The history of Zanzibar and East Africa in general is incomplete without reference to the activities of Sayyid Said which marked a golden age in the history of Zanzibar. The Sultan of Omani exercised considerable influence over Zanzibar and the east African coast. Sayyid said in no doubt played a crucial role in the history of Zanzibar. The coming of Sayyid Said into Zanzibar improved the prospects of the region than it was prior to the movement of Sayyid Said’s headquarters to Zanzibar. This therefore brings us to a question of how. A detailed analysis will be given in this article. It must however be established that in 1828, Sayyid said the then known Imam of Muscat paid a visit to Zanzibar. There is no doubt he was pleased with this region which facilitated the movement of his headquarters from Muscat to Zanzibar. The main reason why he established his capital is not known but various reasons have been attributed to his movement from Muscat to Zanzibar. The area of Zanzibar rose to the peak during the reign of Sayyid said as it has earlier been classified as a golden age in the history of Zanzibar. The various achievements and developments in this area could in no doubt be attributed to the activities of sayyid said in the area. These activities brought about development and were a huge success in the history of Zanzibar. These activities include economic achievements which was the most dominant achievement in the history of Zanzibar. His economic revival in no doubt helped to launch a sustained contact between the East African coast and the interior. The economic activities in Zanzibar during the reign of Sayyid Said was characterised by an effective trading system and activities, slave trade, introduction of new crops such as cloves as well as the use of caravans. This evidently proves that the region of Zanzibar prospered in Economic activities. Other dominant achievements recorded during the reign of sayyid said include foreign relations which brought about the signing of treaties, the establishment of consulates as well as trade relations with various areas in Europe and other parts of the world. It was brought about the introduction of political organization as this was evident in the theocratic system of government adopted in Zanzibar. Government revenue system and tax system was also created in which the balancing of account system was adopted. The history of Sayyid said in Zanzibar is not complete without reference to the development of architecture, judiciary and military system initiated during his reign. He also achieved religious development as well as Educational developments. This article seeks to give a vivid view into the various achievements of Sayyid Said which have been outlined. In order to fully ascertain the achievement of Sayyid Said into power, it is important to briefly consider the activities and state of Zanzibar before the coming of Sayyid Said into power so as to establish the major changes that had evolved due to the coming of Sayyid Said into power.

Briefly considering the activities of Zanzibar before the coming of Sayyid it is important to establish that agriculture flourished in this area as their main occupation was farming. Crops like barley, oat, and millet. This could in no doubt be attributed to the good climate of the area which resulted in the existence of fertile lands in this area. History suggest that the land of Zanzibar was very fertile as it had two rainy seasons which was known as the greater rain or mazika that fell from April to may as well as the lesser rain called muli that fell from October to December. The island was very fertile and seemed equal to the production of all tropical vegetation’s. This is evident that extensive plantations were being established in these areas. Apart from farming, the people of Zanzibar were also identified to be great fisher men and the resources from this area served as items of trade. It must however be noted that even though the animal world of Zanzibar was not extensive, they served as great fisher men as they obtained abundance of fish from the sea, chief among which is the shark in which the natives cherished their meat. This therefore fostered efficient trading system amongst the people. There was internal trading that existed among the people of Thais area. History recorded that sheep’s were sold from Galla to the Zanzibar’s, geese and ducks were brought into the area of Madagascar. The people served as middle men as they traded with the Indians, Arabs and Persians. They obtained ivory, rhinoceros horns from the interior sad sold them to foreign traders. The people of Zanzibar also traded amongst themselves. This therefore establishes the reasons that could be responsible for the establishment of the of the headquarters of sayyid said in Zanzibar being that the economic activities and commerce thrived in this area as it is evident through the exchange of goods between the people of Zanzibar and the East African interior areas as well as its regular trade with the outside world. Sayyid said was in no doubt attracted to the activity in this area as he desired to control the trade between East Africa and the rest of the world.

The age of Sayyid said ibn Sultan is considered one of the most the most prosperous eras in the history of Zanzibar in the 19thc and this is as a result of the various activities and achievements initiated in Zanzibar. The most important activity carried out in Zanzibar was its economic activities which contributed immensely to the growth and development of this region. A scholar Peterson expresses the land to be a feeble land of spices, a vile centre of trade in slaves, and a place of origin of expeditions into the vast, mysterious continent. The strength of Zanzibar was in no doubt built on its economic activities as it prospered in economic activities. The most important economic achievement carried out by Sayyid Said in Zanzibar was the effective system of Trade and others include the introduction of new crops, prosperous slave trade, and introduction of caravans. Sayyid Said’s movement to Zanzibar could be attributed to his aim of transforming Zanzibar into a major trading centre for countries around the world. Sayyid Said engaged in internal trade and long distance trade. Trade existed between Zanzibar and the interior areas. Prior to the rule of Sayyid Said, there was internal trading in this area as history recorded that sheep’s were sold from Somali and the Galla to Zanzibar. Trade between these people was not stable until the reign of sayyid said in Zanzibar. Long distance trade was further strengthened during the reign of the sultan sayyid in Zanzibar and this could be attributed to the fact that the economic activities of this area attracted European states such as America, Britain and France. This activity further strengthened the region of Zanzibar and it rose to its peak. No wonder this period was being attributed to be a golden age period. The coming the Europeans in Zanzibar fostered development in various areas. Various goods were brought and exchanged in this area being that it was a trading centre. These trading activities brought about economic revival that sustained contact between the East African coast and the interior. Due its effective trading system, Zanzibar controlled and operated the economic activities of East Africa, America, Persia, European traders and other Arab traders. The whole commerce of East Africa both import and export passed through the hands of the merchant of Zanzibar. This in no doubt was as a result of its effective trading system. Its most valuable exports are cloves. Even though cloves were the most valuable form of exports, they were not the only commodities of export as others included ivory, samarium, and gums-copal. In return, Zanzibar imported goods from India, china, America and Europe. These included manufactured cotton cloths, beads, wires, chains, guns, gunpowder, glass, knives, china earthen wares and axes. The Sultan of Zanzibar formulated effective policies that facilitated effective trading system. History suggests that Said established rules to govern the activities of foreign traders in Zanzibar. He established free trade in this area as there were no duties levied on goods brought into this area. This brought about effective trade system in the international system between Zanzibar and various European states as he encouraged trade with other parts of the world. Sayyid said made adequate effort to encourage production and trade. A European merchant who went on an expedition to this area expressed in his words to describe the commercial development in Zanzibar ‘a brisk trade is plied here; for many merchant ships come to the island with a great variety of goods, all of which they dispose of before taking in a return cargo’. This there provides evidence to prove that Zanzibar was the centre of trade.

He created economic policies that encouraged the settlement of Indian traders in Zanzibar. Available evidence suggests that they settled in large numbers in Zanzibar as custom agents, middle men, money lenders and whole sale traders. He encouraged their settlement because he believed they were going to be very useful to the commercial development of Zanzibar.

This therefore transformed Zanzibar into an international and strategic market with traders coming from America, Britain as well as Germany. His various economic activities increased trade in Zanzibar. Through this, Zanzibar emerged as an international port. Sayyid said also operated a barter system of trade which involved the exchange of goods.in order to allow for effective trading system, the use of caravans was also introduced. He organized large caravans that penetrated the mainland of the coast. The introduction of caravans opened up the interior, bringing many East African people into the world economy as suppliers of ivory or slaves as well as provision of local products. These caravans were created in replace of relying on the interior tribes for the supply of goods. This means of attainment of goods had been in existence prior to the coming of sayyid said as the Sultan of Zanzibar. The coming of Sayyid Said ushered in the use of caravans. The use of caravans brought about the introduction of caravan routes in the interiors during the reign of Sayyid said. This subsequently led to the growth of various towns like Ujiji, Taboya, and Bagamoyo along these routes.

Another major achievement of sayyid said was the introduction of new crops. Prior to the coming of Sayyid, we have seen that the people of Zanzibar were great farmers and grew various agriculture products but the reign of sayyid brought about the introduction of new crops. Other various crops also emerged in the area due to the coming of the Europeans into this area in the 19thc .Sayyid said passion for agriculture coupled with the advantageous soils of Zanzibar encouraged him to seek for crops that would be cherished by all the people of Zanzibar and would have high demands in the international market. He therefore introduced clove cultivation in Zanzibar as he realized the high demand for cloves in European and Asian countries and so he encouraged his subjects to grow them. The clove crops were described as spices which originated from Moluccus Island and Madagascar. It was considered a commercial crop of the people of Zanzibar. History suggests that in the 19thc, Zanzibar was the most important clove producer. He established many clove plantations in Zanzibar. The cloves produced in Zanzibar were of high quality compared to other areas and this can in no doubt be attributed to its climate and soil. As stated earlier on, it should be notified that the area of East Africa has a high level of fertility. The soil in Zanzibar was suitable for clove production as it required clay which was greatly inhabited in Zanzibar. Oil was being from the clove tree which was used for varieties of activities such as cooking as well as preparation of medicines. It also served as an item of preservation of products in Europe. Before the coming of Sayyid said into Zanzibar, there were no clove trees in existent in this area. He ordered several thousand clove saplings from these islands and encouraged the farmers of this region to plant this product extensively. He directed that every planter should grow three cloves for every coconut tree planted. These instructions were laid down by sayyid said that attracted punishments if not followed to latter. These crop served as a major source of wealth to the people as it was cherished and important both in the internal and external trade.it undoubtedly became the principal and most important cultivation of Zanzibar and was grown wherever the soil was suitable from the large and extensive plantations belonging to the sultan and his family to the few trees owned by various cultivators. Evidence available suggests that there was production large quantities of cloves as more than 6000 tons of cloves were produced annually. He initiated a large-scale cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar that was successful. The emergence of cloves displaced other productions such as coconut, grains, rice, potatoes. The availability of cloves in Zanzibar fostered trade between this area and other areas as it led to the influx of foreigners in to this area to purchase this item. This activity would have in no doubt brought about the growth and development as well as the recognition of Zanzibar since it was ranked the highest clove producer in the 19thc.till the 1970s, Zanzibar and Pemba supplied the world most consumed cloves. These cloves were exported internally and externally. Cloves were exported to India, Britain, United States of America, China and other European states. Over time, several spices such as cinnamon, pepper were adopted in this area. The land of Zanzibar became known as the Spice Islands.

Apart from the introduction of cloves, it should be established that other crops were introduced by Sayyid said into Zanzibar such as the development of grains and coconut oil which helped in improving the agricultural system and the development of the economic system of Zanzibar. Sayyid Said initiated policies to ensure that this agricultural system was effectively put in place.it must also be established that due to the coming of the Europeans in the 19thc, new crops were also introduced such as pineapples, guava, banana, cashew, sugar cane. The people of the interior started growing these crops.

The reign of sayyid said in Zanzibar witnessed prosperous slave trade which was prominent in East Africa of the 19thc. It must be established that slavery was the most profitable of all the economic activities in Zanzibar and the vast majority of the blacks living in the island were either slaves from east Africa or the descendants of slaves from east Africa. The slaves obtained from various areas of east Africa were brought to Zanzibar in dhows where many slaves were packed in large quantities with no regard for comfort or safety. Slaves were usually forced to march in a line down the streets of stone town guarded by local slaves of the island. Slaves were a commodity of export as well as a source of labour to Zanzibar. Zanzibar was said to have had 150,000 inhabitants in which 60,000 were slaves. History has it that a group of slaves worked on cloves and plantations while the rest were exported to Persia, Arabia, the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. His slave trade activities turned Zanzibar into a principal market as people came from different parts of the interior to sell slaves in Zanzibar. The introduction of guns into the area with the coming of Europeans led to efficient slave raiding in this region. Every year about 40,000-50,000 slaves were being taken into Zanzibar from the interior to trade. Evidence also suggests that when the activity of slave trade got to its peak, Zanzibar exported 80,000-100,000 slaves annually. 10,000 were sent to India, Muscat and Mauritius from Zanzibar. The slaves were the backbone of the economy and served as a great source of wealth to the merchants.

Also considering the political organization, Sayyid said made great achievements in this area. History suggest that he organized a theocratic and centralized system of government which was based on doctrines as it was organized in the kharijite sect.it suffered constant changes as the Sultan feared a governor usurping leadership and taking over lordship from him. History suggests that he appointed eunuchs and divided civil and military power system. These officials helped in the running of the system of administration in Zanzibar. The Sultan of Zanzibar created an effective and efficient system of administration through its political organization. His title Sayyid was acknowledged as a modification between the strictly Islamic title of imam and the more secular one of sultan. The system of government which was of the kharijite sect was characterized by quarrels over wealth, titles, slaves and land. His achievement is also noted in the building of his main palace in the city of Zanzibar. He called it bait-el sahil. Even though the sultan of Zanzibar was designated as an absolute and centralized system of government, the Sultan was greatly influenced by aristocracy. His relatives and immediate family become the mere agents of these surroundings. The activities of the Sultan are controlled by theology as the Quran is the statue book of the Arabs. From the Quran, all their jurispudence are derived. This system was therefore adopted in Zanzibar as the political organization and activities in this area was governed by theology during the era of sayyid. The Quran had its short comings as it could be diversified into various interpretations but effective administration was maintained being that the sultan had to rule according to the tents of the Quran and could not oppose the Quran. It should be notified that from this area, the system of administration was carried out. The various officials who helped in the running of the affairs of the administration resided in Zanzibar and this therefore fostered and efficient system of administration as the government was close to the people. Said divided the political structure into provinces which was governed by a Wail appointed by sayyid said. The Sultan maintained peace and stability in the area through his efficient system of administration. Sayyid said received and addressed issues in his headquarters. These include issues of war, shelter as well as food. Said government was identified to have adopted toleration towards the Sunni Muslims. This therefore establishes that the activities of the Omani empire influenced Zanzibar as various parts of the Arabic culture were incorporated into East Africa.

Furthermore, tremendous achievements were recorded in the aspect of architectural development in Zanzibar. He encouraged the development of Arabic architecture in Zanzibar. Sayyid said converted the fishing and farming town of Zanzibar which was described as a land with mud huts and thatched roof into a town with storeyed flats. History suggests that sayyid said built up mosques in Zanzibar through which he encouraged Islamism in the coast and the interior areas of east Africa including Zanzibar. Beauty was derived from the mosque which gleamed with white minarets and the Sultan’s palace in Stone Town. He built up Islamic schools in the area. The construction and architectural activities in Zanzibar was carried out by skilled masons from Arabia with the aid of the native labour force. These activities in no doubt fostered migration of people from the Omani empire into the area of Zanzibar. Their architecture is reflected on the aspect of Islamism.

Sayyid Said was said of have made a lot of achievement towards the development of a judiciary system in Zanzibar. He encouraged the use of sharia law. He developed a system were all crimes and disputes were being settled by the Qadis. The Qadis during the reign of sayyid said was identified to be Sheikh Muhiyy el din, a leading Sunni scholar from Lamu and Sheikh Muhammad, an influential Ibadi scholar. The Sultan was vested with the right to order capital punishment. There was a right to appeal to the sultan’s court. The judiciary activities in this area were carried out according to the dictates of the Quran. The Quran was identified to be a statue of books for the Arabs. From that book, all jurisprudence is derived. The court activities were based on the tents of Islamism. The activities of the judiciary were based on theology. A Historian, Richard burton, visited Zanzibar one year after the death of sayyid said expressed that a year after the death of sayyid said, it was recorded and discovered that during his reign, offenders were never tortured instead they are fined, whipped or put in prison. History suggests that there was only one case of mutilation recorded during the reign of sayyid said.

He was also attributed with the creation of a military system in Zanzibar. This military system was in no doubt created to maintain peace and stability in the area. Being that it emerged as a commercial city, he created this military fleet to protect it. The Beloochs were mercenaries from Muscat and Moran who came into the area of Zanzibar principally as Askar(soldiers). It must be noted that the Askar comprised a chief portion of the Sultan’s army. Said military strength in the area depended largely on his navy. Prior to this period, his predecessors like Sayyid Ibn Ahmad also engaged in the use of military system to maintain peace and stability. He made use of naval forces. Since his possession was largely maritime territories, the ships and gun-boats were the backbone of the armed forces. He gave peace and stability to the people of this coastal area through the creation strong military forces which increased the volume of trade in this area.

Religious achievements spread of cultures as well as educational achievements were also recorded during the reign of sayyid said in Zanzibar. Said was recorded to be a man with great religious taste. He adopted only activities that never compromised his beliefs. He opposed all activities in the area that had no religious support. He forbade the taking and smoking of tobacco. No wonder during his reign he ruled according to the tents of Islamism and also the judiciary system developed by him was strictly based on the concept of Islamism. This in no doubt brought about the spread of Islam and Islamic culture into Zanzibar. Islamism was adopted by many indigenous people of this area. Those who did not adopt Islamism as a religion adopted the cultures of the Arabs in dressing, judiciary structure, architecture, political structure as well as inter-marriages between the Arabs and the indigenous people of Zanzibar. He encouraged the spread of the Arab and Swahili cultures and languages. He opened up Quranic schools which reduced the level of illiteracy among the coastal people.

Sayyid said made tremendous achievement towards the development of a government revenue and tax system in Zanzibar. He introduced a system of taxing all imports and exports as means of generating revenue. Due to foreign relations with other areas, he was able to employ the Indian Banyan who were skilled traders to collect these taxes. Apart from using this people as tax collectors, he also appointed them as advisers to commercial affairs. This therefore enriched Zanzibar’s treasury. A custom collector was created who was known as the chief treasurer. The government revenue system created the balancing of accounts which was done every three or four years. Government revenue was generated from custom collectors. Apart from this method generating revenue, sayyid said and his ruling officials derived revenue through annual poll tax generated from his subjects. The revenues derived amounts to 40,000 piasters every year. Through revenue said settled the army, civil service, personal expenses. They were usually paid this revenue at the end of the north-east monsoon which occurred in the month of March and April. Each province in Muscat were administered by the Wali who ruled side by side with the traditional rulers of the area. The traditional rulers administered the people and collected tributes. Tributes were collected from Muscat and other areas which were remitted to Zanzibar. The tributes remitted to Zanzibar served as revenue for the sultan and his officials.

Another achievement of sayyid said was the introduction and maintenance of foreign relations which led to the emergence of Zanzibar as a strategic market in the international system. The Introduction and maintenance of foreign relations in no doubt paved way for signing of treaties and establishment of consulates which will be extensively discussed in this article. It must be noted that prior to this period, for hundreds of years, Arabs, Swahilis had concentrated on trade and foreign relations with the east African coast but the coming of sayyid said opened the hinterland to foreigners. Zanzibar as an international port. The prosperous commercial activities of the Omani sultanate in Zanzibar attracted the attention of various European empires such as America, Germany, France, and Great Britain. This also led to their interest in the governmental affairs of the Omani in Zanzibar. It was the 19thc which was characterized by European scramble for Africa. Apart from engaging in favourable trade relations, they also wanted the protection of their citizens who resided in this area. This led to signing of treaties between sayyid said and various European powers. Apart from the European states, territories were signed with other areas of Africa as well as with interior chiefs of east Africa such as with Fundikira of the Nyarnwezi allowing coastal traders free passage. The signing of treaties increased the volume of trade on the coast. He held a prominent international standing with respect to his rules set down for rulers of Europe, Asia as well as other parts of Africa. His policies were based on realistic diplomatic skills. The presence of sultan gave some guarantee of security to foreigners.

Commercial treaties were signed between Zanzibar and various European powers. History suggest that a treaty was first signed with the United States of America in 1833. The Americans saw Zanzibar as a field for commercial enterprise. After an advantageous treaty was negotiated between America and sayyid said a consular and commercial establishment commenced in Zanzibar. Sayyid said welcomed them as he gave them a favourable treatment. They were only required to pay 5% duties on the American goods imported into the Omani empire and no duties on the goods imported into Zanzibar. This tremendous treaty brought about booming trade between Zanzibar and the United States of America. The Americans imported goods such as guns, gunpowder, cotton clothes(Merakini), beads, sugar as well as brassware. In return, they bought goods such as cloves, rhinocerous horn, gum, ivory, hippopotamus teeths, cowries as well as beeswax. In 1838, the United States sold goods worth $100,000 to the Omanis. By the time sayyid said died in 1856, it had risen to $550,000. Evidence suggest that by 1859, 35 American trading ships visited Zanzibar. At the middle of the 19thc, the United States of America was the most important western nation trading in this empire. This therefore establishes that America in no doubt was in favourable trade relations with Zanzibar. Apart from America, other European states signed treaties with the Omani sultanate in Zanzibar due to the fear of being overshadowed by America.

Britain signed a commercial treaty with the Omani sultanate of Zanzibar in 1839. This brought about exchange of goods and trade between Zanzibar and Britain. Favourable conditions of trade and judicial privileges were also given to Britain as 5% duties were placed on goods taken into the Omani empire and no duties were placed on goods taken into Zanzibar. This in no doubt strengthened relations between them. This strengthened relation is evident in his move to ban slavery and his efforts to combat this trade in the whole of the Gulf region which was a very lucrative business at that period as persuaded by Britain. He never made efforts to enforce the ban of slavery. He never rejected any offer made by any regional international state to conclude trade agreement.

France in 1844 signed a commercial treaty with the Omani sultanate of Zanzibar. Favourable conditions of trade and judicial privileges were also granted to France. These treaties were fair as they guaranteed the Europeans many privileges. They were allowed to stay and trade in Zanzibar with any form of difficulties. The treaties guaranteed the European businessmen exemption from the payment of taxes in the Omani empire. The creation of treaties brought about the establishment of various agencies in Zanzibar. The Europeans established an agency called john Bertram and co. of Salem Massachusetts. Another American merchant house opened in Zanzibar called Arnold Hines and co. of New York. Sayyid said also established strong international relations with Egypt. Sayyid said ties with Egypt was marked great ties with Egypt and Muhammad Ali. Mutual respected existed between them. Both of them were in confrontation with the Wahhabi activity in the Arabian Peninsula. Sayyid said expressed his admiration of the modern state structure built by Mohammed Ali in Egypt. He made efforts to build closer ties with Egypt.

The signing of treaties brought about the establishment of consulates in Zanzibar. Consuls are like ambassadors, diplomats appointed by the government to reside in a foreign nation and protect the interest of its citizens in the area. It must be noted that the consuls that existed during this period were not as powerful as the consuls we have in recent times. The consuls appointed in Zanzibar had various duties that were vested on them. However, some consuls who resided in this area were identified to be very powerful. The consuls were vested with the duty of overseeing the proper application of the various commercial treaties signed between the Omani empire and various Europeans states. They were also required to protect the lives and properties of their citizens that reside in this area. He settled all disputes between the citizens from his own country and prevented them from molestation. He also intervened in disputes between citizens from his own country and all others including those of the Omani empire. History suggest that in 1841, Britain opened a merchant house and subsequently a consulate in Zanzibar. The first British consul in Zanzibar was an Irish army lieutenant, Colonel Atkins Hammerton. The first American consular authority in Zanzibar was Mr Richard Palmer and it was established in 1837 while the consulate of France was Mr Broquant. He however died of dysentery in Zanzibar. He was therefore succeeded by Beligny a creole from Santo Domingo. These consuls played great roles in the history of Zanzibar. It must be noted that most of the consuls were businessmen and some of them were agents of trading companies. The primary role of the consuls as established earlier on is the promotion and maintenance of commercial treaties. The consuls provided the ground for colonization of the east African region by the colonial powers. They were also vested with the duties of giving annual reports to the government. They also supported activities of their people in Zanzibar.

In concludable fact, sayyid said reign in Zanzibar marked a period a golden age period and this could be attributed to the various contributions he made towards the development of Zanzibar. These developments could be seen through various achievements in Zanzibar. It must however be noted even after his death in 1856, this golden age continued. . Some European writers have argued that Europeans have been the making of Zanzibar and when they withdraw from the city, it would collapse. They saw themselves as large employers of labour. In my own opinion, this is fallacious because even before the coming of the Europeans, trade was prominent amongst the people. History suggest that the people of Zanzibar traded with the people of Madagascar, Mozambique. Apart from that, the prosperous trade which boomed was what brought the attraction of the Europeans into Zanzibar.

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**DEPARTMENT:**

**HISTORY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES**

**HSS 310**

**EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

**ASSIGNMENT QUESTION**

**DISCUSS THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SAYYID SAID IN ZANZIBAR IN THE 19TH CENTURY.**