forced them to migrate.
7. Adventure and exploration, that is to say the need to know what was happening elsewhere.
8. Overstocking and overgrazing that cause land exhaustion led the Luo to migrate.
9. They had a culture of moving since they were pastoralists. They were migratory in nature.
10. Search for fertile lands that could support agriculture caused them to migrate. The Luo also carried out small scale cultivation.

11. Group influence. Some Luo simply migrated because they saw their friends and family members migrating.
12. Famine that led to starvation might have also forced the Luo to migrate.
13. Diseases like small pox and Nagana forced the Luo to migrate.
14. Southward expansion of the desert greatly caused the Luo to migrate.
15. It is also believed that the Luo were invaded by locusts especially those who carried out crop cultivation.
16. The Luo were also naturally warriors who were used to fighting. It is possible that they migrated to get areas of control.

COURSE OF THE LUO MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT INTO EAST AFRICA

1. Between 1300 and 1450A.D, the Nilotes in Southern Sudan began to send groups to look for new areas for settlement, pasture and water. Some of these moved northwards. These were the Nuer, Shilluk and Dinka.
2. The Luo group went up the Nile or southwards. They kept close to the waterside because they needed water for their animals as well as for themselves. Sudan was generally a dry place.
3. From Bahr-el-Ghazel, the Luo moved up to Pubungu in the present day Pakwach in west Nile where they first settled.
4. It was at Pubungu that the legend reveals that there was a conflict between the two brothers, Giipir (Nyiiipir) and Labongo over the spear and the bead. There was a split.
5. One group led by Giipir and Tifool moved Northwest and settled among the Lendu, Okebu and Madi. They intermarried with them and gave rise to the Alur people.
6. The second group from Pubungu was led by Labongo. They moved Northeast to the present day Acholiland, where they met the Madi, mixed with them and in the process intermarried with them and gave rise to the Acholi people.
7. The third group to leave Pubungu was led by Olum Jobiito, the father of Giipir, Labongo and Tifool. They moved southwards up to a place called Pawir (Chope) in Northern Bunyoro.
8. It was at Pawir where the Luo fought the Chwezi and defeated them. They concluded that there were no men in the place and they called it “Coo Pe” in the Luo words meaning “men not there”. To date the place is called Chope.

9. They overthrew the Chwezi and established themselves as the new rulers of the Bito dynasty of Bunyoro-Kitara.
10. In around 1500 A.D, other groups of the Luo that had settled in Pawir left and moved into the northern part of Lake Kyoga, where they met the Ateker and the Kumam.
11. Their mixing with the Ateker made them to abandon their Language and pick up the Luo language and became known as the Langi.
12. Other groups of the Luo moved from the Acholi areas via Mountain Elgon and crossed into the present day Budama areas. They united under the leadership of Adhola and became known as the “Jopadhola” meaning “the people of Adhola”.
13. Some of the Luo left the interlacustrine areas and Sudan and moved into western Kenya to become known as the Kenyan Luo or Jaluo.
14. The Luo moved into Kenya in four main groups namely: The Joka-Jok, Jok-Owiny, Jok-Omollo and the Refugee group.
15. The Jok-Jok led by Ojok came from Acholiland between 1500 and 1550 having crossed Pubungu. They settled in an area in Western Kenya known as Ramogi Hill.
16. The second group Jok-Owiny led by Owiny came in the period 1550-1625, went southwards through Mt. Elgon, Busoga and Budama.
17. There they settled for sometime and then left and moved and settled in Alego and Kadimo in Western Kenya.
18. The third group, Jok-Omollo led by Omollo had earlier settled in Northern Bunyoro. But in their movement to Nyanza, they went through Lake Kyoga and Busoga.
19. The Fourth group (The Refugees) moved from 1600-1800. This refugee group settled in various parts of Nyanza. They came from places such as Buganda, Busoga, Sese Island, Tanzania and Gusii.
20. The Luo finally settled in different places, continued with pastoralism and adopted some farming.
21. Today, the Luo people include the Acholi, Alur, Jopadhola, Langi and Kenyan Luo.

EFFECTS OF LUO MIGRATION UPON THE PEOPLE OF EAST AFRICA

1. The effects were both positive and negative.
2. Still they were social, political and economic in nature.

3. The Luo established themselves as chiefs over the local people
4. They led to intermarriages leading to new languages like Alur, Acholi and so on.
5. In Acholi, by 1700, small Luo became dominant and centralised states began to emerge.
6. They led to the decline of the Chwezi Empire of Bunyoro- Kitara.
7. They established the Biito dynasty which lasted from 4-5 centuries
8. They displaced people of Bunyoro especially the Bahima who had to migrate.
9. They drove away some of the Bantu groups from Samia from west of Lake Victoria.
10. They increased population in East Africa as they came in large numbers which added to the already established population in East Africa.
11. The Luo led to land disputes in East Africa, where they took away land of the people they found in East Africa.
12. Some Bantu speaking people at Alego were defeated and some were absorbed into Luo Linguistic group.
13. In some areas, the Luo lost their languages.
14. They introduced the idea of chiefdoms in East Africa, that is to say the Rwotship.
15. They introduced the idea of keeping short homed cattle especially in Northern Uganda.
16. They introduced pet names (empako) among the Banyoro and Batooro, for example Ateenyi, Akiiki, Amooti, Abwooli, Atwooki and Apuuli among others.
17. They led to the formation of large political units in Buganda and Bunyoro.
18. The Luo initiated the granting of land to clans.
19. Developed the system of burial sites for the Abakama.
20. Various people emerged due to intermarriages with the Luo people, for example the Acholi, chope, Alur.
21. In Bunyoro, they introduced new regalia like the royal drums, a royal fire and so on.
22. They introduced new types of crops like Sim Sim, millet, Peas and many others.
23. During their movements, there were inter-clan wars leading to depopulation.
24. The Luo destroyed property in the wars of migration.
25. The Abaluyia copied some aspects of Luo initiation rites like removing the sixth bottom teeth.
26. The Luo coming into East Africa increased warfare in the region.

Revision questions

- i. Trace the migration and settlement of the Luo in East Africa up to 1800.
- ii. Describe the migration of the Luo speakers into East Africa.
- iii. Who were the Luo?
- iv. What were the effects of the Luo- migration upon the people of East Africa?
- v. Why did the Luo migrate into E Africa?
- vi. Describe the course of Luo migration into E. Africa.
- vii. What were the effects of the migration and settlement of the Plain Nilotes into East Africa?