

## Abatsotso

The Abatsotso of Lurambi in Kakamega District are part of the larger Luhya community who originated from Misri (Egypt). It is believed that Mutsotso is the quintessential ancestor of the Abatsotso. Abatsotso live exclusively in south Lurambi and share north Lurambi with the Abanyala of Ndombi. They speak a dialect of Luhya called Olutsotso. It is a language characterized by click and *kh* sound.

Abatsotso are peace loving people, humble outgoing and cohesive but also very democratic because they never buy one idea unanimously, a character that is nationally recognized as they never elect someone to parliament more than twice. All elected representatives acknowledge this fact which helps smooth handover of power.

Men marry only one wife but tend to entertain other mistresses, thus leading to family problems and lately increase in the incidence of HIV. They have a high liking for leisure.

They are generally subsistence farmers although sugarcane growing has spread from neighbouring Mumias. Abatsotso are hospitable people, always ready to share their food.

This is a community of about 150,000 people with an adult population of 80,000 people. It is divided into two administrative divisions headed by a District Officer (DO). The divisions are broken down to locations and lastly villages. The smallest administrative unit in Lurambi is the family. Every household has an average of eight people.

The region experiences a tropical kind of climate with two rainy seasons in March to August and October – December. Crops grown include – all types of grains – maize, millet, sorghum, also cassava, potatoes, yams, beans and a variety of fruits grow, coffee also grows but on small scale there is a high potential for tea which is unexploited. All types of nuts and peas grow here as well as sunflower. Sugarcane is also grown on small scale. We also have cattle reared.

This community is near the tropical forest of Kakamega – a tourist attraction for its butterfly and birds of all species including some of the indigenous trees. Its rivers flow throughout the year but are not at all used either for irrigation or hydroelectric power generation.

Nature is funny that one dies when (s) he's the Garden of Eden. Lurambi is such a garden, but its people are poor, illiterate and weak. AIDS has worsened the situation.

## Roasterman Goldmines:

This region is in the Gold Mining Zone, I remember a time when a borehole was being sunk in my former school, stones of Gold were found, and this made the work to stop as each one struggled to look in the sand for gold. Where that gold went nobody knows. The rivers also flow with alluvial gold in some areas. Besides gold, the area also boasts of copper ores that remains very much unexploited due to lack of capacity.

Infrastructure in Lurambi is undeveloped, roads are untarmacked, electricity only supplied to few market centres, hospitals are far apart and not well staffed and ill equipped schools are few and undeveloped, teachers lacking in motivation, telecommunication is a dream. Getting an internet (Cyber Café) is difficult. Anything like computer literacy is a strange thing to most of the people especially teachers and farmers at all levels. The government officers are also computer illiterate. The community's ability to develop itself is being frustrated by the market economy, which leaves it at the peril of collapse.

*By Rodgers Shikaru*