

CHAPTER 6

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OMAN POWER (1698 - 1840)

REASONS FOR THE COMING OF THE OMAN ARABS TO THE EAST AFRICAN COAST

1. The Oman Arabs were the Arabs who came from Oman and they included Seyyid Said.
2. The East African coastal area had been associated with the people of Oman from the very beginning.
3. Oman Arabs knew that the majority of the coastal people were Moslems and by declaring a holy war “Jihad” on the Portuguese, they would free the people from Portuguese rule.
4. Oman Arabs knew that they would never control the Indian Ocean trade again without the control over East African coast.
5. The East African coast had towns with important riches, for example Kilwa and Sofala had gold.
6. Need to revenge on to the Portuguese who had driven Arabs from the East African coast.
7. The need to take political power so as to be in position to impose taxes on the coastal settlement.
8. Conflicts among the Oman Arabs families; the Yoruba family and Busaidi family conflicts at home forced the Oman Arabs to control the E. African coast.
9. Oman Arabs intended to control the East African coast to ensure that the Portuguese would never take up control over the coast again.
10. The need to benefit from the lucrative Indian Ocean trade.
11. The need to tax the East African peoples to get revenue from them.
12. The E. African coast had wonderful climatic conditions that attracted the Oman Arabs.
13. The East African coast had good natural harbours that attracted the Oman Arabs.
14. The need to spread Islam along the East African coast.
15. The coast was strategically located hence easy to defend from external attacks.
16. Coastal people were friendly and caring. They were generally hospitable and this attracted Oman Arabs.

REASONS FOR THE CONFLICTS AND STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE OMAN ARABS AND THE MAZRUI FAMILIES

1. The Mazrui governors were not ready to lose their position as leaders to the Busaidi dynasty.



2. The need and desire to control trade along the East African coast caused the struggles.
3. The failure of the Mazrui governors of Mombasa to respect and fully recognize the Busaidi who had taken over their control over the Ottoman Empire.
4. The Declaration of Mombasa as an independent state under the Mazrui governors from the Oman rule caused power struggles.
5. High taxation over the coastal people by the Oman rulers had made life too difficult.
6. Historically, the Mazrui administrators held a belief that they were the right people destined to administer Mombasa after all the Portuguese had found them the true leaders of such an area.
7. The poor and inefficient administration of the Oman leadership encouraged struggles.
8. Availability of supplies from the “Nyika” which greatly encouraged Mombasa in her efforts to resist the Oman rulers.

WHY SEYYID SAID TRANSFERRED HIS CAPITAL FROM OMAN TO ZANZIBAR

1. By the turn of the century, a new man came to power in Oman. This was Seyyid Said.
2. Seyyid Said was born in the 1791 at Muscat the capital of Oman and his father was Sultan Said of the Busaidi ruling dynasty.
3. He was more determined and ruthless in his approach in spite of the several problems he faced.
4. Seyyid Said lost his father at a tender age of only 13 years.
5. By 1817, Seyyid- Said had solved the problem of enemies in Oman and pirates at sea had all been solved with the British assistance. This gave Seyyid Said time to concentrate in East Africa.
6. In 1817, Seyyid-Said sent ships to the coast of East Africa and captured Pate which had been conquered by Mombasa in 1807.
7. In 1840, Seyyid Said moved his capital from Oman to Zanzibar due to several factors:
8. The factors for Seyyid-Said’s shift of his capital from Oman to Zanzibar were geographical, economic, and political in nature.
9. The need to administer the coast more effectively.
10. The need to participate in the Indian Ocean trade and actually to control it by himself.
11. Zanzibar’s climate was very good for human settlement and agriculture.

12. Zanzibar had not only a good harbour but also had a good fresh water supply.
13. Zanzibar was becoming prosperous and rich thus the need to control it. This forced him to transfer his capital from Oman to Zanzibar.
14. The need to get trade items from the interior of East Africa by use of Zanzibar, forced him to transfer his capital.
15. He was escaping from internal wrangles at Oman.
16. Zanzibar was more strategically located on an Island hence easy to defend.
17. Zanzibar had very fertile soils suitable for agriculture than Oman which had very poor soils.
18. The need to completely end the conflicts between the Mazrui and the Oman rulers.
19. The need to control and check Sea piracy that had affected the profitability of the Indian Ocean trade.
20. The need to win glory and prestige. There would be respect accorded to him by Controlling Zanzibar which had developed greatly.
21. At Muscat, there were so many political opponents and enemies in general; the need to escape such people forced him to shift his capital.
22. It is hoped and believed that the people along the East African coast would provide very cheap labour to Seyyid Said's agricultural and industrial schemes, hence he had to shift to Zanzibar.

SIGNIFICANCE / IMPACTS / RESULTS / ACHIEVEMENTS OF SEYYID-SAID IN THE HISTORY OF EAST AFRICA

Seyyid Said is remembered in the history of East African coast because of many effects which include the following:

1. Seyyid Said shifted his capital from Oman (Muscat) to Zanzibar in 1840.
2. He established clove growing in Zanzibar.
3. Seyyid Said transformed Zanzibar into an important trade centre and slave trade market.
4. He developed and encouraged trade with the other parts of the world.
5. He transformed Zanzibar into an international market recognized by Britain, France, Belgium, and other Europeans.
6. He highly encouraged Europeans to open up trading posts in Zanzibar, consequently, the Germans opened up one of such posts in 1844.

7. He encouraged the Indian Banyans who were money lenders from India to settle along the East African coast. These gave loans to traders.
8. He promoted a cash economy other than barter trade by encouraging the use of Rupees which were Indian currencies.
9. He encouraged trade with different tribes from the interior of E. Africa like the Nyamwezi, Yao and others.
10. Seyyid Said signed commercial treaties with foreign countries like France, German and Britain.
11. He vigorously fought against Sea pirates which improved trade opportunities in the Indian Ocean.
12. Seyyid said introduced taxation on all exports and imports hence he successfully collected a lot of revenue that he used to develop Zanzibar's economy.
13. He organised trade caravans into the interior of E. Africa which greatly increased the volume of exports of Indian Ocean trade
14. Seyyid Said personally signed important trade agreements with several chiefs from the interior of East Africa like the one he signed with the chief of Nyamwezi which allowed other traders to operate in his area.
15. He established and developed a one man's leadership at the coast of East Africa hence created a kind of political federation at the coast.
16. He maintained peace, stability and harmony on the East African coast.
17. He greatly inspired and encouraged people to participate in long distance trade.
18. He encouraged slave trade which greatly destabilized several Kingdoms in the interior of E Africa.
19. He ended the wrangles and quarrels that had occurred between the Busaidi and Oman rulers.
20. He encouraged and facilitated the spread of Islam which acted as a unifying factor among the coastal people.
21. He led to the development of new towns in the interior like Tabor and Bagamoyo, through encouraging the penetration of Arabs into the interior of East Africa.
22. He constructed several Mosques and Quranic schools along the East African coast.
23. He greatly aided the spread of the Swahili culture and Arabic language into several parts of East Africa.

24. Through Seyyid Said, new goods were introduced at the East African coast like glass, guns, beads, cloths and others.
25. Seyyid Said participated greatly in the signing of treaties that ended slave trade. He died in 1856 after having changed the condition at the East African.

Revision questions

- i. Why were the Oman Arabs interested in controlling the East African coast?
- ii. What were the reasons for the conflicts / struggle between the Omani Arabs, Busaidi and the Mazrui governors?
- iii. Why did Seyyid said shift his capital from Oman to Zanzibar?
- iv. How did Seyyid Said develop the economy of Zanzibar?
- v. What was the significance of Said Seyyid in the history of East African coast?

