

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRE-ISLAMIC EAST AFRICA

THE POLITICAL SET UP

Question: Examine the political set up of East Africa prior to the coming of Islam.

Before the coming of Islam in East Africa, what is now called the demarcated region of East Africa comprising of countries like Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (Tanganyika) was non-existent.

This region had people who lived in either segmentary or centralized societies like the Nandi, Kamba, Kikuyu and Masai in Kenya; Baganda, Banyoro, Iteso and Langi in Uganda and Nyamwezi, Chagga and others in Tanganyika.

Before the coming of Islam, the peoples of what came to be East Africa, had their own ways of life; and these ways were looked at in political, social, economic and religious circles.

1. Politically, there were two major systems of governance; that is the centralized and the segmentary systems.
2. Under the centralized system of governance, all political powers lay in the hands of the chief or king. The king owned every thing ranging from land to animals. For example the Kabaka (King of Buganda) is called Beene which is a Kiganda attribute for king, which means the absolute owner of everything in Buganda.
3. The Kings and Chiefs had absolute powers over their subjects to the extent that they could dictate death on their subjects. For instance, it was reported that when the Arabs introduced guns in Unyamwezi

land, Mirambo ordered that some strong men be collected so that the power of the gun would be tested on them.

4. In centralized systems or societies, succession to the throne was hereditary where the son or brother of the reigning king would be chosen to succeed him in case the reigning king died.
5. The majority of these centralized societies had tributary or vassal states which were directly answerable to the king and from which the king got tributes. For instance, Busoga was a tributary state of Buganda.
6. Power in the centralised societies was hierarchical or pyramidal, where there was only one top most official – king and very many officials as one descended to the grass roots.
7. The King had powers to appoint chiefs as he wished yet at the same time he had all the powers of dismissing them if he so wished. The chiefs were not hereditary and were chosen on merit or on the wish of the King.
8. In centralised societies, there was a well defined political structure, where power was centered on the already set person called the king assisted by several chiefs below him and was answerable to him.
9. Most centralised societies had a standing army which was used for security, trade purposes, conquests, expansion wars, protection of the king and many other purposes.
10. In centralised societies, the state was built around the ruler as a symbolic centre of power; exercising authority that embraced all the people that he ruled directly. Some women also had supreme authority on the basis of their marriage to the King or chief.
11. The King was always elected by an assembly of great chiefs, court Martials and clan or tribal heads. Usually the candidates from whom the new king was elected were the sons of the previous king.

12. When the election to the throne had been decided, the unsuccessful candidates were either imprisoned or executed. In fact, those who escaped imprisonment or execution lived as peasants or commoners.
13. 'The second system of governance in the East African political system was the segmentary societies. These included people like the Langi, Itesot, Masai, Kikuyu, Gishu and many others.
14. Under the segmentary rule, the state was divided into small political units. Different clans would come together to form a tribe, which was considered the largest political unit.
15. In segmentary societies, the political units therein had neither kings nor chiefs. Much of the political powers lay in the hands of the elders of these societies. The elders were regarded as the custodians of culture and wisdom because of their inherent experience.
16. The segmentary societies were egalitarian in nature, which meant that there was political and social equality for everybody. Every member of the segmentary society had the same social and political rights.
17. Segmentary societies had no standing armies and in case of any emergency, all able bodied people would mobilize to take part in solving the problem.
18. In case of any political or social problem, like quarrels among members of the society, councils of elders were always convened to look into the matter or problem. However, even the youth and women were allowed to take part in solving the problem.
19. In all the societies, however, the governments were set upon tribal grounds and not territorial tendencies. There was no society, whether centralised or segmentary which had more than one tribe.
20. Elders, in the pre-Islamic East Africa, served as leaders in the society and no society, whether centralised or segmentary, accepted to be

ruled by a child. Even in centralised societies where a child could inherit his father, elders would serve as advisors or regents. In Buganda, Apollo Kaggwa, Zakary Kisingiri and Stanlas Mugwanya acted as regents to the young Kabaka Chwa II.

THE RELIGIOUS SET UP

Question: Assess the religious situation in East Africa prior to the coming of Islam

East Africa, before the coming of Islam did not have demarcated zones of what we now know as East Africa that comprises of countries namely Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

During the pre-Islamic East African period the people that formed what later came to be East African sub-continent had their own ways of life - socially, politically, economically and religiously.

1. Religiously, the people of East Africa, before the arrival of Islam, had no revealed Divine law or religion to follow but they were following the customs of their kings or tribes.
2. The East African practiced African Tradition religion. It did not have founders like the case of Islam. The religion evolved slowly through centuries as people responded to situations of their life time.
3. Responding to situations in their experience or life, the East African people came to believe that items of nature like trees, rivers, earthquakes; and misfortunes like epidemics diseases and wars had a bearing on religion or their beliefs, that they started worshiping such items of nature.
4. The pre-Islamic East African religion had no revealed book; rather the religion was just embedded in their history, hearts and experience.

5. The peoples of East African believed in a Supreme Being or God, whom they called by various names and thought Him as living in the sky. The Baganda used to call God Katonda, the Banyankole call Him Ruhanga; among the Masai God is called Engai and the Kikuyu worshipped God they called Ngai.
6. The East African people conducted and observed several ceremonies and festivals through which beliefs about God were expressed. These ceremonies and festivals included Harvest time, start of the rainy season, Initiation rites, Birth of a child, victory over enemies and many others.
7. It was widespread feeling among many Africans that man couldn't approach God directly, but he must do so through mediation of special people or beings called intermediaries. These are spirits or items of nature that are thought to have special powers over some objects.
8. The position and functions of the intermediaries was central in African religious life. They formed bridges where they based to direct man's contact with God through the act of worship.
9. However, some societies like the Masai did not believe in spirits or souls, not even for the spirits of the departed; in fact they seemed to have no idea of future existence.
10. Elders in East African Societies also played an intermediary function; like among the Akamba and Kikuyu. These elders performed religious rituals for their homesteads; either by officiating or helping the priests in making sacrifices, offerings and prayers.
11. East African traditional beliefs had special people called priests. These were ordained males and females, whose duties included making sacrifices, offerings, prayers conducting both public and private rites and ceremonies, giving advice and fulfilling other religious intermediaries between man and God.

12. Prayers in African Societies were accompanied by sacrifices and offerings. Sacrifices referred to cases where animal life was “destroyed” in order to present the animal, in part or wholly to spirits or God. The items of sacrifice included cattle, sheep, goats, chicken and, on a far smaller extent, human beings.
13. Offerings on the other hand referred to the cases which do not involve the killing of an animal, but the presentation of foodstuffs and other items to God or other supernatural beings. Items used for offerings included foodstuffs like fruits, maize, millets, eggs, milk, beer and blood of animals.
14. However, among the Akamba, God was thought as not bothering about what happened among men. They thought it was wasteful to give sacrifices to the creator who lived in the sky and was too far away to be influenced by man.
15. The Akamba, however, made their sacrifice to a man’s spirits who would go and live in a wild fig tree when man died. That was why small huts were often built close to fig trees.
16. East African peoples also worshipped God through songs and dances. Many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies were accompanied by singing which helped to pass on religious knowledge from one person or group to another.
17. Religious singing and dancing were always followed by musical instruments such as drums, flute, whistle and many others to express their religious practices.
18. Along with music and dancing, the East African people also used proverbs, riddles and wise sayings like those which spoke about God, the world, man and nature of things to express their religious feelings.

19. The East African people also believed that the universe was created by God, and some communities believed it as comprised of the heaven where God is thought to reside, the earth – where the living human beings and animals live and the underground where the dead are interred. The Baganda call those parts of the Universe as Ggulu, Ensi and Magombe respectively.
20. East African peoples set up places and official spots to be used particularly for public sacrifices and prayers. These places and spots were considered sacred and included shrines, alters, tree shades, rocks and caves. These sacred places and spots were highly preserved.

THE SOCIAL LIFE

Question:3 Examine the social conditions of East Africa before the coming of Islam.

Before the coming of Islam, what is now called the demarcated region of East Africa comprising of countries like Kenya, Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Uganda was non-existent.

This region was known to have people who lived in either segmentary societies like the Gisu, Nandi, Akamba, Masai, Langi and many others; or centralised societies like the Baganda, Nyamwezi and many others.

During the Pre-Islamic East African period, the people that formed what later came to be East African sub-continent had their own ways of life socially, politically, economically and religiously.

1. Socially, most East African people lived in extended families which included the father as the head of the family, with the mother, children and many other relatives who lived a communal way of life.
2. There were taboos and customs as per communities containing many dos and don'ts and all people of the society were supposed to respect

them because they carried a lot of meaning. So people were supposed to obey the rules and regulations embedded in their customs.

3. Under the centralised societies, there were social classes; where the royal – the king and his family and lineage – formed the highest social class. Next came the chiefs and the lowest social class comprised of the commoners, who are people with no close connection to the king or chiefs.
4. Some other centralised societies like the Banyoro had castes. Under the caste system, man's place in society is fixed and received at birth and it can never change. For instance, among the Banyoro, a person born a Mwiru (commoner) will remain a low class whether he becomes a chief and person born among the Babiito (rulers) will occupy a high social status whether he does not become a king.
5. Among the segmentary societies, all people were considered equal by the principle, all members of the society were supposed to have the same social rights, irrespective of sex or age.
6. There were a number of social initiation events and practices. These events and practices were meant to initiate, greet or grade the young into adulthood. Such practices included circumcision among the Gisu and Sabins.
7. Among the East African communities, marriage symbolized adulthood; and whoever reached the age of marriage was supposed to marry in whatever case it was. People practiced excessive polygamy.
8. In East African settings, successes were always celebrated. Such celebrations were witnessed in ceremonies like birth ceremonies; and in most of them, there was music and dancing to make such occasions joyful and merry.

9. Beer was so central in East African festivities and almost all ceremonies were accompanied by beer or alcohol. Alcoholism was so central and drinking habit was common. Alcohol was also a vital requirement during marriage proceedings.
10. In the East African Societies, the clan played pivotal role in cementing people's relationships, which were either marital or blood ties or maternal.
11. The clan heads and elders acted as the guardians of the clan lands and also formed an important class in Buganda. Their position was hereditary and not dependent on royal appointment like that of the chiefs.
12. The peasants or commoners used to attach themselves to chiefs in theory were allowed to change their service from one master to another if they so wished.
13. At the homes of the chiefs, the peasants' work consisted of cultivation and building houses. In return for his services, the peasant would be given one, or possibly two wives, than given permanently, and might be taken away by the chief at any time.
14. The chiefs and kings were allowed to accrue any number of slaves, who were mostly drawn from the raids on the neighbouring societies. The slaves had no rights and were used for cultivation and for service in the house of their masters.
15. Parents looked after their children and nurtured them as the environment and society demanded. This involved teaching the young the taboos and customs of the society; and this usually took place around the fire place after the evening meal.
16. The children were also communally nurtured; that is, any adult member of the society was supposed to exercise exclusive responsibility over any young people.

17. The Pre-Islamic East African people had two most usual articles of clothing. These were the bead necklet worked over with very small beads into beautiful patterns, worn by women only. The Baganda donned the backcloth from the outer covering of the Mutuba tree.
18. Other clothing consisted of cow, goat and antelope skins. The leopard was considered to be the royal animal, and for anyone other than the royals to wear a leopard skin was high treason.
19. The houses in which people lived were simply beehive-shaped structures of grass or mud supported by wooden poles, and the importance of the person to whom the house belonged could be estimated from its size.
20. Elders, in the pre-Islamic East Africa, served as leaders in the society and no society, whether centralised or segmentary, accepted to be ruled by a child. Even in centralised society where a child could inherit his father; an example of Buganda where the young Kabaka Chwa II had three regents.

THE ECONOMIC SET UP

Question: Explain the economic setup of the East African people prior to the coming of Islam.

Before the coming of Islam, what is now called the demarcated region of East Africa; comprising of countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Uganda was not existent.

This region was known to have a population of people lived in either segmentary societies like the Gisu, Nandi, Akamba, Masai, Langi and many others; or centralised societies like the Baganda, Nyamwezi and many others.

During the Pre-Islamic East African period, the people that formed what later came to be East Africa sub – socially, politically, religiously and economically.

1. Economically, the people of the pre-Islamic East Africa lived by doing a variety of jobs that ranged according to the needs of the people in that area. These included cultivation, hunting, animal rearing, blacksmithing and many others, like bead work, which was exclusively a woman's occupation.
2. Another economic activity in the pre-Islamic East Africa was the production of labour. Families provided the development of the pre-Islamic East African States. Among the Baganda, for example, the Bakopi or peasants provided labour to the loyal clan.
3. Each family got involved in the production of food, both for consumption and sale. Among the trading communities like the Baganda and the Chagga, food production was for both subsistence and sale. Besides, they also ensured food security, where each family had a food store (granary) for storing food that could be used during times of famine or scarcity.
4. Tributes, foodstuffs, animals and, on a small extent, monetary money provided the source of revenue for the Pre-Islamic states. Each family was supposed to pay taxes and tributes to the rulers; which taxes were collected by chiefs or messengers assigned by the king.
5. In trade and commerce, age-sets facilitated the development of both internal and external trade, especially the long distance trade. Among the Nyamwezi, Akamba and Yao, the junior age sets served as guides, guards and porters to the caravan traders.
6. Land ownership formed the foundation of the economy of the people of East Africa. In segmentary societies, land was owned communally; while in centralised kingdoms like Buganda and Bunyoro, the king owned all the land resources.
7. Some societies like Bunyoro, Buganda, Kikuyu and others practised agriculture and grew crops like Banana, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes and others.

8. Some societies kept animals on both small scale like Ganda and Kikuyu; and on large scale by the Banyankole and Masai. Other animals that were kept in homesteads of the Pre-Islamic East African people included sheep, goats, chicken and dogs.
9. In addition to animal rearing, some societies of East Africa practiced hunting. Under this wild animals were sought for and killed for meat, hides and horns. Fishing was also done in some areas close to water bodies like lakes, rivers and streams.
10. East African interior societies practiced both local and long distance trade. Interior societies like Baganda, Nyamwezi, Yao and Akamba traded with the coastal people mainly Arabs and Swahilis.
11. Trade was an important economic activity at the coast. For a long time, there had been contacts between the coastal people with those from Arabia, especially Yemen and the people from Asia, especially Indians.
12. This kind of trade was highly facilitated by the presence of trading items at the coast for exchange for commodities like beads and cloth, metal and others. In those days, spices were valued as preservatives as well as for the flavour they gave to food.
13. In addition, agricultural products like coconut palms and spices were brought to the coast for exchange for commodities like beads and cloth, metal and others. In those days, spices were valued as preservatives as well as for the flavour they gave to food.
14. The coastal people were at the same time pirates and they had boats. These people lived by raiding those moving on the Indian Ocean.
15. The art and craft industry was also well developed in both centralised and decentralized states. Iron implements like hoes, spears, arrows, knives and pangas were made by the Banyoro, a

centralised society, just as they were made by the Kikuyu people, a decentralized society.

16. The Pre-Islamic East African economy was not based on monetary factors. Most of the produce was for local consumption of the produce was for local consumption purposes. Exchange relations were thus largely based on the barter system.
17. Labour in the Pre-Islamic East Africa was neither salaried nor for wages. The provision of ones labour was expected to be voluntary and for free, especially when it came to communal works. The provision and exploitation of labour was also divided, basing on sex and age, depending on roles and duties to be performed.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAM AND THE COAST OF EAST AFRICA

FACTORS THAT MADE ARABS INFLUX THE EAST AFRICAN COAST

Question: “Both pushing and pulling factors made Arabs influx at the East African Coast inevitable.” Discuss.

The Arabs were among the earliest visitors to the coast of East Africa. These visitors to the East African coast come from Asia; however, what is not known is the exact date these foreign visitors – the Arabs came to East Africa.

However, by 1100 AD the Arabs were frequent on the coast, and their coming was influenced by a number of factors pushing – originating from their home lands and pulling – influenced by the coast of coast of East Africa.

1. The pushing factors included the effect of the Fitinah Period in the Arabian Peninsular. This was the period of civil wars in Arabia. Many Arabs who could not stand or were defeated, left their homeland and came to settle on the coast as refugees and to seek safety from the prolonged civil wars.
2. The effects of the Fitinah led to the development of religious-political groups; thereby dividing the Muslim Community into groups. Some of these groups decided to establish new bases from where they would operate freely and peacefully. In their quest for new bases, many Arabs found their way to the coast of East Africa.
3. The split of the Arab Muslims into various sects and factions like the Sunnis and Shiites also facilitated the influx of Arabs at the coast of East Africa. These sects became warring and some Arabs found it almost impossible to stay in their homelands so they found their way to the coast of East Africa.
4. The rebellion led by two local chiefs Sulaiman and Said of Oman also account for the Arab influx at the Coast. These had refused to submit to the rule of Caliph Abdul Malik of the Umayyads. When they were fought and defeated by Abdul Malik's forces, they took sail from Oman with their families and supporters and finally settled at the coast of East Africa.
5. The insecurity in the Arab World was another factor that pushed the Arabs to settle at the coast. A group of followers of Amir Zaid led to a rebellion against Caliph Hashim of the Umayyad Dynasty around 740 AD at Kufah, Zaid was killed and some of his followers felt insecure and decided to seek refugee on the East African coast.

6. The need to spread Islam was also a factor that pushed Arabs to come on the East African coast. Some Muslim sects like Zaidiyyah and the Shiraz had wanted to spread their ideology and gaining rewards. So they moved far and wide, and in the end landed at the coast of East Africa.
7. During the early period of Prophet Muhammad's Mission, and due to Islam's growing strength, Muslims got persecuted by the Meccan Pagans. These Arab Muslims were at one time forced to migrate to Abyssinia for safety. However, those who felt insecure in Abyssinia because it was a Christian region moved farther southwards and found peace at the coast of East Africa.
8. The Arab occupation of the coast of East Africa was also instigated by the Crusade Movements of the 11th -13th centuries. These were Christian movements from Europe meant to destroy the Muslim world. The Crusaders engaged the Muslims in several encounters that forced the weak Arabs that could not resist the attacks to seek refuge else where; and thus found their way at the coast of East Africa.
9. Another pushing factor for the influx of the Arabs at the coast of East Africa was their desire and need for adventure. For instance, a report from Ibn Battuta, when he visited the coast in the Fourteenth Century, only talked about how well they ate.
10. The nature of Arabia, being a desert, the Arabs were forced by circumstances to move to different areas for their survival. They had no taste for settled life; it is therefore in such movements for survival that they might have landed on the coast of east Africa.
11. The presence of Monsoon winds along the Indian Ocean and the Arab dhows enabled the Arabs to sail to and from Arabia without any interference. The Arabs had discovered that the Monsoon winds between November and April would blow their dhows south-west

wards to the coast of East Africa; then between May and October, the winds would blow them safely North-East wards home again.

12. Due to the nature of Arabia, being a desert the main stay of the Arabs was therefore trade. However, due to the political and religious differences in Arabia that resulted into Fitina wars, their trade was disrupted and their operational bases and many other valuable things destroyed. Therefore, trade was jeopardized due to insecurity and so the Arabs looked for trade opportunities elsewhere; hence their influx at the coast.

Despite the pushing factors, there were a number of other factors that facilitated the Arab occupation of the coast of East Africa.

13. The Arabs were attracted to the East African coast because of the presence of the profitable trade. They were attracted by the good and expensive items in East Africa like gold, copper, Ivory and later slaves. These items were highly demanded in Arabia and in many other parts of Asia.
14. There was an influx of Arabs on the coast of East Africa because the Arabs wanted to control trade at the coast, in which they had benefited a lot. The Arabs, therefore, occupied the coast so that they could be in centre of the supply of the merchandise.
15. The conducive environment at the coast also helps to explain why the Arabs came to the East African coast. Arabia being a desert with no clear rain patterns, made the environment there hot and harsh for human settlement. So the cool environment of East Africa attracted the Arabs to settle at the coast.
16. Other Arabs occupied the coast with political motives. Here some Arab leaders wanted to have control over the coast to extend their frontiers and powers of influence. Such leaders thought that by occupying the coast, they would become popular there. For instance Sulaiman of Oman wanted to control Pate and Lamu Archipelago.

17. The favourable climate of the East African coast as opposed to other regions like the North which is mainly a desert and the West occupied by dense Equatorial forest, influenced the Arabs to come to East Africa; in turn they took permanent settlements at the coast of East Africa.
18. The nearness of the East African coast to Arabia; whereby the Arabs could sail easily across the Indian Ocean to and from the coast of East Africa, also must have influenced the Arabs to influx the coast of East Africa.
19. Some African tribes that the Arabs found on the coast of East Africa were hospitable and readily accepted the Arabs. They created a strong relationship between them and the Arabs, which increased their interaction. Therefore, this hospitality became an incentive for the Arab visitors to come and settle at the coast.
20. Existence of fertile soils along the East African Coast and its hinterlands also contributed to the Arab occupation of the coast. The Arabs wanted to use such fertile soils to support cultivation of various crops they had come with to the coast. The crops such as cloves were much used in trade.
21. The Arabs were also attracted to the coast because of presence of fresh drinking water. This water could also be used in other various ways like in washing, irrigation of crops and many other uses. This was important because Arabia lacked such waters and could only be found in the Oases, which were difficult to find except for those who were daring and lucky.
22. The almost vacant lands at the coast of East Africa also attracted the Arab occupation. These large and apparently vacant pieces of land were needed by the Arabs who wanted permanent settlement and those who were interested in agriculture.

23. At the coast of East Africa, there was presence of natural harbours that could allow even big vessels like ships and dhows from the Far East to dock. This was so vital a factor since the Arabs would use the coast as rest places and yards where they could repair their vessels from.

EFFECT OF THE ARAB OCCUPATION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COAST

Question: Examine the effects of the Arab occupation at the coast of East Africa.

The Arabs were among the earliest foreign settlers at the coast of East Africa. However what is not known was the actual date when they landed at the coast though their coming made a great impact on the lives of the people they found at the coast.

1. The most vital effect of the Arab occupation is the spread of Islam at the coast, which replaced the traditional beliefs. Islam became a source of political system and it gave rise to the revival of learning literature, science, law and philosophy.
2. Islam became a unifying factor at the coast. It united the tribes from Arabia, India, Persia and the coastal people. All these tribes and races were determined to use their strength to work together; and since they agreed in most of their principles they helped in converting a lot of people to Islam.
3. There was growth of Dynasties at the coast like the Shiraz Dynasty; and by the time the Portuguese arrived at the coast, they found Mombasa acknowledging the Mamluke Dynasty. The Mamlukes were originally slave-soldiers who converted to Islam and who advanced themselves to high military posts in Egypt, before they established there the Mamluke Dynasty.
4. There was growth of towns at the coast, which helped to improve the ways of life of the Arabs and the coastal people. The towns consisted of highly packed groups of buildings erected with stones and other temporary materials. Such towns included Mombasa, Kilwa, Pemba, Malindi, Sofara, Zanzibar and many others.

5. The Arabs introduced new methods of building; where flat-roofed houses were erected with stones and some having dome-shaped structures. These inherited the traditional ways of building.
6. Because of the influence of the Arabs, the rich people of the coast lived in a considerable luxurious life; dressing in silk and fine material and decorating the walls of their buildings with the carpets.
7. There was adoption of trade by the people at the coast. Trade flourished at the expense of traditional occupations. People at the coast became rich especially the Arabs and their middlemen. Therefore, trade became a major occupation at the coast.
8. Through trade, the coast of East Africa was connected to international world. The East African coast came to be known world-wide and this explains why the Portuguese, British and the Germans later came at the coast.
9. There was infrastructural development, where Arabs setup schools, Mosques, roads, shops among others. These replaced traditional huts and paths.
10. The Arab occupation at the coast of East Africa greatly influenced the cultures of the coastal people. For instance the local people adopted the Arabic ways of dressing. Men started wearing tunics (Kanzus), turbans, caps and sandals. Women started putting on silk dresses and veiled their heads.
11. There was introduction of new crops which had hitherto been unknown to Africans before; like spices, coconuts, cloves among others. These were used in barter trade for which the Arabs would usually trade beads and cloth.
12. The Arabs, especially the Muslims, changed the Africans' attitude towards religion. The Muslims came to believe that those who died

fighting for their religion would go straight to paradise. So Africans fought bravely for their religion and with strict discipline.

13. Many coastal people changed their occupations from fishing, herding and farming to trade and turned to supplying items like ivory, gold and slaves which were very much needed by Arabs and other traders.
14. People at the coast also adopted Islamic practices like fasting, circumcision and praying five times a day. These replaced the local and traditional African customs and religions.
15. The Arab occupation influenced and strengthened the system of administration at the coast. The Islamic Law called the Sharia Law was introduced and used in politics and judiciary as well as in handling and trying cases.
16. The coastal rulers also adopted Arabic titles like Sheikh and sultan; yet Qadhi became the administrators of the Islamic law. These leaders were supposed to ensure that the principles of Islam were observed.
17. Mosques, Qur'an schools and Islamic monuments were established with Arabic words inscribed on them that had an Islamic bearing.
18. Arab occupation of the coast of East Africa influenced the eating and sitting etiquette of the coastal people. The coastal people started eating food of an Arab origin like chapattis, pilawo (fried rice) and also sitting cross-legged.
19. Arabic language was introduced as the official language at the coast to be used in administration, legal and religious circles. Arabic books were also availed to people to read.
20. The occupation of the Arabs of the East African coast resulted in intermarriage between Arabs and local coastal people that led to a new group of people and culture called Swahili; at the same time a

new language Kiswahili developed. With time, Kiswahili became the official language at the coast.

21. The Arab settlement and occupation of the coast of East Africa gave the people who lived there a cosmopolitan character which distinguished them from most of the Africans in the hinterland.
22. There was establishment of trade routes from coastal areas like Mombasa, Kilwa, Zanzibar and others into the interior of East Africa. These routes were used to carry goods and other trade items from the interior to the coast of East Africa.
23. The Arab occupation of East Africa brought about the introduction of new methods of farming including large scale farming; like the clove plantations in Zanzibar for commercial purposes.
24. The presence of the Arabs and their subsequent control of the coast of East Africa, made the coastal people lose their independence and became Arab subjects.
25. The Arab commercial activities facilitated the development of slave trade in East Africa. This was due to the fact that the Arabs worked as agents to Europeans. Because of these commercial purposes, many areas of East Africa were depopulated as a result.
26. The Arab occupation of East Africa helped in the introduction of monetary economy at the coast which replaced the laborious and tedious barter system that had existed for long. This was because Arabs facilitated minting of coins that were used as a medium of exchange.
27. The Arab occupation of the coast of East Africa brought about the need for slave labour and slaves that resulted into warfare and introduction of the deadly gun which caused chaos and insecurity at the coast and later spreading to the interior.

28. The Arabs introduced new techniques and skills of boat building. This replaced the traditional canoes; thus transportation was eased and many people learnt better and more skills of navigation as most trade activities depended on movement on the Indian Ocean.

INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF ISLAM AT THE COAST OF EAST AFRICA

Question: “The introduction and spread of Islam in East Africa by the Arabs, was an effect of the Arabs reaction to the situation in Arabia” Discuss.

The exact date for the coming of Islam in East Africa, and at the coast in particular, is not yet known. However, it was reported that both pulling and pushing factors were responsible for the coming and spread of Islam in East Africa.

1. The most important pushing situation in Arabia that facilitated the spread of Islam in East Africa was the Fitinah period. This was a period of civil wars and disputes in Arabia, that broke out as to who was the rightful caliph. These wars and disputes divided the Arab Empire and caused some of those who had been on the losing side to take refuge on the pleasant coast of East Africa; where they started spreading Islam.
2. After the death of the last successor of Prophet Muhammad – Ali, the Arab Muslims started splitting into various sects and factions like the Sunnis, Shiites, Ismaelites and many others. These sects became warring and those who found it impossible to stay in such difficult situations migrated to the coast of East Africa. Because these settlers were Muslims, they started spreading Islam.
3. The rebellion led by two local chiefs Sulaiman and Said of Oman, who had refused to submit to the rule of caliph Abdul Malik of the Umayyad Dynasty also facilitated the spread of Islam in East Africa. When they were fought and defeated by Abdul Malik’s forces, they ran away from Oman and settled at the coast of East Africa, where they started spreading Islam.

4. The Zaidiyyah group led by Amir Zaid also rebelled against Caliph Hisham of the Umayyads toward 750 AD, but was not strong enough to fight Hisham's army. Zaid was killed; and his followers, feeling insecure, decided to seek refuge on the East African coast. Their stay at the coast facilitated the spread of Islam in East Africa.
5. The effects of the Fitina period in Arabia also led to the development of religious political groups; thereby dividing the Muslim community into groups. Some of these Muslim groups decided to establish new bases; like in East Africa, where they would operate freely and peacefully. With them, Islam spread.
6. During the early period of Prophet Muhammad's mission, and due to Islam's growing strength, the Muslims got persecuted by the Meccan Pagans. These Arab Muslims were at one time forced to migrate to Abyssinia for safety. Abyssinia being near East Africa, Islam started to spread there from.
7. The introduction and spread of Islam in East Africa was also instigated by the Crusade Movements of the 11th – 13th centuries that rose to destroy the Muslim World. The Muslims who could not resist the attacks were forced to seek refuge elsewhere and thus found themselves in East Africa, where they started teaching Islam.
8. At the close of the 11th century, there was an economic revival in Europe that forced Europeans to seek market for their goods. The Europeans, with their superior goods out competed the Muslims for market, which forced the Arabs to look for market elsewhere and thus found themselves in East Africa; and with them Islam started spreading.
9. The nature of Arabia being a desert with no clear rain pattern, made the environment there hot and harsh for human settlement. So, this environment forced the Arabs to move in search of conducive atmosphere for survival like the coast of East Africa. Since these

Arabs were Muslims, they helped to spread Islam to those areas where they went.

10. Driven by the urge to transmit the word of God to gain rewards, some Arab Muslims sects like the Zaidiyyah and the Shiraz had wanted to spread their Ideology. They moved far and wide; and in the end landed in East Africa where they settled and spread Islam.

Despite the Arab reaction to the various situations in Arabia that influenced them to come to East Africa where they introduced and spread Islam, there are other factors that facilitated the spread of Islam in East Africa:

11. The coming of the Arabs with their families in East Africa also helped to spread Islam. When the Arab Muslims arrived from various parts of the Arab world and settled at the coast, the Muslim population increased. This re-enforced the already existing manpower to spread Islam in a more organized way.
12. Arabs and other nationalities of Asia had been trading with the people of the coast since time immemorial. So when prophet Muhammad preached Islam, those Arabs who had embraced it and were traders are likely to have come at the East African coast where they spread Islam.
13. At the coast of East Africa, there existed trade items like Gold, slaves and agricultural items. The Arabs were attracted by these items of trade which they exchanged in return for manufactured goods. In the process of carrying out their trade, the Arab Muslims interacted with the local people whom they influenced to join Islam.
14. The Monsoon winds also played a great role in the introduction of Islam in East Africa. These winds enabled the Arabs to sail to and from Arabia. With the movement of Arabs to the coast, Islam had to be introduced in the process.

15. Acquisition of new lands in form of colonizing Africa was also another factor for the spread of Islam to East Africa. It is argued that some of the immigrants from Arabia came as colonizers. Because these people were Muslims, when they reached the coast of East Africa, they started spreading Islam.
16. Intermarriage between Arabs and the local people with whom they stayed with in their settlements is another factor responsible for the spread of Islam in East Africa. Both the women who had married to the Arabs and their offsprings adopted the religion of Islam from the Arabs.
17. The intermarriage between Arabs and the local people increased the population in places where they stayed as many relatives of these women married to Arabs started leaving their home areas to come and settle in towns. Hence, through interaction, Islam spread.
18. Some Arab scholars who visited the coast of East Africa for adventure , like Ibn Battuta, and had stayed at the coast for some time played a big role in the spread of Islam in East Africa. When these people returned home, they advertised East Africa to the Arab world. Hence, more Arabs Moslems came to East Africa and eventually Islam spread.
19. The favourable climate of East Africa as opposed to the harsh and hot climate of Arabia also influenced many people to come to the coast especially the Arabs to come to the coast of East Africa. In turn, they took permanent settlements and in the process they introduced and spread Islam in East Africa.
20. The proximity or nearness of East African coast with Arabia, gave the Arabs a chance to -sail to the coast of East Africa easily and fast across the Indian Ocean. Since the Arabs were Muslims, they helped to introduce and spread Islam.

21. Some tribes on the East African Coast were hospitable. They warmly welcomed and created a strong relationship between them and the Arabs which increased their interaction. With this interaction, Islam was introduced and spread among the people of the coast.
22. Many people at the coast of East Africa admired the Arab Culture, which was Islamic in nature. They came closer to the Arabs and adopted their culture which they considered superior as opposed to the traditional cultures; hence finding themselves converting to Islam.
23. After 813 AD, more Arabs who were more knowledgeable in Islamic science arrived at the coast of East Africa; and these did much to fuel the spread of Islam. For example, Muhammad Bin Idris el-Shafie founded the Shafite School in 813 AD and started teaching Islam.

METHODS USED BY ARABS TO SPREAD ISLAM

Question: Examine the methods used by the Arabs to disseminate Islam.

1. The Arabs used intermarriage as a method through which they spread Islam. The Muslim Arabs married from the local people. In the process, both the women who had got married to the Arabs and their offsprings adopted the religion of Islam from the Arabs.
2. The intermarriage between Arabs and the local people also increased the population of Muslims in places where they stayed as many relatives of women married to the Muslim Arabs left their homes to come and live among their in-laws. These relatives ended up converting to Islam to win favour of their Arab in-laws.
3. Trade was also an important method that the Arabs used to win the hearts of Africans to Islam. The Muslim Arabs were essentially traders and the presence of trade opportunities made Arabs venture in Africa. In the process of carrying out their business, the Arabs spread Islam to the people they interacted with.
4. Through trade, also, the Arabs extended favourable trade terms and at many times gave big businesses to fellow Muslims. So, the Africans who wanted to gain such trade terms and benefits were attracted to Islam.
5. Provision of employment was also a method used to spread Islam. The Arabs offered employment to many Africans to work as middlemen and porters. So many Africans who worked under the service of the Arabs ended up being influenced to convert to Islam.
6. The establishment of mosques was yet another method to introduce and spread Islam to the local people of Africa. These mosques worked as coordination centres where people met and consequently Islam was passed over to the non-Muslims.

7. The establishment of Qur'an schools also helped in the spread of Islam. In these schools, the curriculum was basically Islamic and the Africans who joined these schools were taught Islam and many converted.
8. The Arabs set up mosques where periodical calls were made inviting people to come for prayer and Salvation. This invitation, with time, yielded fruits when many Africans honoured it and embraced Islam.
9. Domestic slavery was also one method the Arabs used to spread Islam to the people of Africa. The Muslim Arabs related well with their household slaves whom they treated well like members of their families. This friendly approach, helped in winning the slaves to Islam, the religion of their masters.
10. Liberation of slaves was also a method that won Africans to Islam. Many Muslim traders bought freedom of slaves. The liberated slaves were preached to and converted to Islam.
11. The liberated Muslim slaves when they were re-united with their people, they passed on the message of Islam to their people with pride; indeed many relatives to the ex-slaves embraced Islam.
12. The concept of slavery also worked as a method for the spread of Islam. Where slavery existed, among those people enslaved, were some Muslims who would lead others into prayers of deliverance. When such slaves would be set free, they would attribute their release to prayers and ended up converting to Islam.
13. The Arab culture of setting up Arab-Swahili villages was also one of the methods used to spread Islam. In these villages and other settlements, the Arabs exercised the basic principles of Islam, like brotherhood, sharing, endurance among others. These were admired by many Africans and on several occasions adopted Islam.

14. The Muslim Arab eating and sitting habits also helped win many Africans to Islam. The Arabs used to sit with Africans and ate together in circles. This level of togetherness and brotherhood attracted many Africans to Islam.
15. Introduction of plantation farming also made many Africans convert to Islam. The Muslim Arabs set up plantation farms where people of all walks of life were employed. The Muslims who worked on such plantations would preach to fellow workers whom they influenced to Islam.

FACTORS THAT HAD HINDERED THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AT THE COAST OF EAST AFRICA

Question: Examine the factors that had hindered Islam to take root at the coast of East Africa.

The conversion of the coastal people to Islam began some time after 813 AD when Muhammad bin Idris es Shafi, the founder of the Shafite School, started teaching Islam. After its introduction, however, Islam did not have a strong impact at the coast for some time. This was because of the following:

1. The work of converting people to Islam was solely the work of Isolated Arabs, Swahili and Somali traders, and their African converts. It was not directed by any missionary organization and lacked plan, money and literature.
2. The Arabs, who were supposed to champion the spread of Islam, devoted very little time to Islam simply because they were more concerned with trade; since the Arabs who came at the coast of East Africa were primarily traders. Therefore they attached very little importance to the spread of Islam.
3. Most Arabs who came to the coast of East Africa were traders and most of the time; they were carrying out their business. So some of

the coastal people who joined Islam did so because they admired the Islamic culture but not because they were preached to.

4. The Arabs, who were interested in the spread of Islam at the coast in the initial years, did not have enough money to set up schools and to produce literature. This, too, hindered the quick spread of Islam at the coast.
5. The Arabs were very few in number and would not sufficiently cover the long strip of the East African coast in so small a time; hence the spread of Islam had to move on very slowly. The Arabs were also not settled. They were moving in different areas, from one place to another looking for trade items. So they couldn't settle in an area for a long period of time; hence couldn't effectively spread Islam.
6. There had existed political conflicts and disputes between different Muslim families like the Busaid and Mazrui Arabs. These devoted most of their time in such conflicts and therefore couldn't get enough time to preach Islam.
7. The Arabs were also met with the hostility of the local tribes as the Segeju and Wazimba. These were very notorious to the Arabs; in addition, they were also feared to be cannibals. Therefore, due to the fear they had for these tribes, the Arabs had to confine themselves to their settlements. Islam, therefore, could not spread so fast.
8. Islam was also hampered by the coming of the Portuguese, who wanted to stump out Islam. The Portuguese destroyed Arab Settlements at the coast leaving them homeless. With such a condition, Islam would not spread smoothly.
9. There was also a problem of language barrier. Though there was a multiplicity of languages at the Coast, the Arabs couldn't understand any of the local languages, as the local people didn't understand Arabic. This difficulty of communication hampered the spread of Islam at the coast.

10. The traditional beliefs of the people at the coast of East Africa also hampered the spread of Islam. At first, many coastal people could not abandon their beliefs easily because they looked at Arabs as the people who had come to wipeout their traditional ways of life since very many African practices contradicted with the Islamic faith and teachings.
11. The Arabs lacked backing from their home countries. This was due to the fact that most of them settled at the coast of East Africa as refugees. Therefore, they had no connection between them and their home area since it was not their wish to leave their home countries. This therefore meant that Islam lacked political will and support.
12. The faith of Islam lacked a missionary group to promote their cause. Arabs did not come as missionaries; thus they did not go out to the coast in a body highly bent to spreading Islam. Islam just spread naturally through interactions between Arabs and the local people.
13. In addition to the Islamic faith lacking Muslim missionaries, Muslim states in Arabia did not form Islamic organizations that would finance and send members of such an organization to East Africa to spread Islam. As a result, Islam did not have a big impact.
14. The participation of Arabs in slave trade also hampered the spread of Islam at the coast. So many local people feared to come closer to the Arabs for fear of being taken up as slaves. Arabs used to raid villages and homes looking for slaves. With this state of affairs, people had to keep themselves away from Arabs and would not accept their religion.
15. The reluctance of the early Arab traders to settle permanently at the coast also delayed the spread of Islam. The Arabs used to come for merchandise and then go away back to Arabia. Therefore, in the first days of Arabs arrival at the coast, they were not directly in touch with the people at the coast.

16. The Arabs preached against traditional African norms, such as polytheism. This annoyed the Africans, who started disobeying and not taking interest in whatever they preached.
17. The Bantu tribe that ate up their way through Africa from Zululand left the Arabs feeling insecure. They had captured Kilwa and turned against the inhabitants (the Arabs), many of whom flung themselves desperately into the sea; there again sharks were awaiting them. The few that remained could not do the work of spreading Islam effectively.
18. The Arabs also lacked the geographical knowledge about the East Africa coastline. The Arabs did not know the map of the coast and this made them reluctant to venture in unknown areas which delayed their movements along the coast. This affected the quick Islamisation process.
19. The coastal states also conflicted among themselves, which resulted into disunity among the coastal people. So, preaching to disorganized people wouldn't be easy; hence the Islamisation process was slowed.
20. The presence of tropical diseases like malaria also hampered the spread of Islam. These diseases killed many of the Arabs; and having been very few themselves, it reduced their number further; hence delaying the progress.
21. The Arabs themselves were arrogant, harsh and not friendly. They always kept themselves aloof from the Africans. These behavioral characteristics scared away East Africans from the Arabs, resulting into failure to convert them into Islam.
22. People who tried to spread Islam lacked incentives to attract the locals to Islam. They did not give rewards and gifts as a means of attracting people to their faith. If some gifts were offered to the converts, more people would have been attracted to Islam. But since no material goods were offered, Islam did not become popular.

23. Islam had complicated practices, which East Africans feared – like stoning to death and circumcision which are harsh and painful rituals respectively. Muslims were not to take alcohol yet many rituals in African cultures were accompanied with alcohol. All these limited African joining Islam.
24. Some African chiefs used their political authority to drive away Muslims. They looked at any foreign infiltration as a threat to their independence. Therefore, not many Muslims entered East Africa. As a result, Islam was not preached to many.
25. The different Islamic sects that existed like Zaidiyyah, Sunni, and Shiites destroyed the unity of Muslims. These sects were very antagonistic and also limited by political confusions prevailing both at the coast and in their metropolitan countries. For instance, the imam of Oman and Busaid conflicted for the control of the coast of East Africa. These conflicts retarded the Islamisation process.
26. Africans had their own traditional religion they were very attached to and not ready to compromise it with Islam. This resulted in the need to maintain and allow the continuity of the religion of their ancestors. As such, Islam was not readily taken up.
27. When the Christian missionaries came to East Africa, they out competed Muslims. Muslims did not have a soft approach like that of the Christian missionaries, who were even philanthropists. The Muslims who had supposedly caused horror to Africans won very few people to the Islamic faith.
28. Many of the coastal areas were still bushy, forested with mangrove vegetation and with no safe pass ways which was a deterrent to the progress of Islam. Such an environment could not make movement and interaction easy, hence slowing the Islamisation process at the coast.

FACTORS THAT FACILITATED THE SPREAD OF ISLAM ALONG THE COAST OF EAST AFRICA.

Question: Examine the factors that facilitated the spread of Islam along the coast of East Africa.

Much as Islam had very low ebb at the beginning, it later gained momentum and took some root at the East coast of Africa; and by the close of the eighteenth Century; the whole of the East African coast line had been islamised. This was facilitated by several factors.

1. The proximity or nearness of the East African coast to Arabia where Islam came from made it easy for Islam to spread along the coast of East Africa. This short distance made it possible for the Arabs to reach the coast easily; and since the Arabs were Muslims, they helped to spread Islam at the coast.
2. After the first Arabs reached the coast, more started coming with their families from various parts of the Arab world. This increased the population of the Muslims at the coast and reinforced the already existing manpower; and hence the spread of Islam in a more organized way.
3. Establishment and construction of Qur'anic schools and mosques helped in training of the new preachers. The graduates from such schools were sent to different areas of the coast and pioneered the work of spreading Islam.
4. Islam was also further helped by the abolition of slave trade. Earlier on, Africans had feared Arabs due to their involvement in slave trade. After the abolition, however, Africans changed their attitudes towards the Arabs. They came closer to each other, hence Islam had to spread.
5. The Arabs captured the political power at the coast and established dynasties at the coast, like the Busaid Dynasty under Said Sayyid. This contributed much to the spread of Islam as leaders sent trade caravans

along the coast. Since these traders were majority Muslims; they helped in the spread of Islam.

6. After 813 AD, more Arabs who were knowledgeable in Islamic Science arrived at the coast of East Africa and these did much to fuel the spread of Islam. For example, Muhammad bin Idris es-Shafi, founded the Shafite School in 813AD and started teaching Islam.
7. The defeat of the Portuguese at the coast increased the number of Muslims at the coast. This was because, Arab Muslims could now move freely from one place to another which wasn't the case before. The Arabs, at the time Portuguese were controlling the coast of East Africa, confined themselves in certain areas for fear of their dear lives; so they could not carry out the mission of spreading Islam.
8. When the Portuguese arrived at the coast of East Africa, they destroyed Arab settlements and these forced some of them to penetrate into the interior, planting some seeds of Islam there. This helped Islam to spread in some places near the coast.
9. Intermarriage between the Arabs and the local people of the coast of East Africa facilitated the spread of Islam at the coast. In the process, half-cast sons and daughters were produced. Both the women who had married to the Arabs and their offsprings adopted the culture of the Arabs including their religion.
10. The intermarriage between Arabs and the coastal local people increased the population of Muslims at the coast. This was made possible because many relatives of these women married to Arabs started leaving their home areas to come and live with their married relatives. Hence, through interaction, Islam had to spread at the coast of East Africa.
11. The existence of trade activities at the coast of East Africa also facilitated the spread of Islam. With the demand for goods from East Africa increasing, some Arab traders opted to occupy the coast

permanently. This paved way for the spread of Islam at the coast in that apart from their commercial activities, in their free time, Arabs preached Islam.

12. There was also the role played by the Ex-slaves. The life on the coast was dependent on slaves who had been captured in the interior. Those who served Arab master were fortunate for the Qur'an taught that kindness to slaves was a virtue and were treated as servants but not slaves. After sometime, the Ex-slaves started preaching to the local people what they had learned from their masters.
13. The existence of trade relations between the East Africa coastal people and the Arab Muslims brought about interaction between these two groups of people. So, those Arab Muslims must have influenced the coastal people to embrace Islam.
14. The presence of safe sailing water of the Indian Ocean made sailing of the Arabs and other people who spread Islam at the coast easy. They kept on moving forth and back to the coast using Indian Ocean waters, and in the process Islam spread at the coast.
15. The favourable climate of the East African coast as opposed to other regions like the North which is mainly a desert and the West occupied by dense equatorial forests, influenced many people especially the Arabs to come to East Africa. In turn, they took permanent settlements and in the process they spread Islam.
16. Some tribes at the coast of East Africa were hospitable and readily accepted the Arabs. They created strong relationship between them and the Arabs which increased their interaction. Since the Arabs were Muslims, they influenced the coastal people to convert to Islam.
17. The spread of Islam at the coast of East Africa was also spearheaded by the religious – political wars in Arabia (Fitina period). These wars made many Arab Muslims to leave their homeland and came to settle at the coast of East Africa as refugees and to seek safety from the

prolonged civil wars. These Arabs interacted with the coastal people to whom they taught Islam.

18. The course of the monsoon winds at the Indian Ocean also helped in the spread of Islam at the coast of East Africa. The Arabs had discovered that the Monsoon Winds between November and April would blow their dhows South–West wards towards East Africa. As they waited the winds to blow North–East wards between May and October, they stayed at the coast, where they spread Islam.
19. The development of Swahili-Arab villages at the coast helped in the spread of Islam. These villages became centers from which the local coastal people observed Islamic cultural practices. In fact each Swahili-Arab village had a Mosque and Madarasa which were vehicles to the spread of Islam.

THE ROLE OF TRADE IN THE ISLAMISATION OF THE COAST OF THE EAST AFRICA

Question:7 Assess the role played by trade in the early spread of Islam along the East African coast.

The coming, introduction and spread of Islam at the coast of East Africa was largely a product of trade. For a long time, there had been contacts between the coastal people with those from Arabia, especially Yemen and Oman.

Trade as a factor, influenced the spread of Islam at the coast in the following ways:

1. Trade and commerce attracted Arabs from Arabia and Persia to the coast of East Africa. The Arab traders being predominantly Muslims, helped to spread Islam at the East coast of Africa.
2. Arab traders used Africans as middlemen who they influenced to Islam. These middlemen hunted and looked for trade items in the land behind and around the coast. In their transactions, they spread Islam to the people they interacted with.
3. Arab Muslims established trading centres along the coast of East Africa which became Muslim villages. The chief coastal settlements that became Muslim villages were Kilwa, Pemba, Zanzibar, Mogadishu and Lamu Archipelago.
4. After Said Sayyid's transfer of his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar, the Arab traders started carrying Islam along the coast of East Africa. At this stage, Islam took root in several places along the coast and secured some African followers.
5. Through trade and commerce, the monetary sector and activities attracted Africans from the interior of Africa resulting into a busy coastal area, and thus helped to spread Islam.

6. Because of Arab Muslim settlement and trade activities, intermarriage between Arabs and the local Africans took place. This resulted into multiplication of Muslim population at the coast.
7. The increase in the Muslim numbers at the coast meant that the Swahili population, who were Muslims, found openings as troops, traders or interpreters. These helped to spread Islam wherever they went.
8. Through trade activities, Muslim culture was exhibited by Arab traders to their African trade partners, thus influencing the spread of Islam and its principles.
9. Through trade, Asian and Arab Muslims acquired wealth which they used to help spread Islam through missionary activities, like building schools (Madrasas), Mosques and sponsoring Islam activities.
10. Trade opened up the East African coast to the outside World, particularly to the Arab Muslim world. Therefore, after 813 AD, more Arabs who were more knowledgeable in Islamic science arrived at the coast of East Africa and these did much to fuel the spread of Islam.
11. Through trade activities, there emerged an elite Muslim business group that became the owners of wealth. These worked for the spread of Islam by financing Islamic activities. Such elite groups included Indians, Arabs, Swahili, Somalis and African traders.
12. Trade accessed Muslim traders to African kings and chiefs; because the Kings and chiefs wanted to win favours from the Arabs, influenced their subjects to embrace Islam.
13. Some Arab Muslim traders acted as volunteer missionaries, and these helped very much in the spread of Islam. During some free time, some Arab traders got some time off their business to teach the people they related with the principles of Islam.

However, much as Islam was spread with the help of trade activities, trade had a negative effect on the spread of the religion.

14. Arab Muslim traders participated in slave trade, and this created a negative attitude on the local population at the coast against the Arabs. This negative attitude stagnated the spread of Islam.
15. When the Portuguese took over the East Africa coastal trade from the Arab Muslim, the prosperous trade decreased and the Arab traders were further discouraged. The spread of Islam, therefore, also got a setback.
16. Because of the profiting trade along the coast of East Africa, Arabs, who were the champions of Islam, were so much commercially oriented; and thus paid little significance to the spread of the mission of Islam.
17. Trade boomed along the coast because of the big profits the Arabs were getting from it. They did not take much initiative to spread Islam, despite their long stay at the coast, because they spent most of their time in trade activities.
18. In the beginning, the Arabs did not settle at the coast. They used to come and search for merchandise and then go away. Therefore, in the first days of the Arabs arrival at the coast, they were not directly in touch with the local people. This delayed the spread of Islam at the coast of East Africa.

THE ROLE OF EAST AFRICAN COASTAL MARKETS TO THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

Question: Explain the significance of the East African coastal markets in the spread of Islam along the East African coast.

One of the impacts of the Arab occupation of the coast of East Africa was the establishment of markets and trade posts along the coast of East Africa.

With the coming of the Arabs, very many trade posts and markets were opened, prominent of which included those found in towns like Kilwa, Mombasa, Malindi, Zanzibar and Lamu Archepirago.

The establishment of markets at the coast was so vital and important that greatly contributed to the spread of Islam; as follows.

1. The East African coastal markets became meeting points between Muslim Arab traders and Africans; and through continuous interaction between Muslim Arabs and the local people, Islam was spread.
2. The East African coastal markets attracted many Africans traders from the interior to the coast. These traders from the interior interacted with the Muslim Arab traders who influenced them and consequently accepted Islam.
3. The East African coastal markets helped to unite people of different backgrounds together. The Muslim Arabs, Swahili, coastal and interior Africans all met at the coastal markets causing interactions that facilitated the spread of Islam.
4. The East African coastal markets provided Africans with wealth which made them become very rich. The wealth, Muslim traders accrued, was used partly for propagation of the faith through financing Islamic activities.

5. The East African coastal markets with time developed into towns like Kilwa, Mombasa and the like. The towns made convergence and divergence of Muslim Arabs and Africans easy. The Muslim Arabs then passed on Islam to those Africans who converged into these markets.
6. The East African coastal markets boasted the development of Kiswahili language which was a mixture of Arabic and African words. Kiswahili eased communication between Muslim Arabs and Africans and Islam was spread therefrom.
7. With Africans and Muslim Arabs meeting in these coastal markets, relationships developed that resulted into intermarriage between the two groups. The offsprings from such marriages were Muslims and this increased the Muslim population at the coast.
8. Some Muslim Arab traders who operated in the East African coastal markets acted as voluntary and volunteer missionaries. Though these Arabs were essentially traders, they could spare some time off their business to teach Islam.
9. The East African coastal markets led to the introduction of the gun as one of the commodities of trade. The introduction of the gun availed the Muslim Arabs with an opportunity to reach those areas originally feared because of insecurity. Thus, Islam reached such areas.
10. To East African coastal markets boosted universal brotherhood at the coast between Africans and Muslim Arab traders. Arabs interacted with Africans; ate together and related well. Many Africans were overwhelmed by this brotherly attitude of the Arabs that they were influenced to Islam.
11. The establishment of the East African coastal markets boosted permanent settlement of the Muslim Arabs at the coast. From their settlements, the Muslim Arabs were able to teach Islam to those Africans they came into contact with.

12. With the establishment of the East African coastal markets, there developed a class of middlemen between the Muslim Arab traders and the local people at the coast. These increased attraction and Islam was spread.
13. The success of the East African coastal markets led to migration of many African and Arab kings and chiefs to the coast in order to have full control of the profitable trade. This boosted trade and increased interaction through which Islam spread. For instance, Sayyid Said transferred his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar.
14. In the vicinity of the established coastal markets, Muslim Arab traders put up Muslim quarters and settlements. These became centres of diffusion of Islam through interaction of the Muslim Arab traders and the Africans.
15. The volunteer Muslim Arab missionaries, when they returned home in Arabia, facilitated the coming of Muslim scholars and learned men in the field of Islamic disciplines; these helped a lot in the spread of Islam through teaching the faith in a more organized manner.
16. In order to boost trade and to get more profits, the Arabs set up plantations along the coast. Africans were employed on these plantations, Muslims inclusive. These might have facilitated the spread of Islam when they preached to their fellow workers.
17. As more and more commodities poured in the coastal markets, there developed industries which benefited Muslims. This was due to presence of plantations and raw materials. Muslim employed in these industries got money they used to finance Muslim activities.
18. The East African coastal markets made trade profitable and this made Arabs rich and were in position to set up infrastructure like mosques and Qur'an schools where people were preached to and taught Islamic virtues.

19. The East African coastal markets led to provision of employment to Africans. Africans were employed as porters, domestic servants, and the like. The Africans who worked for the Muslim Arabs ended up converting to Islam in order to win favour of their Arab employers and masters.
20. The coastal markets led to coastal chiefs and kings to become rich and prominent. They in turn used such wealth to set up Islamic infrastructures like Qur'an schools and mosques which helped propagate Islam.



DISINTEGRATION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COASTAL MARKETS

Question: Account for the eventual disintegration of the East African coastal markets.

1. There arose political conflicts and disputes between different Muslim Arab families like the Busaid and Mazrui Arabs. These devoted much of their time in such conflicts and forgot their duty of maintaining the markets.
2. The emergency of insecurity on trade routes also led to the disintegration of the East African coastal markets. The Arabs were met with the hostility of local tribes like the Seguju and Wazimba.

These limited the movement of traders looking for tradable items to keep the markets going on.

3. The disintegration of East African coastal markets also resulted from the Portuguese ruthless invasion and conquest of the coast. The Portuguese destroyed Arab facilities including their settlements and markets.
4. The East African coastal markets lacked proper management and administration as the main architects, the Arabs, were not settled. The Arabs were always moving around looking for trade items. So they could not settle in an area for a long time to foresee the management the markets.
5. As trade at the coast became more and more profitable, the African kings and chiefs resorted to imposing heavy taxes on the Arab and Swahili traders. The Arabs went out of business and thus abandoned the East African market and ventured in other areas like West Africa.
6. The Portuguese took control of the Indian Ocean trade which reduced the commercial prosperity of the coastal markets. Such trade was an important means through which the coastal markets developed.
7. The Arab participation in slave trade kept many people, especially the African local people, away from the Arabs. Therefore the coastal markets disintegrated due to lack of people coming to them.
8. The exhaustion of trade commodities in areas around the coast forced the Muslim Arab and Swahili traders to move deeper into the interior of East Africa to look for these tradable items. This left the markets at the coast abandoned.
9. The East African coastal markets also disintegrated because of poor transport and communication. There were hardly any passable roads

and because roads had not been set up, the traders could not easily access their goods to market.

10. The areas around the coast were covered by thick vegetations and infested with epidemic diseases and dangerous insects like tsetse fly. These claimed the lives of many people; and thus coastal trades feared to risk their lives looking for tradable items to deliver to the markets.
11. Language barrier also affected the East African coastal markets as it hindered quick business transactions. There had existed a number of languages at the coast which the Arabs didn't understand; yet Africans didn't understand Arabic.
12. The emergence of European imperialism also affected the coastal markets. The Arab traders faced stiff competition from chartered companies like the German East Africa Company and the Imperial British East African Company. These monopolized trade and kept the Arabs out of business.
13. The Arab dominancy of the coastal region of East Africa in all spheres of life sharpened hatred between Arabs and Africans. The Arab occupation of the coast made Africans lost their independence and became Arab subjects. So, the Africans turned to fighting the Arabs to regain their lost independence instead of uniting to develop the markets.
14. The disunity of the coastal people also accounted for the disintegration of the East African coastal markets. The coastal people were always at war with one another for the control of the coastal commercial activities and market. For example, the Sultan of Mombasa conflicted with that of Malindi.
15. With the desire to control the coastal markets, for example Kilwa for its gold advantage, wars erupted for the control of gold. This led to insecurity and decline of this coastal market was inevitable.

