1. THE POKOMO OF KENYA

The Pokomo live in Tana-River District, Coast Province of Kenya. They are of Bantu origin. They live along the River Tana just south of Lamu Island from Ozi and Kipini at the Indian Ocean up to Garissa to the north. They call themselves "Bfokomo" - pronounced with a bilabial affricate. They call the land which they occupy, "Bfokomoni" (the land of the Pokomo). The Pokomo are divided into two major groups i.e. the Upper Pokomo, who are locally referred to as wantu wa dzuu, meaning "northerners" and the Lower Pokomo, who are referred to as malanchini, meaning "southerners". The dividing line, however, is negligible to an extent that a Pokomo from the north can communicate with a Pokomo from the south without any difficulties.

The Pokomo have a total of fourteen clans known as vyeeti (singular: kyeeti). The Lower Pokomo have six clans while the Upper Pokomo have eight clans. The names of the Lower Pokomo clans are Buu, Dzunza, Kalindi, Ngatana, Kulesa and Mwina. The names of the Upper Pokomo clans are Zubaki, Malalulu, Malankote, Korokoro, Ndera, Gwano, Ndura and Kinankomba. The Buu is the most prominent clan among the Lower Pokomo while the Zubaki is the most prominent clan among the Upper Pokomo. They are also the two most populous clans among the Pokomo. The Pokomo clans are further sub-divided into sub-clans known as masindo (singular: indo). Hence, the Buu clan, for instance, is divided into seven sub-clans; namely, Kale, Deno, Kamwelo, Karya, Kadssoo, Yuu and Kadsaye.

The name "Tana" was coined in the early 1800s during the initial contacts between the Europeans and the Pokomo. The first European had sailed up the River. The local Pokomo gathered at the River to have a glimpse of this stranger. The European explorer enquired what the name of the river was. The Pokomo did not have a name for the river, so they answered, "Tsana" meaning "river". So from that day the river became known as River Tana and the district that was formed later became Tana-River District which was carved out of the then Tana-Land Province.