

# CHAPTER 11

## SLAVE TRADE IN EAST AFRICA

### WHAT WAS SLAVE TRADE?

1. Slave trade comes from two words namely; slavery and trade.
2. Slave trade is the buying and selling of human beings as commodities.
3. Whereas slavery is a situation where a human being owns another to work for him or her without payment.
4. Slavery is also the ownership of human beings by another as property.
5. Slave trade therefore involved the actual buying and selling of human beings.
6. Slaves worked for their masters until the masters could stop them.
7. Never -the -less, slavery was not new in East Africa that is to say there were a number of domestic slaves among the people of East Africa especially in the chiefdoms and palaces of kings.
8. The slaves, however, in those days were treated as human beings and they had their rights.
9. But with the coming of the Arabs, Asians, Indians, Europeans and others the whole system of slavery was changed.
10. They got the slaves for very hard manual work and the conditions they subjected the slaves in were unbearable.
11. The Arabs, Africans and Europeans contributed to the development of slave trade in East Africa.
12. Therefore the three groups namely; the Africans, Arabs and Europeans participated equally in slave trade.
13. The Africans got as slaves were exported to work in plantations and salt mines in Persia; they did manual work in Europe, China and other places.

### HOW SLAVES WERE ACQUIRED OR GOT IN EAST AFRICA.

1. The ways in which slaves were acquired were in most cases too brutal (cruel).
2. Through wars, where war captives were taken as slaves and sold to the outsiders.
3. Criminals that had bad records in society were taken as slaves, for example wizards, debtors, adulterers and murderers among others.
4. The destitute or the needy were taken as slaves.

5. Some of the slaves were bought from the chiefs.
6. Prisoners of war were also taken as slaves.
7. Barter trade, that is to say, where slaves were exchanged for foreign goods like mirrors, beads, and others.
8. Slave caravans went to villages directly to look for slaves.
9. Big raids could be organized against the weak communities using guns, spears and clubs and people could be taken as slaves.
10. At times those moving alone also provided slaves once arrested.
11. Young and energetic people were just forcefully captured by using guns and swords.

#### **WHY THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN SLAVE TRADE BETWEEN 1800 AND 1850 IN E. AFRICA**

Slave trade increased in East Africa between 1800 and 1850 due to:

1. The defeat of the Portuguese from the coast of East Africa by the Arabs which enabled the Arabs to re-establish trade links with the continent of Asia, hence slave trade.
2. There was an increased European demand for slaves to go and work in their plantations.
3. Seyyid - Said's establishment of big clove plantations at the coast of East Africa especially in Zanzibar and Pemba where slaves were important to provide labour.
4. The penetration of the Arab and Swahili traders into the interior of East Africa who organized raids for slaves led to the increase in slave trade.
5. Some African cultures were very primitive and backward. Slavery was considered to be a way of eliminating bad ones.
6. The tribal conflicts along with inter-tribal conflicts also led to increase in slave trade, for example wars between Buganda and Bunyoro where people were captured.
7. Seyyid Said's transfer of his capital from Oman (Muscat) to the coast of East Africa ; Zanzibar. He later established Zanzibar as an international market.
8. Slave trade was highly profitable to the East African chiefs and Arabs.
9. The development of the long distance trade in East Africa that needed slaves to transport goods from the interior of East Africa to the coast and vice-versa.
10. The development of well defined trade routes in the interior brought more Arab slave traders which increased slave trade.

11. Religious arrogance or racial prejudice, that is to say, where the Arabs believed in being supreme and that they had to get people of low status to go and work for them.
12. The industrial revolution in Europe as early as 1850 increased the need for raw materials that could be cheaply produced by African slaves.
13. Existence of trade routes of long distance trade gave, more ease to slave traders in East Africa, to use such trade routes for slaves.
14. Presence of guns which were used to raid slaves led to its increment.
15. The demand for guns by African leaders to expand their territories and defend them, forced them to look for slaves to exchange for guns.
16. Earlier on slave trade had been abolished in West Africa, hence the Portuguese who were operating in that region turned to East Africa.
17. Some people voluntarily surrendered to the slave dealers due to unbearable conditions they were living in.
18. Some of the African leaders were willing to sell their subjects into slavery instead of defending them, for example Mirambo of the Nyamwezi.
19. Some African leaders also needed wealth or riches since slave trade was very profitable.
20. The spread of Kiswahili language which became a commercial language increased the slave trade.
21. The intermarriages between the Arabs and the Africans along the coast increased the relationship between the two communities and this also increased the demand for slaves in East Africa.
22. The increase in shipping facilities along the Indian Ocean increased the demand for slaves.
23. The collapse of gold trade at the East African coast forced traders to resort to slave trade for survival.
24. Slaves were demanded to transport commodities like ivory. They were therefore needed for transport.
25. The demand for ready made goods from the Arabs, forced the Africans to provide slaves that were highly demanded by the Arabs.

## EFFECTS OF SLAVE TRADE IN EAST AFRICA BEFORE 1850

1. Slave trade led to depopulation as very many people were taken from East Africa to other areas of the world.
2. It reduced East African economic development, as the trade took away most young and energetic people who could do various economic activities.
3. Several people in East Africa were killed during the raids which were intended to get slaves.
4. There was displacement of family members from one another, that is to say as people who were running away from slave raiders, got detached from their family members.
5. Villages of Africans were set on fire due to slave trade; hence it led to massive suffering and languishing of Africans.
6. The activity was very dehumanizing, that is to say people were treated very harshly during slave trade. They were whipped, flogged and so on.
7. Farmlands were destroyed during slave raids, hence causing famine later.
8. Those involved in trading of slaves like Seyyid Said got a lot of wealth.
9. Slave routes latter facilitated the growth of communication networks. Modern roads and railways were established following those routes
10. Slave trade caused insecurity in several parts of East Africa, as a result people lived in great panic and fear. There were inter-tribal wars.
11. It provided a firm ground upon which Christian missionaries came to E Africa. Missionaries claimed to have come to stop slave trade.
12. Thereafter, their activities led to scramble and partition of east Africa. As they got problems with the Africans, they invited their home governments to come and protect them.
13. Some towns like Zanzibar were able to expand due to slave trade.
14. In order to end this trade, legitimate trade was introduced into several parts of East Africa.
15. A number of crops like rice, wheat, among others were introduced by the Arabs at the coast and later in the interior.
16. East Africa was partly exposed to the outside world because of slave trade and slavery.
17. It led to fame and prominence of several slave dealers like Tipu-Tip, Seyyid Said and others.
18. The African chiefs also got a lot of wealth from slave trade and became economically strong.
19. New and strong empires like Nyamwezi of Mirambo were partly established out slave trade activity.

20. Small states were wiped out by powerful ones as slave trade intensified, for example Busoga kingdom in Uganda.
21. Towns developed along the east Africa coast, for example Zanzibar became an international trade market and gained prominence.
22. The Arab and Kiswahili languages spread into the interior as a result of slave trade.
23. There were also intermarriages between the Arabs who penetrated inland and the Africans inland. This gave rise to half caste.
24. African communities developed in America, Brazil, and Jamaica. Up to date, in these countries, African races can be seen.
25. Guns became means of acquiring political power and wealth among the Africans.
26. It intensified the spread of Islam into interior of East Africa as the Arabs could some times end up Islamizing the people.
27. However, it is also true that the Arabs involvement into slave trade had a negative impact on Islam, that is to say people in East Africa feared Islam due to the Arabs involvement into slave trade.

**ABOLITION OF SLAVE TRADE IN EAST AFRICA AFTER 1850  
REASONS FOR ITS ABOLITION**

1. The abolition drive started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, about 1772 AD.
2. Britain was one of the European nations that greatly benefited from slave trade. However Britain started the campaign to end slave trade due to many reasons.
3. Industrial revolution in Europe whereby machines took up work originally done by slaves hence slaves were declared useless.
4. Activities of humanitarians like William Wilberforce, Granville sharp, and Thomas Clarkson who decampaigned slavery and slave trade.
5. European writers and philosophers and religious-leaders attacked Slave trade.
6. Slave trade was against the principle of equality of all-mankind both before the law and before God.
7. Overproduction of commodities like sugar, clothes in Europe necessitated that slaves be resettled in Africa to provide market for European goods.

8. Slave labour had its own disadvantages. The slaves would need to be fed, housed, treated and sometimes they would strike, hence the need to end slavery.
9. With time population increased in Europe and stopping slave trade therefore was to check on population increase.
10. Slave labour had become unproductive, for example, slaves if not happy could destroy machines and slaves needed holidays.
11. New homes for freed slaves were established in places like Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa and Bagamoyo at the East African coast. The slaves released would now be settled.
12. Pressure from the public (public opinion) after studying the poor conditions of the slaves forced humanitarians to speed campaigns against slavery.
13. The press like magazines, newspaper, radios and so on also played a big role as they reported massively the mistreatment of the slaves.
14. The coming of Christianity to East Africa and their preaching overpowered slave traders who gave a second thought to the activity.
15. When slave trade was abolished in West Africa, the abolitionists were forced to come to east Africa to abolish it also.
16. The American Revolution which introduced the ideas of freedom and democracy led to rebellion elsewhere.
17. The 1789 French revolution which preached liberty and equality among human beings also contributed to slave abolition. Britain took up the lead.
18. The philosophers like Rousseau also held similar views of equality of mankind.

#### **STEPS TAKEN TO ABOLISH SLAVE TRADE IN EAST AFRICA**

1. The question of slave trade was discussed in Europe during the Vienna settlement and conquests of 1814-1815.
2. Britain led the campaign to end slave trade and slavery.
3. The Humanitarians were at the fore front to end slave trade and slavery. Notable of them were William Wilberforce and Clarkson.
4. In 1807 the British parliament declared slave trade and slavery illegal.
5. By 1815, British ships begun inspecting and patrolling on major water bodies in Europe to ensure that no slave trade went on.

6. Britain also took the initiative to stop slave trade along the East African coast and in the interior.
7. In 1877, the governor of Mauritius signed a treaty with the sultan of Madagascar to stop taking slaves to Mauritius.
8. In 1822 Seyyid - Said under the influence of Britain signed the “Moresby” treaty. However the “Moresby treaty” had its weakness, though it did not allow the Christian countries to participate in the slave trade, it stated that the Arabian states could freely trade in slaves in Africa.
9. In 1824, Captain Owen set up the Owen protectorate over Mombasa, the idea had been to abolish slave trade in the area.
10. But, however, Captain Owen had acted without consultation with the British government and he was thus forced to withdraw in 1826.
11. In 1839, another attempt was made to effect to the Moresby treaty signed between Britain and Seyyid- Said, this attempt however ended up into a complete failure.
12. In 1845 Seyyid- Said signed another treaty with Colonel Hammerton who was the British Consul (representative) in Zanzibar.
13. Therefore, the “Hammerton treaty” of 1845 was also signed which provided that “the slave trade could only be conducted within the territories under the Sultan of Zanzibar.
14. In 1856 Seyyid Said died which gave several English people the chance to condemn slave trade.
15. The most serious decampaigner of slave trade was Dr. Livingstone, who wrote several articles and pamphlets on slave trade.
16. Although the Hammerton treaty had forbidden all Christian countries from involving in slave trade, the French through their “Free Immigration scheme” continued to take part in slave trade.
17. In 1864, the French free immigration scheme was abolished.
18. Generally, it can be examined that efforts to abolish slave trade in East Africa were more successful after 1873; this was so because initially slave trade was still very profitable.
19. In 1873 more tiresome efforts to end slave trade were made by Dr. John Kirk. He signed a treaty with Sultan Barghash that stated that: - Shipment of slaves from the coast of Africa

was to end and that by the Hammerton treaty, all slave trading activities which were around Zanzibar were to be closed down.

20. In 1876, Sultan Barghash made other proclamations and statements namely: - Slaves could not in any way approach the coast from the interior and he also confirmed that slaves could no longer be moved either by land or sea.
21. From then onwards, the German and British administrators, explorers and missionaries began to go into the interior to preach for the end of slave trade.
22. In 1889, a law was passed which made it clear that after Jan 1890, all the children born were to be automatically free citizens.
23. In 1897, all the slaves in Zanzibar and Pemba were freed.
24. In 1905, in all German territories children born in that year and thereafter became free.
25. In 1907 Britain declared that the state of slavery was illegal in the areas which they controlled.
26. The British abolished the “legal status of slavery” in Tanganyika after they had taken over the administration of the area in 1919.
27. In 1921, slavery ended in Tanganyika.
28. With the coming of explorers, missionaries and legitimate traders, East Africa moved from a state of slavery to colonialism.
29. In the campaign against slave trade and slavery Britain used patrol means to ensure no slave trade was taking place along the east African coast.
30. Britain also persuaded other European countries like France, Spain and Portugal to stop slave trade.
31. Mission centres were also set up to act as homes for freed slaves, for example Bagamoyo.
32. Information was published in form of books, pamphlets, magazines and newspaper to persuade Europeans to stop slave trade and slavery.

#### **PROBLEMS OR CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SLAVE TRADE ABOLITIONISTS**

1. The problems were social, economic and political in nature.
2. Others were from within East Africa where slaves were got.
3. While others were external especially from Europe where the abolitionists and the beneficiaries of slaves were from.



4. There was opposition from other European powers which had not industrialized, for example Portugal and Spain.
5. Britain was alone in the struggle and the missionaries they used were few in number.
6. The British anti-slavery squadron or forces operating in East Africa was too small to do the work effectively.
7. The East African area and coast line was too big to be monitored effectively.
8. The British forces, for a long time only concentrated on the E. African coast and therefore other areas were not at first covered.
9. British personnel were small in comparison with the big East African region.
10. European powers continued with slave trade, they shipped the slaves' cargos into ships bearing American flags.
11. There was a problem in transport, that is to say there was no clear means of transport as yet.
12. The poor climate of East Africa could not favour the abolitionists.
13. Lack of enough geographical knowledge of several parts of East Africa.
14. There were numerous caravan routes for slaves; hence it was not easy to follow up all of them.
15. They lacked social facilities. For example hostile tribes gave them hard time by attacking them.
16. The treaties that were signed to abolish slave trade were too weak to do so.
17. Slave trade dealers were usually armed and often killed abolitionists.
18. Lack of sufficient capital to finance their activities.
19. Tropical diseases like malaria killed many abolitionists.
20. Resettling the Freed slaves was not easy, that is to say, no accommodation.
21. Some people preferred remaining as slaves. They were not sure of the conditions outside slavery.
22. Slave trade had more or less become a tradition in some societies; hence they regarded it as part of the society.
23. It was suggested that slave trade would be replaced by activities like growing of cash crops, but the crops would take long to mature, hence making the Africans suffer economically.
24. In some cases the anti-slavery squadron witnessed slaves being thrown into water as they approached slave traders' ships. They therefore relaxed their patrol.

25. The slave trade dealers would also hide in the estuaries in seas as patrol ships would approach.

#### **EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVE TRADE UPON THE PEOPLE OF EAST AFRICA**

1. The abolition of slave trade increased the British influence in East Africa.
2. Britain got encouraged to colonise East Africa, so as monitor slave trade abolition.
3. It also increased the coming of the white settlers into Kenya and Tanganyika as traders and farmers.
4. More missionaries came to help in the stopping of slave trade.
5. Many people accepted Christianity as a new religion.
6. Roads and railways were constructed to facilitate the abolition of slave trade. This later helped the Africans.
7. Legitimate trade was introduced in East Africa.
8. Trading companies like the German East African company (G.E.A.Co) and the Imperial East African Company (I.B.E.A.Co) came to participate in legitimate trade in east Africa.
9. Cash crops were introduced to make Africans produce raw materials to feed the European industries.
10. Africans regained their dignity and respect as human beings.
11. However, a new form of slavery resulted; that is to say, Africans were subjected to forced labour by the colonialists.
12. Security within the interior improved because there were no slave raids.
13. East Africa experienced population increase as people settled down.
14. Conflicts arose between people and their leaders who had subjected them to slave trade and slavery.
15. The influence of the Arabs and their leaders, the sultan collapsed.
16. Slave traders lost their profits which they had enjoyed from the trade. This affected them financially.

#### **Revision questions**

- i. What was slave trade?
- ii. How were slaves acquired during slave trade?
- iii. Why was there an increase in slave trade between 1800 and 1850 in East Africa?

- iv. What were the problems faced by slave trade abolitionists in East Africa?
- v. Why was slave trade abolished?
- vi. What were the effects of slave trade?
- vii. What were the results of the abolition of slave trade in East Africa?
- viii. Explain the steps taken to abolish slave trade in East Africa.