An assessment of the potential of ecotourism and community based natural resource management as a rural development strategy with special reference to Isimangaliso Wetland Park

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An assessment of the potential of ecotourism and community based natural resource management as a rural development strategy with special reference to Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyse the potential and challenges for ecotourism development and how it can be applied as an integrated tool to provide economic incentives and better opportunities for community development, while improving natural resource management and conservation in Isimangaliso. The capital assets, the context of vulnerability of the local communities along with other significant attributes of the supply side were investigated in-depth. In addition, the potentials and challenges for ecotourism development in the selected Isimangaliso, Khula Village were studied. The impacts of ecotourism on local livelihood improvement, biodiversity resources and natural environment, and management and conservation of the area were also explored through sustainability concepts. However, the focus of the study was not only on ecotourism potentials and opportunities but was also on the development of sound guiding principles for planning and management of ecotourism development in Isimangaliso in a sustainable manner.

It was found that community’s willingness to participate in local development and natural resource management remains a questionable issue to be achieved. This is because local communities are strongly influenced by vertical network of the state administration. The study reveals that there is a strong interaction and interdependency between local livelihoods or poverty and the status and effectiveness of natural resource management in Isimangaliso.

The study indicates that the area has plenty of potential natural and cultural resources. These resources signify three fundamental elements for ecotourism destination: quantity, quality, and fascination. The natural attractions consist of vital and sensitive biological and scenic values of the destination area.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRA: Association For Rural Advancement

CBET: Communality-based Ecotourism

CBNRM: Community-based Natural resource management

DEAT: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

DFID: Department for International Development

EFCOT: Ethiopia Forum for Community Based Tourism

GEF: Global Environmental Society

GTZ –CBET: German Agency for Technical Cooperation-Community-Based Ecotourism

SANBI : South African National Biodiversity Institute

UNDP: United Nations Development Program


USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature
CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism encompasses the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. It is the largest and fastest growing industry, which has the best possibility for generating many new jobs worldwide. It is a promising income-generating business venture and alternative option for developing the livelihood of the rural community since it does not require year’s long vocational trainings (Rannersmann, 2003). Although tourism contributes to the economic development, in latter periods, it resulted in very negative environmental impacts due to the large number of visitors damaging destination areas of tourists. Therefore, this gave rise to environmental awareness among travellers starting in 1990s, which indicated the need for development of ecotourism destinations (Holden, 2003). In developing countries tourism or ecotourism has become one of the economic sectors that generates significant income and at the same time conserves the environment especially in protected areas. For example, Amboseli National Park of Kenya generates an aggregate income of 18-20 times more than agricultural sector of the economy (Atlabachew, 2002).

Furthermore, EFCOT (2003) indicated alternative means of income generations and off-farm activities to minimize degradations pressure on endangered environments in rural areas of Ethiopia. Ecotourism could be as a good example of alternative income generation and off-farm activities which benefit local communities while conserving of natural resources and the environment. In addition, Scwenk (2002) stated that the assessment of ecotourism or simple nature tourism does not need more facilities and depends on locally obtained facilities or natural capital of the poor that can be managed locally. For example, in Ethiopia to encourage sustainable tourism, there is an attempt to introduce ecotourism to rural areas as component of natural resources management through creating diversified livelihoods for local people (Van Ter Beek, 2001).
Moreover, natural resources can provide economic potential through ecotourism besides other uses (Couralet, 2004).

There are a number of conservation initiatives for example in South Africa concerning world heritage sites, which are attempting to conserve resources whilst linking them to the development of the community (Gumede, 2009). The Isimangaliso Wetland Park in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa is one such initiative. The notion of conservation in South Africa is imbedded in White Paper on Tourism (DEAT, 1996) which seeks to promote conservation and tourism. In this Tourism White Paper, it is stressed that national and provincial agencies should play an important role in development and management of conservation land for tourism purposes. Conservation authorities and wealthy private tour operators carry out the bulk of tourism activities and business around the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The participation of the local community in the activities is minimal. The reasons behind the lack of participation and ownership of businesses by the local communities remain unknown (Gumede, 2009). One of the ways of establishing reasons for the lack of community participation in tourism related activities and businesses by the local people was to conduct this research, which would culminate in bringing the core reasons for this phenomenon to the surface. Maximizing the benefits for the local communities from the various tourism activities, such as the provision of accommodation, transportation, entertainment and selling crafts remain a concern for a development practitioner. The Park has various tourism attractions that draw tourists from all over the world. The visitors of the park are interested in the attractions within the Isimangaliso Wetland Park as well as the environment around it that includes the lifestyle of the local people. It is from this perspective that more emphasis should be placed on community participatory approach ecotourism development (Gumede, 2009).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The main objective of this research is to analyse the potentials and constraints for community-based ecotourism development to stimulate rural community
development and at the same time to effectively conserve and manage natural resources in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

To achieve this aim, two priority objectives were screened and completed so that the research process could run efficiently and pragmatic research findings could be generated theoretically and practically. Each objective involved sequential activities as follows:

**Objective 1:**

Investigate the potential of ecotourism for improving livelihoods of local communities in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

**Activities:**

1. Identify the vulnerability context of local communities in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.
2. Measure existing regional and local capital assets of productive resources in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.
3. Investigate the potentials of supply for ecotourism development.
4. Investigate ecotourism benefits for stimulating local livelihoods and economy in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

**Objective 2:**

Investigate projected effects of ecotourism on the social and natural environment of Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

**Activities:**

1. Assess the possible risks for the environment and local communities which are associated with the ecotourism development.
2. Identify guiding principles for concerned stakeholders for planning and management of ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.
1.3 Context of the study

1.3.1 Location of Isimangaliso Wetland Park

The study area is located at the north-eastern coast of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. It is starting from the east of Mbonambi town and stretches down 0° to the east of N2 road to the Kosi municipality. The District Municipality of UMkhanyakude is the main urban designated area, although the entire area is largely rural in character. UMkhanyakude is located between latitudes 27° and 33° south and longitudes 27° and 28° east (Gumede, 2009). The main study area is at Khula Village which lies near the town of St Lucia, which is east of the Mtubatuba local municipality (UMkhanyakude District Municipality, 2011).

The park comprises 328 000 hectares and stretches along approximately 280 kilometres of coastline. It starts south of the St. Lucia Estuary and stretches northwards to the Mozambique border. Isimangaliso Wetland Park is 27 kilometres from the town of Mtubatuba (Gumede, 2009).

The entire UMkhanyakude District Municipality could be visualised as consisting of two geographical sections. On the one hand, the northern section has places such as Umhlabuyalingana and Jozini. The northern section which is characteristically a flat low-level area away from the ridges evident more towards the south, hence it is called 'Umhlabuyalingana' (homogeneously flatland). This area contains the northern sections of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park (Gumede, 2009). On the other hand, the southern section contains areas such as The Big-Five False Bay, Hlabisa and Mtubatuba, and portions of the St Lucia Estuary which is the central feature of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park, the World Heritage Site.
1.3.2 Location of Khula Village

Khula Village is located about 10 kilometres west of town of St Lucia, falling within the jurisdiction of the Mtubatuba local municipality and the larger UMkhanyakude District Municipality. The main village is therefore, located approximately 12 kilometres from the southern section of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The residents of Khula Village are part and parcel of the physical environment and tourism facilities and activities to be found in the Isimangaliso Wetland Park which is predominantly occupied by rural communities directly linked with the people who were removed from parts of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. Khula Village has approximately 3600 inhabitants and is semi-rural (Gumede, 2009). The spatial distribution of these semi-rural households ranges from 50 metres to about 100 metres. The town of Mtubatuba is the main administrative centre of Khula Village.

Prior to the new democratic order of 1994, Khula Village did not have an adequate infrastructure, such as water reticulation, electricity, tattered roads and socio-cultural facilities. Some of the residents of Khula Village are employed in the town of St Lucia, working in homes, restaurants, lodges and shops. Several of the residents are either owners of small-sized craftworks or employed by the well-off sector of this region (Gumede, 2009).

Apart from working for businesses in town, some Khula Village residents are in the business of selling craftwork on the side of the road going to St Lucia, or at the market area in St Lucia, which is patronised by domestic and international tourists. Khula Village community is therefore dependent on tourism activities for their household income (UMkhanyakude District Municipality, 2011).

1.4 Problem statement

As happening elsewhere as well as in South Africa, there are as many failed
implementations as successful stories of ecotourism (Kiss, 2004). South Africa has been looking for appropriate integrated conservation and development approaches in rural areas, where natural resources are increasingly shrinking from heavy exploitation of resource-dependent communities, ecotourism is promoted as a tool to secure conservation and promote development of rural society (Cadman et al., 2010). Community based ecotourism initiative is considered as one of the most ideal driving forces for many projects in national parks, protected areas and biosphere reserves (Men, 2007). Yet, it is still questionable on how to use it as a sustainable means to stimulate economic activities of local communities whose livelihoods are condemned as destructive and illegal, to reduce poverty, while providing strong incentives for sustainable resource conservation. This creates doubt about the use and effectiveness of ecotourism and inspired this investigation into how ecotourism could be used as a tool to address resource conservation and community development.

The main purpose of this research is the utilization of sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) as the foundation for the analysis of how ecotourism could impact on current local livelihoods and management and conservation of natural resources in Isimangaliso Wetland Park. In addition, it explores guiding principles for concerned stakeholders as well as proper mechanisms to use ecotourism in an effective and sustainable manner by gaining insights into critical socio-economic profiles of communities, which conventional research approaches have missed (Ashley and Carney, 1999; DFID, 1997, 1999, 2001). This research will contribute to a new theoretical basis for the study of ecotourism, as well as to providing new approach for using it as a tool for both conservation and development.

1.5 Research Question

The core research question for the study is: How can ecotourism can be developed in Isimangaliso Wetland Park to contribute to community development and nature conservation? Four hypotheses have been developed to pull together different spectrums of information to answer this research question.
Hypothesis 1

Ecotourism can be developed in Isimangaliso Wetland Park when it helps the local communities to address their livelihood issues and achieve their livelihood goals.

To assess this hypothesis, different sources of information are needed:

- Vulnerability context (i.e. livelihood shocks and stresses, trends, and seasonality) of the local communities in the area considered;
- Livelihood capital assets (human, social, natural, financial and physical assets) of the local communities in Isimangaliso Wetland Park; internal and external factors that influence local livelihoods and determine livelihood strategies of the people in the area.

Hypothesis 2

Ecotourism can be developed in Isimangaliso Wetland Park in areas where the potential and opportunity exists.

To assess this hypothesis, different sources of information are needed:

- Potential of the areas for ecotourism development (i.e. attractions, accessibility, amenities, and support policy and institution);
- Potential of demands for ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park (demands of tourists and private business sector); and challenges for ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

Hypothesis 3

Positive ecotourism development in the context of Isimangaliso Wetland Park National Park when the local communities and concerned stakeholders are aware of the potential opportunities, challenges and risks and are motivated to collaborate and participate in the development.
To assess this hypothesis, different sources of information are needed:

- Perceptions and attitudes of the local communities and other concerned stakeholders towards ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park National Park as well as perceptions of the local communities and other concerned stakeholders of possible ecotourism impacts (economic, socio-cultural and ecological).

**Hypothesis 4**

Ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park is positive when it has the potential to contribute to natural resource management, conservation and community development in the area.

The assessment of this hypothesis requires the synthesis of all necessary information applied to analyse the first three hypotheses. These facts are combined, assessed and discussed in order to find out the potential and limits of ecotourism as an integrated conservation and development mechanism in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

**1.6 Definition of terms**

**Community-based natural resource management** is the management of natural resource under a detailed plan developed and agreed by all concerned stakeholders. The approach is community based in that the communities managing the resources have legal rights, local institutions and the economic incentives to take substantial responsibilities for sustainable use of their resources (USAID, 2007). Community-based natural resource management is the creation of successful coordination among government and local rural community in the natural resource management. The vital element effective coordination is the institutional environment within which natural resource management takes place. Institutions establish the rules for resource management; determine the process by which management decisions are made (Hanna, 2002).
Ecotourism is a responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of the local people (The International Ecotourism Society, 1998).

Community is the people who have different ideas, interests, strengths, capabilities, needs and concerns based on their demographic and socio-economic backgrounds but would like to share common tasks and things together in the same definite location (Carson & Roddick, 2000).

1.7 Assumptions

- The respondents have enough knowledge in ecotourism and community-based resource management and are able to clearly articulate answers to the interview questionnaire.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Before doing interviews, the researcher explained respondents the purposes of the interviews and his status as a research student. Besides, other interview ethics were also followed. For instance, the information that was sensitive or likely to be harmful to respondents was kept confidentially. The respondents were treated as co-workers or partners of the researcher.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced, analysed and summarised all the important information regarding the research question of the study. The main purpose of this study was to analyse the potentials and constraints for community-based ecotourism development to stimulate rural community development and at the same time to effectively conserve and manage natural resources in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

In the democratic South Africa of today it is important nowadays that the community participate in all aspects of tourism (DEAT, 1996). According to
Blench (1999) the community must actively participate in and promote responsible tourism so that it is sustainable in the medium as well as the long term. This cannot be over-emphasised for the case of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. Ecotourism has come more and more to the foreground as a possible tool of providing a long-term livelihood security to rural poor while at the same time saving the natural resources which are under pressure as people increasingly draw on them as an additional source of income.
CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Many countries have showed strong political commitment to apply integrated approaches for the rural development, poverty alleviation and sustainable development via responsible solutions. The emergence of integrated approach is seen when development and biodiversity programs attempt to define win-win strategies to attain economic, social and environmental gains, while minimizing trade-offs that compromise long-term sustainability (Porritt, 2002).

The challenges to developers and conservationists is to ensure that natural resources and other necessary attributes of community-value are applied and developed in a sustainable manner, so that they give rise to effective and practical social and environmental mitigation strategies for sustainable community development (Rapley, 2002).

Heijman et al. (2007) introduced the concept of rural resilience. This concept is based on the idea that ecological, economic and social systems become increasingly interlinked. A rural area may be considered as a social system interacting with and depending on an ecological substrate and whose survival depends, among others, on its interrelations with the system of natural resources. The environment and its natural resources are conditioned by the actions of the population. The adaptive capacity of a rural system is a central feature of resilience and refers to the ability of a system to adjust to changing internal demands and external circumstances (Carpenter et al., 2008).

The beginning of the 21st century has marked ecotourism as a possible tool for providing a long term livelihood security to rural poor while at same time protecting the natural resources that are under pressure as people increasingly to them as additional sources of income. According to Holland et al. (2003), approximately
75% of the total poor in the world live in the rural areas. Majority of the profitable tourist destinations in the third world are located in the rural areas (Holland, 2005).

2.2 Sustainable Rural Development

Following the Second World War, development was usually thought of in terms of economic progress of rapid and sustainable in the real output per head and attendant shifts in the technological, economic and demographic characteristics of the society (Regan, 1996). Towards the end of the Second World War, development was viewed in the light of economic development (Escobar, 1995; Telfer, 2002) and natural resource management were regarded as the only means of achieving economic growth. The rise of capitalist society has put less emphasis on the continued depletion of natural resources which have been exploited to meet the demands of the ever growing world population. Furthermore, exploitation of natural resource and the degradation of environment have detrimental effect on the natural environment and human ecology. The 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm gave more awareness to ecological crisis of environmental degradation (Mebratu, 1998). Thereafter, a paradigm shifts for development has been introduced to generate an alternative approach to development.

The concept of environmental conservation was introduced as a global concern over the sustainability of natural resource that is essential to authentic development. According to Sharply and Telfer (2002), the concept of environmental conservation and development are complimentary through appropriate environmental conservation initiatives.

The Brundland Report of the World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987 stated that the world needs to focus on sustainable development as a means of long term economic development initiatives. The report defines sustainable development as a kind of economic development that meets the needs of current generation but not at the expense of the future generation (UN, 2010). In addition, sustainable economic development is a development that improves the quality of life of the community (Bullard & Evans, 2003).
Sustainable development is enhancing quality of life for all time in particular those most affected by poverty and inequality. The efficient use of natural resource and intergenerational equity are the fundamental principles. If this generation leaves the next generation with degraded economic, social and environmental assets and less wealth, this will result in an unsustainable future (Bovapoa, 2005). These considerations have placed importance on the development of rural community in order to reduce the imbalances caused by urban-oriented economic development that creates economic inequality between rural and urban community (Hirsch, 1987). The notion of rural community development provides a mechanism for marginalized and impoverished societies to participate in economic activities and contribute towards economic growth and development. The participatory approach to rural community development provides the community an opportunity to improve their economic and social life and intervene in the redistribution of natural resources and enhance quality of life (Buller & Wright, 1990; Bovapoa, 2005). Moreover, this promotes the conservation process in rural areas and enhances the conservation of natural resources.

According to Markey, et al. (2004), economic imbalance, social inequality and marginalization of the poor usually trigger the over-exploitation of resources. Over-consumption of natural resources is a fundamental challenge of sustainable rural community development. Environmental injustice and economic inequality in rural development cause more poor people to suffer from loss of livelihood assets, opportunities, and traditional knowledge. This is the result of developer and planner not paying much attention to social structure of the community and relative to identify the needs of the community through consultation and participation process. According to Ashley and Maxwell (2001) successful rural community development through multi-sectorial strategies, developers and planners need to take the following principles into consideration to recognize the great diverts of rural situation, respond to past and future challenges in rural areas be consistent with wider poverty reduction policy, reflect moves to democratic decentralization and make case for productive sectors in rural community development as a strategy to maximize growth and to reduce poverty.
2.3 Community-based Natural resource management

Since the early 1980s, community-based natural resource management has become a mantra of sustainable development (Virtanen, 2005). Some development experts, local community program planners as well as desk officers have now embraced CBNRM projects as one of the most cost effective means of combating poverty (Jones, 2004). For others, it also represents a mechanism or channel through which development priorities can be elicited from target communities. To a few, CBNRM helps to strengthen the civic capacities of the communities by nurturing organizations that represent them. This allows for better targeting of poverty programs (Sebele, 2010). It also allows community members to exercise more control over natural resources and project funds as well as improve the delivery of public goods and services (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Community-based natural resources management include community resources management, community-based coastal resource management, and community forestry, community in protected areas, collective resource management and co-management (Roe et al., 2009).

Community based natural resources management programs are based on the proposition that local populations have a greater interest in the sustainable use of resources than does the state or distant corporate managers. Local communities are more cognizant of the intricacies of the local ecological process and that they are more able to effectively manage these resources through local or traditional forms of access (Li, 2002). However, critics such as Uphoff (1998), also clarify that not all community’s decisions and actions with regard to natural resources management are benign.

Local communities and authorities are major players in sustainable rural development. The idea and knowledge of local communities are crucial and can be incorporated into integrated planning. The objective of community based natural resource management is to draw communities into participative and collaborative policy making(Rozwadoska,2011) .Furthermore, sustainable development could also be achieved through planned, democratic, corporate means, including participation in decision making, planning and implementation.
Local communities and their societies have a significant role in making decisions and improving environment and economic justice concerning the use and management of natural resources.

According to USAID (2000), community-based natural resource management is the management of natural resource under a detailed plan developed and agreed by all concerned stakeholders. The approach is community based in that the communities managing the resources have legal rights, local institutions and the economic incentives to take substantial responsibilities for sustainable use of their resources. Under natural resource management plans, communities become primary implementers, assisted and monitored by technical series.

Ken (2005) and Brown (2002) mentioned that natural resource conservation can be grouped into sectors. The first one deals with improving the environmental resource of social groups such as farmers, pastoralists and landless. The second sector deals with the programs that seek to preserve the important tracks of forests and water bodies for biodiversity protection and combined with recreation and tourism development. In the light of environmental protection these areas are referred to protected areas and essential for the conservation of biodiversity.

The classical approach considers local communities as a direct threat to the biodiversity. Therefore, developers and conservationist need to design models to get rid of people. In industrial countries, the implementation of classical approach involves government setting areas to be exclusively for conservation purpose only. The conservation of protected areas involves the exclusion of people. Since the mid 1980’s, land alienation for protected area has been increasing global under the programs of Global Environmental Facility(GEF) and international conservation nongovernmental organisations, which promote large national parks and wilderness areas (Pretty, 2003 & Gibson, 1999). The disadvantages of the speedy expansion to protected areas where local people survival needs are neglected have caused unrest of social atmosphere, loss of traditional wisdom and local culture as well as failure to conservation initiations (Pretty, 2003 & Gibson, 1999).
The populist approach sees the participation and empowerment of local communities as a key to friendly solution to more sustainable use of biodiversity. Populism is most often used to describe any political movement seeking to mobilize people as individuals rather than members of any particular socio-economic group, against an overbearing authority, usually the state (Marshall, 2007).

The neoliberal approach to conservation places more emphasis on institutions, market, policy and solutions in adding economic value to biodiversity and argue that solutions to environmental problems and proper pricing strategies and market interventions. It emphasizes a move away from traditional thinking about state as the most important political actors in the global system and the recognition of geopolitical and economic change. This lead to the development of integrated conservation and development projects (Brown, 2002). Considering the economic advantage, the neoliberal approach was accepted by conservationist and developers. Even though it threatens the populist approach, the new innovative approach adds market component and socialist institutions into place. Some critics believe that community based resource management is neoliberal approach (Ken (2005) whereas others believe that it is derived from neoliberals through globalization nexus strategy (Duffy, 2006).

2.4 Ecotourism and rural community development

Ecotourism has emerged as a possible tool for providing a long term livelihood security to rural poor while at the same time saving the natural resources which are under pressure as people increasingly drawn on them as additional sources of income (Jones, 2005). According to Holland et al. (2003), approximately 75% of the total poor in the world live in the rural areas. Majority of the lucrative tourist destinations in the third world are located in the rural areas (Holland, 2005). Tourism attraction in rural areas include national parks, wilderness zones, mountainous areas, cultural sites and other protected areas and biosphere reserves which inhabit rich ecosystem and biodiversity (Holland et al., 2003). Poor rural areas are often characterized by tourism potential which provides good
opportunities for economic development in the long run. Tourism is a vital tool to spread out benefits to the areas while at the same time triggers positive impact on poverty alleviation, environmental protection and revitalization of rural areas. However, one needs to consider the type of tourism strategy to adapt as every rural area has unique characteristics (Hall, 2005).

According to Rural Development Framework (RDF), rural area is defined as sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depends on natural resources, including the villages and small towns scattered across these areas. In other words, rural areas constitutes (1) places where community and initiatives as well as infrastructure occupy only small physical spaces of the landscape, most of which are surrounded by fields and pastures, forests, water, mountain and desert (2) places where people most habitually run their working time on farms (3) abundance and relative tawdriness of land and (4) high transaction costs due to long distance and poor infrastructure (South Africa, 1997). Introducing responsible tourism such as ecotourism to rural areas can provide a variety of advantages to the rural community. It increases local ownership on business and control over resources in locality and improve local participation in rural development (Holland, et al., 2003). In addition, ecotourism may bring other benefits such as economic growth, diversification, and stabilization, job creation and expansion of local services, community empowerment, and increased opportunity for local interaction and mitigate migration.

2.5 Implication of Ecotourism

Environmental protection, conservation and development paradigm shifts have led to expansion of ecotourism (Burger, 2005). The concept was brought about a scheme to integrate sustainable development and tourism. Tourism is one of the world’s most important service industries that provide a tangible benefit to host countries, (Hall, 2005). Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism development derived from the concept of responsible tourism and from the industry’s attempt to integrate tourism into the umbrella of sustainable development (Epler Wood, 2002).
TIES (1998) defined ecotourism a responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of the local people. In addition, besides the utilization of environmentally sustainable practices and stimulation of local economy, ecotourism holds education a subcomponent. Tourists want information about the environment, history and culture of the area to update their knowledge and experience as a part of holiday making. This entails providing quality experience for long term business pursuits, encourages good word-of-mouth recommendation and repeated visits of both domestic and international tourists. Furthermore, ecotourism provides opportunity for interaction with local community who are human capital of the area. In addition, ecotourism provides a platform for empowerment of the hosts when it enables local communities to shape their own lives and the kind of society in which they live in (Goodwin, 2002). Ecotourism development has also become a significant approach to address socio-economic concerns in conservation context. In emerging global market economy, ecotourism has become an efficient tool in combating socio-economic problems in conservation context for natural resource dependent economies in particular, (Fransson & Graeling, 2003)

2.6 Ecotourism Development in Protected Areas

Biosphere Reserve areas created under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program to provide demonstration of sustainable landscape management, encapsulating the principle of sustainable development by managing for both conservation and local economic development (UNESCO,1996). However, Biosphere Reserves are normally established over human occupied landscapes in rural contexts, seeking ways to incorporate the development and resource needs of those of the local communities and the conservation of the natural environment.

The conservation community has adapted the ecotourism concept as a means to participate in sustainable development discourse (Campbell, 1999). Tourism Policy-makers and developers regard ecotourism as a reliable means which comprise pro-poor tourism concepts in rural natural-based areas. This is because
it places importance on both protection of local natural ecosystem and sustainable livelihood approach (Visser, 2003).

Customary forms of resource use such as agriculture, fishing are now conceptualised as potentially unsustainable and are restricted. Without significant involvement and benefits from protected area tourism option protected area’s communities struggle to meet subsistence needs to the extent that resettlement may be the only option to sustain their livelihoods (Michler, 2011). This trend to out-migration among the locals happens when there is a tough restriction over available resources or prohibition on other forms of resource use. The strategy of marginalizing protected area’s communities to the extent of exclusion is connected with a renewed emphasis on traditional protectionists’ approaches to conservation a protected area management. The approach prioritizes ecological imperatives ahead of socio-economic objectives under the perception of a global biodiversity crisis (Wilshusen, 2002). Instead, conservationist promotes ecotourism as the most sustainable form of resource use. The adoption of ecotourism principles allows them to criminalize other forms of resource use within the policy requirements of providing local benefits and empowerment (Goodwin, 1996).

2.7 Ecotourism and resource ownership

Ecotourism development requires participation of all stakeholders who directly and indirectly influence its operation (Heher, 2003). The development of ecotourism requires the participation of communities control over resource use (Campbell & Mattila, 2003). This requires community support for effective and sustainable use of natural resource. The definition of communities varies depending on social factors, internal structure, and external linkage, cultural and natural boundaries (Carson, 2002). It can be defined as people who have different ideas, interests, strengths, capabilities, needs and concerns based on their demographic and socio-economic backgrounds but would like to share common tasks and things together in the same definite location (Carson, 2000 & Roddick, 2000).
Developing ecotourism requires developers and planners to reflect on the sense of community (Markey, 2003) and community’s perceptions process, especially the host and guest relationship (Williams & Lawson 2001). The sense of pride from the community is regarded as a vital constituent of long-term community development. This relates to sustainability of community identity, purpose and culture and at same time directing ways to grasp diversity and tolerance within the community.

The resources of the destination belong to the local people and are considered as the precious properties of the community (Russo, 2002). They have the right and responsibility to understand, appreciate and conserve its universal and benefit from and control over the use of these natural resources. In addition to providing benefits to local community, tourism can assist to motivate people to raise concerns on maintaining their resources as key players for entire community development. Community involvement and cooperation could speed the progress of ecotourism and enhance the preservation of natural resource and other heritage resource of the site (Garrod, 2001).

2.8 Impact of ecotourism

Ecotourism is an environmentally safe way for rural communities to generate income from exploiting natural resources. It is an alternative tourism which involves more sustainability perspective on natural resource preservation, resource consumption, community development, local empowerment and participatory community development (Dowling, 1995).
**Table 1.2 Examples of Impacts of Ecotourism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Impacts and characteristics</th>
<th>Positive Impacts/Benefits</th>
<th>Negative Impacts/costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td>An incentive for conserving natural areas</td>
<td>Clearance damage to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide resources for environmental conservation and management</td>
<td>Indirect damage to vegetation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide incentives to maintain or enhance the physical environmental ethic</td>
<td>Altered habitats</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inapt tourists activities, i.e. hunting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disturbance of wildlife</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soil erosion and compaction, leading to modification in land cover</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pollution –air, noise and waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Foreign exchange earnings</td>
<td>Failure of total revenue to match costs of ecotourism impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economics development and diversification</td>
<td>Increased burden on under-funded resources management agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribution of income to local economies and communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generation of income for conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased employment opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local infrastructure development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural</strong></td>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversification of facilities and services
Assist in long-term conservation of cultural heritage
Historical perspectives concerning indigenous peoples and flora and fauna
Encourage local communities to value and benefits from natural and cultural assets.

Seasonality
Diversification of resources (opportunities costs)
Conflicts over access and appropriate use
Inappropriate co modification of local cultures
Improper tourists behaviour


“Ecotourism has the potential to contribute to both conservation and development and as a minimum, it involves the creation of positive synergetic relationships between tourism, biodiversity and local people through the application of appropriate management strategies,” (Ross and Wall, 1999a:673).

They explained that positive impacts on biodiversity resources can increase economic incentive for environmental protection and the improvement for environmental education for all concerned players of ecotourism development. According to Weaver (2000), ecotourism contributes to environmental preservation through awareness programs for the host community and tourists to support conservation.

According to Ross and Wall(1999) , the contribution of ecotourism to sustainable development of rural community are seen when it provide direct, indirect and induced socio-economic and cultural benefits without compromising significant bases of their based such as natural resources. Furthermore, ecotourism has
positive advantages such as job creation, generation of revenue for rural community economic development, improvement of community participation and empowerment and diversification of local economy (Weaver, 2002).

There are negative impacts of ecotourism on rural community environment. Population displacement and resettlement, conflicts of interest and rivalry upon resource access and ownership are the negative consequences of tourism development rural areas (Holland, Burian & Dixey, 2003). In addition, solid waste and wastewater generation, habitat annihilation and socio-cultural harms are considered negative impacts of ecotourism (Isaacs, 2000). To sustain ecotourism, it is necessary that the benefits and costs are projected prior to its development. Jenkins and Wearing (2003), summarized the potential impacts of ecotourism by categorizing them into environmental, economic and socio-cultural in the table above.

2.9 Challenges of Ecotourism

The future of ecotourism as a tool for sustainable conservation and community development is still uncertain. Ecotourism is not really community-oriented but suppressed by development agenda according to who initiates and implements it. Ecotourism has been imposed by nongovernmental organisations to be developed on community-based level as they need to follow the ‘greening of aid’, which encourage them to play more roles in spreading participatory development and environmental protection (Kiss, 2004). These nongovernmental organisations are fund-oriented and the outcomes their community-based ecotourism projects have to fulfil the agendas of donors, who support them rather than to address the exact needs of communities (Jones, 2005).

Communities are not homogenous group and they do not have a single voice. Many ecotourism projects have failed to address the structural inequality within communities that influences local participation in planning and implementation. In their roles as advocates of the local resources management, ecotourism coordinators often collaborate with a small legitimate group which works on behalf of the community constituting the entities and interests they claim to
represent(Agrawal & Gibson 1999). The failure to grasp the complex nature of community means ecotourism paradigms assume shared interests and consent on the preferred outcomes from tourism and conservation initiatives.

2.10 Conclusion

The state economic growth and environmental governance are priorities over the strengthening of social fabric and improvement of community wellbeing (Few, 2002; Kiss, 2004; Butcher, 2007). This leads to low recognition of local involvement, unequal benefit sharing, restriction over resource use, and misinterpretation of socio-economic and political contexts of communities, let alone the marginal or vulnerable locals to face insecure livelihoods (Kiss, 2004; Rith, 2004; Blackstock, 2005; Men, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the context of vulnerability, capital assets, livelihood system and strategies and the involvement of external actors before analysing how useful ecotourism is for conservation and development. Therefore, this research strives to investigate how ecotourism could be used as mechanism to address resource conservation and community development. The main purpose of this research is the utilization of sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) as the foundation for the analysis of how ecotourism could impact on current local livelihoods and management and conservation of natural resources in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.
CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two dealt with the theoretical framework of the study, and attempted to give background to the concepts and principles associated with the study. The latter was achieved by highlighting some important references related to authors in the field. This chapter deals with the research design and data gathering methods employed for the study.

There are many factors that affect community livelihoods (capabilities, assets, and activities) and community enthusiasm to accept changes in their livelihoods, as well as the dynamic relationship between the different factors (Serrat, 2008). In response, Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) has been adapted by researchers and development planners as an instrument for analysing complex livelihoods of people (Ellise, 2000). The SLF is holistic structural approach to identifying influential factors that are centred on people and important in contributing to community livelihood diversification and livelihood sustainability supported by existing activities (Garden, 1999). The tool aids stakeholders with various ranges of viewpoints and abilities to contribute in structured and comprehensible study and deliberate over the factors that influence community livelihoods, their relative significance and the way in which these factors interact. Thus, stakeholders are able to determine and suggest appropriate development mechanisms to be applied in a rural context for the enhancement of community livelihoods.

An SLF model will be used to analyse the way that ecotourism could contribute to livelihood improvement, community development and conservation in Isimangaliso Wetland Park. It will assist the researcher to identify the causes of local livelihood problems, people’s access to resources and ways of deploying livelihood assets and their livelihood activities influenced by institutional structures and processes.
The complexity of internal and external factors and their relationships with how local communities in Isimangaliso Wetland Park pursue their livelihood strategies, which also impact on the use of natural resources, will be explored through this process.

According to Allison and Murray (2001) the SLF model has various applications such as “people-oriented”, “dynamic” and “holistic” approaches which address diverse dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental). It provides insight of rural livelihood context for improving rural development interventions which are not at the expense of communities needs to engage in and influence developments imposed by external forces. This approach will help the researcher to shape a holistic analysis upon the applicability of ecotourism as an alternative livelihood approach which addresses social and environmental problems in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

The inception of the SLF analysis (see fig 3.1) is the “vulnerability context” within which communities operate (Carney, 1998). This represents external impediments
and internal vulnerabilities, which influence livelihood components (assets, activities, access and consumption of resources) and are beyond people’s control (Johnson, 2004). It is confined to factors of sensitivity and power that affect the ways people think and decide upon problems and construct their livelihood strategies to increase their self-reliance to cope with them. Different physical, social and political environments create different levels and types of vulnerability for people, especially poor and vulnerable ones to secure their livelihood options (Nicol, 2000). These include local norms and customs, power relations, political pressure, social structure and processes, natural disasters and climate change, disintegration of communities, gender equity, social and political evolution, and national, regional and global policy issues. Normally, the vulnerability context comprises three main elements, each of which involves different indicators, for measurement (Carney, 1998). The vulnerability context comprises three main elements, each of which involves different indicators, for measurement (DFID, 1999; Carney, 1998; Ellis, 2000). The elements include:

- **Shocks**: social conflict and disorder, natural disasters and problems, human health shocks, education economic shocks, and crop/livestock shocks;

- **Trends**: resource trends, population and migration trends, economic trends, and trends in governance;

- **Seasonality**: production, price, and employment opportunities.

The second step of the SLF focuses on the livelihood components of local communities by using the household as the unit of analysis (Carney, 1998, 1999; Nicol, 2000). In SLF principles, community livelihoods are formed by a large number of different forces and factors that are changing over space and time. The analysis of community livelihoods embarks on the assessment of community assets which define the capabilities of each household to undertake different activities and livelihood strategies involved to realize their desires. Their activities and strategies signify relative success that enables people to secure their livelihoods and wellbeing by combining and investing capital assets to reach positive adaptation to changes (Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, the accumulation
of capital assets increases people’s abilities to reduce their vulnerabilities, especially on household basis, and to influence institutional structures and processes (Carney, 1999 and Nicol, 2000). However, capital assets do not directly generate livelihood strategies for communities in its capacities. Communities’ access to assets is often influenced by the internal system and external forces such as policies of the “Transforming Structures and Processes”. Followings are elements of capital assets and their underlying indicators for analysis (Carney, 1998; DFID, 1999 and Ellis, 200)

- **Human capital**: skills, knowledge, ability to labour and health condition

- **Social capital**: social network, social norms, trust and relationship of trust, reciprocity and exchange of services and membership of more formalized groups;

- **Natural capital**: natural resources and biodiversity, living resources, and energy sources

- **Physical capital**: physical infrastructure (shelters and building, transport, water supply and sanitation, energy and access to information - communication); and

- **Financial capital**: Available stocks (i.e. savings, micro-credit programs), and regular inflows of money (i.e. income, pension, remittance).

“Transforming Structures and Processes” are very crucial when analysing the complexity of community system and livelihoods by using the SLF. Its core components, such as formal and informal institutions, organizations, policies and legislations, are powerful and have the capacities to shape community livelihoods. They also affect how people access and use their assets to build their livelihood strategies (DFID, 1999).

Livelihood outcomes present different types of impact of interest and have relationship with livelihood assets of communities and the local system. Outcomes, such as increased income and food security, improved wellbeing, reduced vulnerability, increased local empowerment and control, maintenance of cultural resources, and sustainable use of natural capital are determined by the
success of local livelihood strategies. As community assets are prone to the influence of both internal and external environments, the feedback impacts of livelihood outcomes on asset base could assist rural communities in tackling poverty and vulnerability.

### 3.3 Research Design

Combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study. However, the focus was on the implementation of qualitative inductive analytical approaches with a wide range of key informants, strategies of inquiry, and explicit and systematic steps in analysis. Relevant secondary data about socio-economic, demographic, geographical, hydrological, and natural conditions of Isimangaliso Wetland Park is used to analyse current planning, management policy, and project implementation of concerned government agencies and civil society. The primary data is collected through different methods. The qualitative methods involved group discussions and interviews with local elder people and patrons, semi-structured interviews with local households. In this study, with regard to ecotourism development, two major steps were considered successively. By using the SLF for concrete analysis, the first step encapsulated two main aspects in research plans. These included: (1) vulnerability context of local communities and (2) existing capital assets and interaction between these capitals and their relationships with other external and internal factors which affect local livelihood activities and strategies and the management of natural resources. Based on the results, from the analysis of community livelihoods, the second step focused its attention on the potentials of Isimangaliso Wetland Park for ecotourism development. Various aspects involved for the analysis were: (1) natural and cultural attractions of the areas (2) tourism infrastructure and superstructure (3) carrying capacity (4) community’s perceptions and stakeholders’ attitudes towards ecotourism development in Isimangaliso Wetland Park and (5) other challenges (i.e. management structure, security, stakeholder partnership, etc.) which could hinder ecotourism process.

To develop ecotourism as a change agent in rural development in Isimangaliso...
Wetland Park area in as sustainable manner was noticed as a challenge. Therefore, the possible effects of ecotourism on natural and human environments of the chosen area were also investigated.

3.4 Sample and sampling method

As the nature of research was mainly based on modified analytic induction approach with holistic perspectives, the selection of sample size did not concentrate much on number. It stressed the quality of respondents and their potential know-how to answer the questions and provide rich and relevant information for analysis and interpretation. The selected sampling techniques were snowball, purposive and non-proportionate stratification samplings. The first two sampling techniques were used to identify respondents for qualitative interviews and discussions. Neuman (2003) argued that these non-probability sampling techniques are useful to identify the relevance to the focus of study rather than the representativeness of the population. A deep understanding and explanation of social life through the selection of right samples, units, activities or events is the main concern of qualitative researchers (Neuman, 2003).

For the purposes of this research it was decided to select different samples step by step, with different specific subject matters of cases determining whether respondents were correctly chosen. These techniques were considered appropriate for the complex situations of Isimangaliso Wetland Park. Snowball sampling was used to deal with special inter-connected networks of local communities. These techniques were used to identify 50 participants selected from Khula Village. The selection of the village was based on three major criteria: locations, characteristics, and socio-demographic and economic backgrounds of the places/people/residents. Moreover, snowball and purposive techniques provided the researcher a wide range of information to build close rapport with local communities and to correctly select 100 household representatives for semi-structured interviews. In the first phase of fieldwork, only 15 households were interviewed, while the remainders were questioned in the second phase with an estimated population of 3600 inhabitants and are semi-rural. To design sound
guiding principles, data from content analysis, group meetings and discussions, semi-structured household interviews and surveys were combined together.

3.5 Resources and Research materials

Various resources and materials used for data collection throughout the fieldwork were:

Description: Types: Purposes:

Secondary data: material reviewing activities, plans, laws, development policies and frameworks of concerned government, NGOs and development and compiling statistics and other relevant information about the characteristics and management of Isimangaliso Wetland Park and previous research findings related to the subject matters of the study

Maps of the area: material Identifying general and specific locations in Isimangaliso Wetland Park and the village and commune settlements in the area, illustrating land use planning and features of the areas, spotting the maps drawn during the field visit and cognitive mapping process with support from local elders in order to characterize the area of investigation and select appropriate location and respondents for group discussions and interviews

Questionnaires material: directing and supporting the processes of semi-structured, in-depth, informal and quantitative surveys with a range of selected informants

Voice recorder: material recording verbal responses of interviewees during the fieldwork (Voice recorder was used only with permission of interviewees).

Local assistants: resource facilitating the communication with local villagers and guiding

Research assistants: recording written response of interviewees during the fieldwork
3.6 Research Situation

Due to the nature of investigation approaches and geography of the area, researcher and his interview assistants and group discussion facilitators had to stay longer in the village while working with local respondents. The process of data collection and the amount of time spent in the field varied in accordance with the situation and availability of the respondents.

The interviews were based on prior appointment. Prior appointments were made before the interviews took place with local, because sometimes they were busy and often out of their offices and houses. As the interviews were time consuming, the interviewees had to be free and well-informed in advance. Most of the respondents preferred to be interviewed at home, so that they could speak freely on behalf of private and public interests.

Each interview was planned to take about 5 to 10 minutes. More time was allocated for respondents who could be interrupted by their family and business affairs. However, the researcher and his group made provisions to deal with this problem properly by making all the interviews with the locals informal and relaxed in order to make them comfortable and talk freely. Helping them with or participating in their usual activities was assumed as one of the most effective strategies to approach the right persons and to build trust with local respondents. This social relationship approach was applied with each new respondent of the local society until a stable relationship developed to gain access, develop trust, obtain information and reduce hostile reactions from local communities. The researcher adapted existing role strategy (Neuman, 2003) to deal with different types and sexes of respondents (elder people, deviant groups or elites, young adults, etc.). This strategy enabled the researcher to access respondents and move freely to observe and interact with them. The researcher retained two attitudes in the field to gain reliable data and understand the contexts and occurrences of events and information through friendly social interaction with local respondents.

These were: (1) avoid showing that he and his research team were active
information seekers who would obstruct the locals to reveal sensitive information (i.e. corruption, intimidation, illegal fishing, etc.) and (2) try to value respondents’ knowledge, experience and ideas and be a good listener.

Generally, interviews were planned to be conducted from 9:00 AM to 11:00 or 12:00 AM. Only until local respondents got up from their naps after lunch, researcher could continue his work until 5:00 PM.

Before doing interviews, the researcher explained respondents the purposes of the interviews and his status as a research student.

Besides, other interview ethics were also followed. For instance, the information that was sensitive or likely to be harmful to respondents was kept confidentially. The respondents were treated as co-workers or partners of the researcher.

3.7 Research Constraints

Despite well-planned research process, the researcher assumed to encounter a number of constraints during his fieldwork. First, the geographical location of Khula Village could hinder the researcher from getting access to local respondents easily. This difficulty would disallow the researcher to carry out and finish his interview plans quickly and build close rapport with community members promptly over a short period of time. In addition, it would also difficult to identify right persons for the interviews and group discussions. Therefore, the researcher had to stay in the field longer in order to deal with these problems. Then, the chosen respondents were required to identify further informants through snowball sampling technique. Yet, this technique did not work well until the problem of selection was founded out. The reason was that most of the previous respondents only identified their friends, relatives, and members of their teams, who had similar socio-economic interests.

Nonetheless, since the fieldwork was divided into different stages, effective coping strategies to avoid biased and falsified information were developed, for example, the application of name cards. It was required that the researcher had to spend
more time observing and mapping the social complexity, as well as exposing himself to the real local context of the sites.

3.8 The research instrument

To design appropriate procedures for this study, the first nature of diverse methods which were considered as applicable for obtaining sufficient data for the entire research process was taken into account. These methods ranged from data collection to data processing, data analysis and interpretation. This research employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Several qualitative approaches were used to collect data from the communities. These approaches involved different respondents, modes of inquiry, and many methods of analysis. Neuman (2003) indicated the strength and characteristics of qualitative methods when research was conducted in a natural setting where data were emergent rather than prefigured, and were reflective. From this perspective, both inductive and deductive reasoning processes were employed to understand and investigate the conditions in the study area with their sensitive socio-economic and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2003). As Yin (1993) pointed out, qualitative data could represent perceptual and attitudinal dimensions, and actual events, and situations could be readily converted to numerical values. In addition, Finn, Elliot-White and Walton (2000) argued that qualitative ethnographic insights could help to comprehend, interpret and measure complex socio-cultural aspects of livelihoods and impacts of development from the host communities’ perceptions.

Primary and secondary data is needed for analysis and interpretation. This contributes significantly to the effective use of a variety of data sources such as data triangulation for concrete analysis of related subject matters (Decrop, 1999). Furthermore, secondary data is used to identify the success and shortcomings of concerned government institutions and NGOs’ plans and implementation with regard to natural resources management and rural development. The secondary data is obtained from different sources including government documents, NGOs’, population census and SA statistics, research papers and theses, local and provincial authorities’ documents and statistics and materials provided at the
workshops / meetings / conferences. Additionally, they were substantial to understand learned experiences and lessons in similar context to ecotourism development in protected areas. By doing so, effective and efficient development mechanisms of ecotourism were identified, and thus led to systematic approaches for stimulating rural livelihoods of the local communities and economy in Isimangaliso Wetland Park.

Primary data compilation involved many methods and is triangulated as follows: Methods for Analysing Vulnerability Context, Capital Assets and Their Interactions. The analysis process of vulnerability context, local livelihoods and strategies, local asset base, and their interactions with internal and external factors involved a combination and a triangulation of qualitative methods. Decrop (1999) explained that “Method triangulation entails the use of multiple methods to study a single problem.” Those projective methods are Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), semi-structured, interviews and participant observation. The application of this approach was to reduce the limits and biases of each method and help to increase the credibility and dependability of data collected in the field.

In addition, it helped to provide rich data and a comprehensive insight for analysis based on scientific rules. PRA is an approach for a holistic analysis of local conditions and the formulation of problem-based strategies through active participation of local stakeholders (Carlos, 2004). By giving more freedom to local participants to express themselves, the study could make use of a range of visualization methods for group-based and individual-based analyses. These analyses enabled the study to deal with spatial and temporal aspects of social and environmental problems as well as with intensive sensitivity of community livelihood approaches. Frank Ellis, agro-economist and researcher, had proved the effectiveness of combining tools for PRA process to explore complex livelihoods, diversity and vulnerability and the influence of multiple levels of environment on rural people through his several studies in Africa (Murray, 2001). He stated in his book “Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries (2000)” about a variety of methods and the interdependency between PRA tools and the SLF analysis in rural context.
Based on a review on current PRA methods advocated by Frank Ellis and other scholars, three techniques were selected to support the analytical framework of community livelihoods in Isimangaliso Wetland Park. There were: (1) transect walk and cognitive mapping; (2) group meeting and discussion and (3) social mapping. The first technique was used to identify socio-economic conditions, patterns of village settlement, community structure, and related geographical backgrounds of Isimangaliso. The second technique was run on an informal participatory base (Neuman, 2003) with local participants and discussants that represented different resource users and beneficiary groups. Noticeably, the criteria for selecting focus group discussants were principally based on: (a) variety of age and gender; (b) variety of occupation (d) time availability and (e) variety of knowledge and ability in inter-disciplinary fields. It allowed all selected villagers to interact actively in discussing, specifying and reasoning their livelihood stresses, status of their capital assets, and the effects of internal and external environments on their livelihood.

The third technique was done with the locals to draw contextual social and historical backgrounds (past and present) and to envisage the possibility of their communities with regard to livelihood problems, social and environmental evolutions, and the management of natural resources in their areas.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with local households with a fairly open framework and atmosphere which allowed for focused, conservational, and two-way communication between interviewers and selected household representatives. This tool was used to obtain both general and specific qualitative and quantitative data relevant to specific issues, Hesse-Biber (2006) from local households. On its basis, the main elements of local assets and their interactions, species and habitats, threats and opportunities, community attitudes and perceptions and their suggestions for the development and conservation in Isimangaliso were discovered through this tool. To accommodate it, a set of questionnaires consisting of key and sub inquiries, was properly designed to balance between open-ended and focused interviewing. Rather than being structured, the household respondents were allowed to ask questions and discuss
sensitive issues with the interviewers in a free environment. While being interviewed, other members of the household were also enthusiastic and cooperative to help the respondents answer the questions correctly. This was relatively useful for optimizing the strengths of answers and the reliability of data from household interviews.

As mentioned by Neuman (2003), a great deal of what researchers should do in the field is to pay attention, watch, and listen carefully apart from their interviewing tasks. Bernard (1995, cited in Minda, 2004) also argued that many social research problems might not be addressed properly and insufficiently unless participation observation was considered. This tool was applied to observe and assess the village characteristics and physical surroundings, daily life, social relationship and structure, modes of resource access and use and competition, and the context in which events occurred in Isimangaliso. Being a complementary approach, it was intentionally used to help verify or triangulate the quality of information obtained from semi-structured interviews.

Methods for analysing potentials and challenges for Ecotourism and Its Impacts to develop ecotourism in Isimangaliso, both potentials and challenges and other related features need to be discovered properly. Potentials refer to ecotourism resources consisting of natural and cultural assets with different characteristics and other supporting components which are important to operate ecotourism and cause it to move and grow.

Future Possible Scenario (FPS), through participatory discussion, was used to explore the potentials, inclination or movement and consequences of current development plans and ecotourism initiative. FPS was regarded as a strategy analysis tool of growing complex, uncertain, dynamic possible outcomes of development which creates a form of imagination of various possibilities of the future by incorporating different combinations of facts, trends and assumptions (Carlos, 2004). This was done to investigate communities’ perceptions on their resources, the management of Isimangaliso, as well as on ecotourism development and its possible impacts on natural resource management and their livelihoods. Its process was integrated as a part of the group meeting and
discussion techniques as it involved informal debates and participatory interactions between different groups of ideas. The design and construction of FPS were based upon a consideration of SWOT analysis of Isimangaliso Wetland Park. This analysis was employed to analyse the underlying constituents thoroughly and chronologically in order to understand the full context of internality and externality of the areas.

3.9 Procedure for data collection

This study embodied different methods for data collection. To reach the objectives, the process was divided into three major phases. These sequential phases provided the better chance to have in-depth investigation, holistic views, and logical comparison.

The preliminary phase was conducted a pilot phase in Isimangaliso with a systematic framework, this pilot step was carried out by applying and testing necessary research tools to work with local communities and other related groups, who were the key informants or respondents of the

Through this phase of the fieldwork, necessary baseline information was collected over different space and time. Working on the basis of concrete and funnelling inductive approach, researcher was able to measure the effectiveness and convenience of research designs and selected instruments in data collection. Furthermore, the fieldwork arrangement and complexity of the site (i.e. social dealings, cultural patterns of communication, field entry protocols, etc.) were clearly projected. Therefore, appropriate procedures and research techniques to apply in the plenary steps were found out

This research involved 3 undergraduate students in community and development, School of development studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, This phase began with field visit and in-depth interviews with local communities and their authorities and executing government staffs in the area. This process was done by the researcher
To collect data from local households, five students were selected and trained as interview assistants and facilitators for group meetings and discussions and household surveys. The selection was based on their commitment, knowledge and experience in social research. During the training, they were informed about the purposes and nature of the research and taught how to observe, select, behave with and interview representatives of local households. After being familiarized with the context of study, they were brought to the field to carry out their assigned works. Normally, semi-structured household interviews were conducted in the Khula Village of Isimangaliso after groups meetings and discussions. The researcher regularly monitored and evaluated the tasks performed by interview assistants, while at the same time observing other contexts and occurrences of events in the field. The group met two times per day to discuss about all difficulties in getting access to and in interviewing local respondents, as well as to strategize interview techniques to increase the reliability and validity of data. In the evening, the group verified the interview results and recorded extra data from observation and the answers of local respondents which were not included in the questionnaires. After the success of this fieldwork, the researcher and interview assistants discussed and worked on coding, familiarizing, categorizing and processing data into computer programs.

Usually, the researcher went to the village with each group in order to help assist and monitor them, while at the same time the researcher was also involved in the interview process. Sooner after returning from the fields, some of them were trained and guided to process data into computer by using a statistical program (SPSS).
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS/RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

It has been argued that the analysis of data can be achieved through the process of description, explanation and prediction, all these depending on measures used for analysis and the related statistical measure employed (Magi, 2005). It is nonetheless important to indicate that the analysis of data does not in itself provide answers to research questions, but interpretation of data goes a long way towards providing a clearer picture. “Essentially, interpretation converts the results of analysis and makes inferences about the various sections of the research design” (Magi, 2005: 125). As such, this chapter contains the ordering and summarising of data so as to get answers to the research questions.

Fundamentally, this chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected during the survey phase. This is presented by means of statements, tables, graphs and various forms. Furthermore, the data presentation is based on demographic information, emerging relationships between Khalu communities, reflecting on their awareness, preferences and participation with regard to ecotourism and management practices at the Park. This analytical process is expected to help this study fulfil its intended objectives. It is therefore imperative in this section to give an outline on what will guide both the analysis and interpretation of data. In analysing the data, as was mentioned in chapter three, the utilisation of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was solicited to achieve the above mentioned outcomes. The interpretation of data in this chapter has been largely guided by both the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

The livelihood challenges and capabilities, livelihood components (assets, activities, access and consumption of resources, and other internal and external factors) which affect livelihoods of the local communities in Isimangaliso are
described. At the beginning of this chapter, brief description income-generating economic and cultural active of Khula Village community are presented. Following this section, the vulnerability context, livelihood problems and existing approaches of the local livelihoods are depicted and assessed. It consists of two fundamental parts, namely livelihood shocks and trends. The last section of this chapter indicates and discusses the livelihood scenarios and potential additional local livelihood options that lead to the improvement of the livelihood strategies and quality of life of the people in the area.

The methods involved in collecting relevant data with regard to these issues were group meetings and discussions and semi-structured interviews (see Chapter 3). The group meeting and discussion technique was mainly used to compile data about the vulnerability context, while semi-structured interviews was principally applied with the selected local household respondents to obtain information about the livelihood capital assets of the people. The study adapted triangulation method for data collection in order to pick out, verify and improve the reliability and validity of information for concrete analysis. Therefore, some necessary responses from individual methods which complement to the description and explanation in each section were fastened together in order to provide better understanding of the local livelihood issues in the areas.

Besides, participant observation and secondary sources were also employed to complete the focus of this study, while some quantitative information derived from the semi-structured interviews with the local households were used to substantiate the results. The research results concerning the contexts of local livelihoods in Isimangaliso Wetland Park are described in the following sections.

4.2 Economic and cultural activities of Khula Village

There are a number of tourism activities located in and around the tribal areas and Khula Village. These include arts and craft making, historical cultural activities, cultural events and guest entertainment. Historical and cultural sites have not been identified or recorded. The game and nature reserve activities have taken more attention than any other tourism activities. According to the KwaZulu-Natal
Tourism Authority (2009), approximately 25% of all foreign tourists who visit the province visit the Zulu cultural villages north of the Tugela River. International tourists visiting the Khula Village area have shown interest in cultural activities like *Indlamu* (Zulu dance). The community members have organised themselves into groups that perform cultural entertainment in different areas of the village in a form of income-generating activity (Gumede, 2009).

In the area of Khula Village that is characterised by poverty, the income that is generated through cultural activities performances and craftworks has empowered the community. The income generated through these activities has influenced them to change their thinking positively towards themselves. At the local schools the environmental education, cultural activities and craftwork have been added to their curriculum. These developments are helping the local youth at an early stage to position themselves since tourism is becoming the popular industry in the area.

Dance groups are also invited to perform during the Isimangaliso Wetland Park programmes. These cultural activities further add to the conservation of the cultural heritage of local communities, as well as providing an opportunity to get financial benefit. The activities also help reinforce a sense of pride among the residents about their culture (Gumede, 2009).

Furthermore, the people of Khula Village are very skilful in craft making. The tourists visiting the area are also very impressed and are prepared to buy the crafts and artefacts. It is from this perspective that the local people are producing craftwork that impresses the tourists and at the same time negatively affects the natural resources such as endangered trees, animals and plants.

It is clear that the professional support and training facilitated by the Isimangaliso Wetland Park authorities, has helped empower the people of Khula Village and its surroundings in the field of art. There are also local art organisations and cultural institutions that take samples of the local artwork to bigger markets outside the area (Gumede, 2009).
4.3 Analysis of the Vulnerability Context

4.3.1 Shock

There are three major shocks that affect livelihoods of the local communities in Khula Village area, as mentioned by the representatives of local communities during the group meetings and discussions. These shocks are analysed and described in the following:

There is a decline in fishery resources (these respondents measured it by fish catch, size and type of fish) which affect local basic food and main livelihoods. According to the local participants, this decline is caused by problems of access to fishery resources in the released fishing grounds and hydrology, over-fishing and illegal fishing in the area. The decrease of fishery production is also associated with the practices of illegal activities, such as illegal fishing (i.e. illegal methods such as, fish poisoning, and use of illegal gear). Despite the fishery laws, the local respondents reported that more sophisticated fishing gears which are illegitimate are being used by different groups of the people.

The increasing population growth is also harmful to natural environment and biodiversity resources in the area. According to the group participants, adding to the constant increase in local people, the influx of the in-migrants has made the available settlement area become more densely populated. As the number of fishermen increases, the fishery resources become scarce and more problems, such as competition and conflict of interest and deterioration of other natural resources, emerge in the area.

Furthermore, lack of support from the local government is considered as a political shock distressing the people’s livelihood in Khula Village. The authorities are perceived by the local communities in Khula Village as institutions which have been mistreating the people and misusing local natural resources and are obstacles for community-based development in the area.
4.2.2 Trends

The declining fishery resources and other natural resources in area have made the people suffer constant livelihood loss. The amount of fish catch has dramatically decreased, and big and high value fishes are rarely caught by the local fishermen, except few medium scale fishermen. According to the semi-structured interviews with representatives of the local households in Khula Village (n=100), the average amount of fish catch is varying in accordance with the season (see Table 4.1). In the closed fishing season, 61% of the households interviewed mentioned that they could catch from one to ten kilograms of fish per day, while 24% receive the average daily fish catch in between 10 to 20 kilograms of fish. During this season, only few local households questioned reported that their daily fish catch could range between 20 to 30 kilograms of fish (7%). However, 8% of the total interviewed households revealed that they could catch up to 100 kilograms of fish every day. In the open fishing season, 27% of the local households interviewed mentioned that their daily fish catch are between 30 to 100 kilograms depending on the fishing gears they use as well as the area of fishing they are allowed to access. Of total, 40% could obtain their daily fish catch up to 10 kilograms, while 17% and 16% respectively receive from 10 to 20 kilograms and 20 to 30 kilograms of fish in this season.

**Table 4.1:** Average daily fish catch of interviewed local households in Khula Village (in %, n = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Daily Fish Catch /Kilograms</th>
<th>Closed fishing season /%</th>
<th>Open Fishing Season %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The difference between those who catch a lot and those who catch only a little was found. The small scale fishermen would find it lucky enough to catch 3 to 5 kilograms of fish per day in the closed fishing season and 5 – 10 kg in the open season.

Three major trends were found to be possible resolutions among local communities in Khula Village with an attempt to reduce their livelihood loss. The first trend is to enhance their current livelihood activities in order to increase their fish catch by resorting to the system of control and course of action which better-off fishermen have applied. According to the semi-structured household interviews in Khula Village, only 46% of the total respondents mentioned that their catch are enough for daily household consumption whereas 22% said it is insufficient for them to eat and exchange for necessary goods (Table 4.1).

Access to information sharing is also subject to current management system and social organization at grassroots level in Isimangaliso area. According to the semi-structured interviews, 67% of the total households questioned reported that they used to participate in meetings, discussions, and decision-making and planning for the development of their communities (see Table 4.2). These households said to have been informed in some ways by the government officers and concerned NGO staffs about these activities in case they are absent.

This would be done through their village network, not always from the main interventionists. Only 39% of the total ever initiated some ideas for the overall development, leaving a majority (61%) as conjectural followers. When asked whether they are satisfied with government’s, NGOs’ and other sub-developers’ plans and works in the areas, people’s negative and positive responses were just about equal share (48% and 52% respectively).
Table 4.2: Local participation and satisfaction with the performances of external developers and planners perceived by the interviewed local household respondents (n = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience in Information Access and Satisfaction</th>
<th>Yes /</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been invited to participate in meetings, decision-making, planning and implementation for the development of your community?</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever initiated or been allowed to initiate any ideas for the overall development of your community?</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with governments, NGOs’ and other sub developers’ plans and works?</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Natural Resources

All the group participants and semi-structured interviewees agreed that the existing natural resources and all ecological conditions in Isimangaliso are essential for the socio-economic development of their families and communities. These massive assets are natural settings, wildlife, forests and other species, and especially fish and other aquatic resources. They mentioned that these resources supply stable jobs and continual food security and are vital for enhancing their quality of life both at present and in the future. As mentioned in the informal group meetings and discussions, a dramatic decline in these resources will make the local communities suffer, unknowing how to survive in the areas with absolute livelihood loss, what to settle on and where to move for new livelihood strategies. They explained that this is because the people do not have enough capabilities and other necessary skills. Moreover, the people claimed that they could benefit more directly and indirectly from other ecological units, such as forests. Noticeably, most of the group participants as well as semi-structured interviewees
vindicated that they prefer living with fresh air and beautiful natural sceneries in Isimangaliso to living in urban areas, where are gradually affected by pollution.

Apart from these implications, natural resources in Isimangaliso are advantageous for all communities living in there. Most of the interviewed household respondents emphasized that to live in nature reserve as the unique cultural ways of life and stereotype of their communities dated back hundred years ago. Their sense of pride is emotionally involved in the sustainable use of these resources. Therefore, retaining natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem in the areas could offer to the entire communities in Isimangaliso the perpetual image and distinguished natural heritages to their young generation to know, love, and learn to protect them.

Another interesting perception of the local communities concerning biodiversity significances of Isimangaliso is the benefits for the government and country. The local residents in the area pointed out that natural resources could help the government to improving economic condition of the country. This can be done through initiation of responsible businesses such as reliable lot concessions, fish processing investment, and tourism.

Consequently, the government would be more able to generate economic revenue and employment opportunities for the people in order to reduce the poverty rate in the regions and other remote areas in the province. This perception reveals that the majority of the local communities pay much attention to and are most willing to safeguard the natural environment, ecosystem and biodiversity resources of area. Their motivations are not only to fulfil their main economic interest, but also to achieve communities’ sustainable livelihoods and use of natural capital in the areas to benefit the nation as a whole.

**Access to Natural Resources**

Community access to natural resources presents one of the most complex problems affecting livelihoods of the local people in Isimangaliso. According to the semi-structured interviews, 77% of the total household respondents questioned said that they have abilities to get access to and use natural resources, while 23%
does not have enough abilities to use all kinds of allowed common property resources (see Table 4.3). This is because they do not have sophisticated equipment to support their activities, and their ability to pay the government officers and local authorities to use the areas is limited.

**Table 4.3:** Experience and equality in resource access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Access to Common Property Resources (CPR) (n=120)</th>
<th>Perception of Locals on Equal Means of Access and Level of Access to CPR (n=120)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.5:** Opinion on natural resource management

The group participants in Isimangaliso realize that natural resources being used by the community are declining. When asked to forecast the trend of availability of
natural resources in area compared to the past, they agreed that all kinds of the available natural resource especially fishery have been depleted severely. This denotes that there is a need for effective measures to reduce possible social and environmental problems.

4.4 The need for alternative livelihood options in Isimangaliso

This section summarizes and analyses the major results of Chapter 4 by stressing an immediate need to improve the livelihoods of the local communities in Khula Village, while at the same time promote nature conservation in the areas. The increasing livelihood requirements, the convoluted context of the management structure and the adequate capacity to administer and preserve natural resources, and the global climate change are potential implications of the environmental change in Isimangaliso.

In the context of Khula Village, there is a gloomy sign of constant illegal fishing and hunting. The worse environmental conditions and the decrease of fishery resources might make the local people conceive other feasible sources of income in order to cope with their livelihood needs and shocks. In this way, the alternative livelihood income can be generated for them through two substantial approaches: (1) village-based livelihood approach, and (2) non-village-based livelihood approach. At present, the demand for land for farming, vegetation, and other field cropping has been dramatically increased in the area. The idea of disproportionate ownership over fishery and other natural resources along with low awareness and knowledge of local residents and all beneficiary groups about their essential casual roles might lead to more environmental change and livelihood complexity. In general, the study reveals that the more causes to environmental degradation, the more likely biodiversity and people’s livelihoods are going to lose. Therefore, it might cause poor and vulnerable people to migrate or to be excluded from the regions since they do not have effective solutions or abilities to cope with the loss of their livelihood assets.

Other non-fishing livelihood activities can be simply introduced in Isimangaliso in order to solve pressing resource allocation conflicts and preserve natural
resources and ecological environment, while improving local communities’ livelihoods. The possible economic activities are still foreseeable within a domain of village-based livelihood methods. The effort to conserve and improve natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystem and alleviating poverty rate of the people all at once are common challenge to developers and environmentalists in Isimangaliso.

Yet, some alternative livelihoods could be identified at optimal level. To reduce the increasing fishing efforts, illegal hunting and forests clearance in the area, alternative revenue generation activities are needed in a timely manner in combination with other local economic viabilities. The development of these economic alternatives might be based upon environmental friendly principles. Therefore, the quality of life and the awareness of local villagers could be improved, thus encouraging active local participation in conservation and development in the areas.

With respect to geographical, environmental and social conditions of Isimangaliso communities, enhancing ecotourism could be one of the alternative options. By nature, ecotourism is originally developed from the concepts of ecological and sustainable prudence which integrates with remarkable economic viability to enhance local livelihoods. This would be beneficial for the management and the conservation of natural resources in Isimangaliso, while at the same time stimulating the local economy through the creation of jobs and sustainable businesses.

However, there is a need to further investigate the feasibility of the places for ecotourism development, the demand of the market (tourists and private intermediaries), as well as to assess ecotourism impacts on human and natural environments.

4.5 Research Limitation

Various research constraints cited by the authors included:
Language barriers and the need for a translator and challenge in translating concepts such as ‘tourism’, ‘conservation’ and ‘benefit’ of ecotourism in the area while conducting the survey.

Time constraints to interview villagers due to long travel distances.

Timing and seasonality - rapid decision to start due to availability constraints of time and research had to be undertaken in the summer season.

Delays in interviewing the community’s members due to their work schedules.

Lack of time and financial resources to visit and interview other villages in the area therefore the research data is only based on communities in Khula Village.

Survey sample size and bias not representative of the rural communities in the area therefore it is fair representative of rural communities in Isimangaliso.

Lack of time to interview additional key stakeholders such as tourists, tour operator and Park Authorities to obtain data.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the analysis and interpretation of measures that discuss the ecotourism development and promotion of tourism as well as the participation patterns and practices that would benefit the communities at Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The analysis and interpretation of data was achieved by utilising the objectives and hypothesis as point of departure. The result of the study revealed that there is a need for alternative livelihood approaches. These conclusions lead to some recommendations presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

5. DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Community Livelihoods in Isimangaliso

As it was shown in Chapter 4, Isimangaliso is rich in natural resources, biodiversity and quality ecosystem. These attributes contribute to wider local and regional development and food security of local communities living in or adjacent to the areas. These resources include fish and other aquatic creatures, flooded forests and forestlands, wild animals and water hydrology. However, the use of these resources is co-dependent and complex.

Despite being natural resources rich areas, a majority of its population lives with poverty problems due to limited or unequal access to and poor management of these resources. Local communities are strongly dependent on natural resource base for food and employment. Most of them have no access to land for agricultural production. Fishing and activities related to tourism are the central economic activity and primary occupation in the areas. Local fishing activities in Isimangaliso are classified into three categories: subsistence, medium and large scale. This division is based on the fishery laws, level of investment and methods of fishing activities of individual households (Hara, de Wit, Crookes & Jayiya, 2011). Subsistence fishing is generally found as the most common form of fishing in the communities of Khula Village. This form involves family fishing methods by using simplest gears to fish in the released fishing grounds nearby the village or in other fishing areas through mobile passage. Fish catches are used for household consumption. Subsistence fishermen would keep almost all processed products for daily consumption. Besides fishing the locals also combine fishing and non-fishing trade activities to form systems of mixed livelihood strategies which can provide more economic earnings to support their households. These include craft-making, working for tour operators, animal rearing, gardening, working in the fishing lots, grocery selling, providing services for basic commodities and crop farming.
Poverty in Khula as is attributable to many critical factors such as inadequate economic opportunities, inadequate social public services and infrastructure, lack of ownership right and access to common property resources, low capabilities, insecurity, social inequality or exclusion, and vulnerability. These factors are contributing to make livelihood conditions of local communities worse, while biodiversity conservation remains a challenging task to overcome due to its close relationship with local livelihood options. Most villagers have low education and incompatible strategies to solve their livelihood problems and vulnerability. However, this cannot be translated into complete incapability or inappropriate knowledge of the locals in finding effective coping strategies for their livelihood vulnerabilities. In fact, the traditional knowledge, practices and technologies are amply suitable for the geographical and environmental contexts of the place.

The neo-liberal concepts of the government and international development agencies such as UNDP that focus on economic diversification for the maximization of local income and broad-based sustainable economic growth with equity in the in Isimangaliso may sound theoretically imposing. Yet, it might be also rhetoric in practice. The case of Khula Village shows that the main motivation of the rural poor is not often the maximization of income, but rather of their households’ chances of survival. The attitudes and perceptions towards livelihood risks among a majority of vulnerable local communities in Khula Village may conflict with apparently economically justified innovations (Hodder, 2000) of development paradigms of the government which focus starkly on primary production in rural areas (AFRA, 2011). Therefore, several programs to increase economic productivity of local livelihoods or to provide sustainable local livelihoods have failed to determine integrated rural development approaches to deal with existing pitfalls. In addition, it also shows lack of success in investing in the construction or expansion of local capitals, for instance, financial capital building through the provision of adequate micro financial credit and economic incentive (short-term goal) and human and social capital construction (long-term goal).
Central to this issue, it is recognised that efforts to minimize vulnerabilities and to reduce socio-economic and institutional obstructions to local fishing communities through livelihood development and diversification is needed for local livelihood improvement. Also, it is important for NRM and rural development planning in general in Isimangaliso. This might consider responsible development strategies to reduce the roots of the hindrances, which worsen the economic life and local well-being, while preserving the resources in a sustainable manner.

As local communities in Khula Village are mainly dependent on natural resources, the improvement of their livelihoods through different appropriate livelihood change strategies is necessary. This would help to foster sustainable management and consumption of biodiversity resources in the areas, which have been severely destroyed and cannot continue to supply to the needs of the increasing population in a sustainable way. There are three possible approaches that would help to provide more supports and opportunities to current and future livelihoods of local communities in Khula Village: (1) the improvement of existing livelihood patterns and approaches; (2) the diversification of livelihood activities; and (3) the implementation of alternative livelihood options. According to Swift (1998), Ellis (2000) and Whittingham (2003), these approaches are substantial and useful depending on the context of the area which changes over time and space in different ecosystems. The first approach involves strategies to promote the existing activities which have been done by the locals in their living environment and social system. In this respect, it is necessary that people apply intensive production activities, increase skills and occupations, adapt technological change, invest in more capitals to improve business activities, and implement more sustainable activities. Besides, people have to claim their ownership and access rights over natural resources in their localities in order to survive. The second approach engages a number of potential economic activities and joins these in a range of diverse activities. As explained by Ellis (1998, 2000), Swift (1998), and Reardon and Barrett (2000), different members of a household are responsible for different areas of work in accordance with their skills, knowledge, experience, gender, age or time. In addition, such household-level economic activities should be reinforced and adjusted to the seasonality and
convenience of works in the area. Different from what have been widely explained and suggested in the third approach abandon of existing activities to adopt something completely new for livelihoods – it was in the focus of this study that a new solution to the current pressing socio-economic and ecological troubles is to adapt alternative approach. This has to do with the introduction of a livelihood alternative which provides additional economic earnings to local households without having to renounce their traditional economic activities. Thus, it could also help to enhance people’s income possibilities within their own region, while increasing their skills, knowledge and labour productivity.

The third approach is expected to reduce livelihood vulnerabilities or increase the well-being of the locals, while at the same time help to improve biodiversity conservation in Isimangaliso. It is possible that this approach will call upon the development of informal sector or local SMEs to produce more small scale products and services at household level suitable for local capacity and technology. It could be used as a catalyst to support local economic stimulation and participatory NRM, reduce poverty and prevent the damage of local economy and social system in the areas.

5.2 The Interaction between Local Livelihood Improvement and Natural Resource Management in Isimangaliso

The study finds that local livelihoods in Khula Village are mainly derived from aquatic and other natural resources. The villagers usually depend on subsistence fishing and other tourism related economic activities. A majority of them have limited jobs and economic opportunities in the closed fishing season.

Another factor that leads to higher level of vulnerability and poverty in the area is no access right to agricultural land and actual land demarcation despite increasing trend among the locals to clear the forestlands to do vegetation and other seasonal crop farming. It was indicated in the result section that there is a need for efficient planning and sustainable management and harvest of natural resources in Isimangaliso in order to attain sustainable local livelihoods and growth of local economy, which could contribute to a reduction of poverty and
level of resource-dependency among community members. However, the finding presses that the variation of local livelihood conditions strongly affects the management effectiveness, behavioural thinking and use level of natural resources in the area. This requires the enhancement and diversification of local economic activities, while promoting local empowerment and participation through a variety of dynamic local organizations in decision, planning and development processes (Gordon, 1999 & Whittingham, 2003). This would help to promote the local economy and the sustainable management of natural resources.

The attempt to strengthen the local social structures and network system at community-based level in Isimangaliso in order to stimulate local economy and to set up sustainable management of natural resources is to empower local control and organizations. This could help them to participate actively in decision making, planning and development processes (Markey, Conn and Roseland, 2004). It is widely accepted that the local control, participation and management of biodiversity resources are the important tools at all stages (Yos, 2003). These affect the livelihood improvement approaches of the people.

Local communities can provide significant inputs to manage natural resources in their localities through their traditional wisdom and production culture, conservation ethics and the replication of spiritual and cultural values within local context. The study finds that Khula Village communities have faced a lot of severe socio-economic and environmental problems and increasing competition from internal and external forces.

Growing competition and conflicts over natural resource access and consumption in Isimangaliso have made local communities more aware of the importance of conservation. This entails alternative structures of local control and management (Markey, Conn and Roseland, 2004). It was indicated that a majority of local communities want to participate in decision-making, planning and local development. Informal methods and extensive capacity building and information sharing programs are required to promote their roles at this stage. Realizing the improvement of the local involvement to address current pressing strategies for
NRM is a central part to mobilize local forces in to help protect their resources against internal misconducts and outside encroachments.

5.3 Linking Ecotourism to Future Natural Resource Management

5.3.1 Trend towards Ecotourism Development in Isimangaliso

The unique culture, abundant flora and fauna, and distinctive geographical landscapes of South African protected areas mean that in terms of neo-liberalization concept the country has strong competitive advantages in developing nature-based tourism. In South Africa, the form of ecotourism that is being currently applied in most protected areas as a part of CBNRM strategies and is often initiated by government and environmental NGOs (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2007). Ecotourism initiative in rural protected areas has been vividly promoted via integrated conservation and development frameworks.

A trend towards ecotourism initiative in natural resources rich areas where people suffer chronic poverty is increasing considerably (Ken et al., 2004). These prospective works attempt to incorporate a variety of frameworks necessary for monitoring and assessment of impacts by visitors on biodiversity resources and the human and natural environments in South African protected areas.

Ecotourism is promoted as a tool to secure conservation and promote development for all levels of rural society, sparkling through local communities in South Africa (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2007). The emphasis on pro-poor development, community participation and integrated conservation and development projects in rural protected areas is clear amongst local government bodies and NGOs. As often as it goes, there is awareness that funding will not be forthcoming without at least some acknowledgement of pro-poor and local empowerment agendas. This reflects that the promotion of ecotourism through community participation satisfies all of these competing and overlapping agendas in one neat neo-liberal package. .
5.3.2 Ecotourism Development Opportunity in Isimangaliso

Ecotourism has been regarded as one of the most ideal driving forces for many projects in national parks, protected areas and National Parks (Hall, Robert and Mitchell, 2005). Within its embrace, a number of major concepts e.g. sustainable development, community involvement and nature conservation have always been included, and thus ecotourism becomes popular and a worthy and potentially constructive tool in development (Honey, 1999; Campbell, 2000; Macleod, 2003). However, one needs to fervently ensure with credible aspects before ecotourism is predicated as a possible development tool in rural protected areas. These aspects might include: abundance of resources; positive tourist demand; value added attributes of ecotourism to other current types of development; commitment and politics of government and non-government organizations to enhance ecotourism development; expected gains exceed expected costs of ecotourism; interest and commitment of the private sector; and, employment opportunities and local economic stimulation and diversification (Fagence, 2001).

5.3.3 Ecotourism and Local Livelihoods in Isimangaliso

The current threats to natural resources Isimangaliso are usually caused by illegal fishing and over-fishing, illegal hunting and poaching, deforestation, conflicts over resource access and control, land encroachment, extractive harvesting and increased poverty rate among the locals. The need for economic alternatives and diversification for local communities to resist these problems is regarded as one of the most desired remedies for the management and conservation of biodiversity resources in the area. Through ecotourism, alternative local livelihood options and diversified economic activities could be generated and bring a sense of ownership and conservation to current decreasing resources (Jenkins & Wearing, 2003).

Besides generating more revenue to local economy and job opportunities, ecotourism would help local communities to realize their roles in contributing to better protection of their natural and cultural resources, Ross and Wall (1999). According to Hap, Seng and Ratana (2006), the use value is comprised of: [1] direct value (production and consumption goods); [2] indirect value (ecosystem
functions and services); and, [3] option value (premium placed on possible future uses or application). The non-use value could consist of intrinsic significance of resources and ecosystems of Isimangaliso, such as existence value, bequest value, culture value and heritage value.

The study finds that communities are optimistic that ecotourism development in the area would give a lot of benefits to them. Besides its economic perspective, ecotourism would also help to: (1) enhance community participation; (2) strengthen local ownership and access rights; (3) improve people’s knowledge and skills; (4) revitalize social structure, system, network and relation of the communities; and (5) preserve local values and resources. On the other hand, the local communities would also be prone to the negative consequences of ecotourism development socially, culturally and environmentally. Even though ecotourism is one of the reliable community livelihood options, its emergence has not been entirely discussed and related to the discourse on sustainable development. It has transpired out of concerns with negative environmental impacts rather than on socio-economic impacts.

The nature of ecotourism industry is critically dependent on local involvement, through their roles as employees or local entrepreneurs and their traditional knowledge as the owners of the places, and on resident goodwill towards tourists. Without adequate community participation and support over decision on the course of development, many possible negative impacts of ecotourism would most likely occur at the sites. This requires strong involvement of local communities in ecotourism development from the outset and continually. Developers of the areas need to place importance on giving more opportunities to the locals to help manage ecotourism and obtain equitable flow of benefits (Pearce, 1992). Moreover, their ideas and decisions are necessary to be incorporated in the planning and implementation process in order to ensure that development is not misled at the expense of the community (Murphy, 2004).
5.3.4 Ecotourism and Natural Resource Management in Isimangaliso

Ecotourism as a tool for NRM is a type of conservation initiatives which seeks to provide an economic incentive to local communities so that they are inspired to conserve the natural resources (Murphy & Murphy, 2004). In this sense, ecotourism could be seen as having great potential to address a range of biodiversity and conservation issues in Isimangaliso. As the approach of ecotourism usually focuses on conservation and environmental sustainability, the improvement of local well-being is often considered when it provides incentives for on-going conservation of the areas.

It was found that ecotourism has the potential to help reduce the amount of natural resource depletion and the growing decline of the environmental quality in Isimangaliso caused by human activities. It could help to remonstrate with the local communities about illegal activities through the provision of economic alternatives and job opportunities to increase their income-generating abilities in the area. Realizing economic incentives provided by ecotourism as conservation mechanism would make people aware of the value of their resources and try to reduce or avoid current destructive practices. A variety of jobs found as possible livelihood alternatives for the locals to do in Khula Village are craft-makers and sellers, tourist guides, cultural performers, food service providers, goods vendors, home-stay service providers and fishing.

5.4 Limited Potential of Ecotourism to Contribute to Local Livelihood

Despite strong optimisms having been put on the roles of ecotourism as a change agent in rural community livelihoods and conservation principles, it needs to be recognized that the outputs of its development may not be economically beneficial as hoped (Fagence, 2001). It might be to general extent an ecologically-driven tool rather than an economically-driven strategy (Kiss, 2004). This depends on the nature and politics of its developers and planners as well as on the influence and behavioural compliance of the community representatives (King & Stewart, 1996). This part discusses the problems in using ecotourism as a tool or an incentive for the community livelihood improvement and the conservation of natural resources
in Isimangaliso. In addition, it demonstrates some factors which obstruct local communities, especially the poor and vulnerable ones, from participating in ecotourism and its benefit sharing.

Different from the natural phenomenon, ecotourism initiative in Isimangaliso is not created by the local communities principally. This initiative has been strongly influenced by economic, social and environmental perspectives and policies of the government, Isimangaliso Park Authorities and respectively supported by UNESCO. These institutions have been working to appeal for immediate participatory development that is environmentally and socially responsible, while at the same time provides economic viability to Isimangaliso where environmental problems are closely related to poverty.

It has been widely accepted that most environmental issues in Isimangaliso are state and global threatening and most of the environmental resources in the areas are common property resources. Therefore, it is obvious that many environmental constraints in the area, which are associated with social and developmental issues, need the intervention from the South African government and international communities. The nature of their works could shape their management behaviours and thinking of the current resources in which local residents in the area used to rely on as shared resources for both livelihood requirements and conservation purposes (Hira & Pitfall, 2004). In this respect, their development initiatives, e.g. ecotourism initiative, are not really community-oriented.

It is problematic that ecotourism is developed in natural resources rich but impoverished areas like Khula Village, where people need to have more access to common property resources. The problems might occur when only a few, not all local villagers or service providers are committed to conserve the area. This would cause difficulties for the conservation of natural resources and ecological environment through common property resource management of the area sits conservation process requires strong willing and participation of both benefit receivers and non-receivers (Goodwin & Roe, 2001).
Even though most local communities in Khula Village desire to see ecotourism operation fully established in their localities, their current behaviours and attitudes are subject to change, especially when they see disparities in income generation and income distribution. Apart from an attempt to receive more development and build linkages with the outsiders to reduce social persecution in the area, local residents expect ecotourism to provide additional revenue or economic incentive to improve their living standard. When more benefits are given to local communities, the conservation status and the management of natural resources could be enhanced. However, economic benefits for local households might be lower than expected for people to depend on as a single source of income, (Goodwin et al., 2001). Not all tourist expenses for their ecotourism trips would remain at the local communities.

5.5 Guiding Principles for Ecotourism Development in Isimangaliso

This section focuses mainly on the development of ecotourism guiding principles for planning and management of ecotourism in Isimangaliso. Based on the real context of the area which have been indicated, explained and discussed throughout this study, the site specific strategic frameworks are needed to support and sustain ecotourism process to benefit both conservation and community development.

Rhetorically, the term “ecotourism” and “sustainable tourism” are often used interchangeable. Developing ecotourism in Isimangaliso to provide long-term benefits for conservation and community development requires strong consideration from and multi-sectorial development frameworks of all concerned stakeholders, especially the local communities. Despite its focus on sustainability concepts, ecotourism is not really a panacea to all the current problems in the area which are caused by a complex relationship and interaction between the human society and the natural environment. Three dimensional or triple-bottom line concepts; social, economic and ecological aspects should be carefully taken into account from the outset in order to achieve sustainability of its development. Since ecotourism is not a single-icon tool to be applied in a complex social,
political and environmental sphere, it should be recognized as a part of integrated sustainable development strategies in Isimangaliso, and to develop it at a community level is strongly encouraged.

Careful guidelines for planning and management of ecotourism in Isimangaliso are strongly needed in order to ensure that it is developed on a right track, and the opportunities and benefits it can offer to the communities and a range of other concerned stakeholders could be increased. Therefore, prior to its development, the substantial characteristics of ecotourism should be recognized by the communities, industrial people and developers in the areas, so that the application of this tool for development and conservation is not overstated.

5.5.1 Community Involvement and Community-based Approach

Each step of management (planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring) in Isimangaliso should involve local communities to influence and benefit from ecotourism development. This affair is complicated, yet vital for successful community-based ecotourism in the area. The existing social network and community structure should be considered by ecotourism developers and planners because these can create challenges as well as opportunities. The goal of community involvement is to achieve fair benefit sharing which could serve immediate and future needs of the related groups or sub-groups in the area. Local community involvement in socio-cultural and environmental activities would enable them to receive direct benefits through giving support and input in planning, monitoring and criticizing the project. In addition, community participation and support should be encouraged and obtained in order to determine strategies and activities which are beneficial and supportive to the living conditions and capacities of the communities as well as to retain local knowledge and culture. Respecting the issue of gender equity in community participation is also important since ecotourism can help to promote women roles in decision-making, planning and in income-generating activities.

Ecotourism developers in Isimangaliso should try to understand, promote and empower the legal ownership rights and accountabilities of the communities over
their resource use and conservation and local development. Enabling the community to influence activity and benefit from ecotourism process would encourage them to partake actively and responsively to development and conservation projects since their sense of pride is upgraded.

To increase local awareness, understanding, support and involvement in ecotourism as well as in conservation, a wide range of training programs should be provided to enhance the capacities and skills of the communities. This would help to increase local employment opportunities which could also energize local products and local capacities in running and diversifying small and medium scale tourism-related businesses. Training could be provided on a formal and informal basis, reflecting destination potentials and job requirements and the capacities of the communities. It is important that the content, forms and means of training, and duration of training should be designed and developed in a suitable way to the needs and traditional learning environment and capacities of the communities and other local industry people. Additional training would be needed for those positions that do not require in-depth training due to the nature of their work, but still need some training. This is because these people already have some capacities and skills in certain areas, and would only need training to ensure standards. This type of training would incorporate construction, general labour force and those wishing to join the cooperatives. In this respect, training-of-trainers programs should be adapted to increase the number of possible local skill and knowledge providers in the areas.

Capacity building for the communities in Isimangaliso through a range of training should also concentrate on how to encourage and facilitate better local involvement in planning, decision-making, development and implementation. This means local people could participate in designing institutional mechanisms to encourage growth and development as well as conservation in the area. This should be done prior to ecotourism development to ensure that ecotourism is not perceived as the only remedy to all current problems and that the communities are ready for the consequences of development. Local communities should also be provided skills in addressing the increase of tourist number in the area and the
subsequent impacts. From a conservation perspective, educating the communities
to increase their awareness about the value of biodiversity resources and
ecological environment in Isimangaliso is crucial for the environmental programs.
Yet, the messages of such environmental education should refer to the relation
between these resources and ecotourism, to how people could conserve at local
level and what benefits they could get out of development.

5.5.2 Stakeholder Partnership Building and Participation

It is necessary that the partnership between key stakeholders of ecotourism
development in Isimangaliso is strongly built to ensure that each body could play
different significant roles for conservation and community development. First,
partnership should be formed between local communities and private sector. This
would involve business members of tourism industry (tour operators and travel
agencies, transport companies, etc.) to join venture with local communities and
industry to organize and provide needed tourism services and products to
interested consumers (tourists). This partnership could also be built into planning,
marketing and promotion, pricing, and a coordination of technical or financial
assistance. Second, the facilitation of community level joint venture with
government and semi-government institutions working in the area should be
established and strengthened. This partnership should be forged into joint
planning, decision and policy-making and monitoring and collaboration efforts.
Mechanisms and community trust funds established to ensure a proportion of
money managed and saved for environmental conservation efforts in Isimangaliso
help to contribute to some important activities and programs. These include hiring
of more environmental rangers, training programs for rangers and communities,
community education and community development programs. Economic
incentives from ecotourism and revenue obtained from government subsidies,
donors and such joint methods could also use to employ local people in
conservation and management of resources. It is noteworthy that local
communities could benefit a lot through this partnership building, especially when
obtain government incentives, subsidies and technical supports.
Third, the partnership should be built between local communities and civil society organizations. Environmental-based and social-based non-government agencies, both current and potential ones (i.e., UNESCO, WWF, UNDP, etc.) should develop more short-term and long-term plans related to ecotourism, conservation and community development as a whole and introduce these plans painstakingly to local communities in Isimangaliso for their future exercises.
CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 CONCLUSION

The study began by using fundamental concepts of sustainable livelihood approach to look at the context of livelihood aspects and the evolution of development and conservation processes in Isimangaliso which influence community livelihoods and their capabilities. The main focus of the study was to investigate the potential of ecotourism to address current conservation and community development concerns in Khula Village. In the context of sustainable development of the rural areas, it is promising when there is a strong support from various institutional stakeholder assemblies in providing crucial means and intensifying working force to help the areas achieve its development goals. But, the case of Khula Village presents a major challenge despite the presence of various key stakeholder groups involved in the conservation and development of the area, as the area is undergoing extensive transformation in management strategies. This makes it difficult to predict how the communities and the management system which is strongly influenced by the external forces will progress together at length.

Isimangaliso is a protected nature reserve which has to be managed through appropriate principles and mechanisms which are favoured by the environmental governance organizations. Isimangaliso park authorities are one of the major stakeholder groups which are supported by international development agencies and donor institutions. However, its internal environmental governance system has strived more to achieve the goals of ecological protection without paying enough attention to improve the livelihood options of the communities. Another internal management system is mainly guided by concerns to promote economic growth and benefit the national income, for instance the concession laws on commercial fishing lot operations in the protected areas. It was found that these existing conservation and development paradigms have triggered considerable
impacts on natural resource management and community livelihoods which are predominantly dependent on the use of those resources.

A major challenge in Isimangaliso is to find appropriate balance between nature conservation and community development; between top-down management and participatory scheme, and between serving national and global interests and benefit sharing among concerned populations living in and depending on the area. This issue was picked out for in-depth investigation within the scope of this study by considering the potential of ecotourism in improving community livelihood and as well as conserving the environment. By endeavouring to pursue and attain the research objectives, the context of livelihoods and internal and external environments which affect community livelihoods and strategies in Khula Village was placed at the focus of this study.

It was indicated in Chapter 5 that despite living in natural resource rich rural local communities especially the subsistence fishermen, are experiencing rapid livelihood loss caused by a wide range of vulnerabilities and other prevailing factors. The general determinants that make the local people vulnerable, while at the same time causing a limitation in their livelihood strategies are derived from the consequences of management and development plans of concerned internal and external authorities. These are attributable to the decline in fishery resources and other nature-based livelihood sources, inadequate public and social infrastructural services, limited opportunities to increase livelihood activities, power relation that causes social inequality and exclusion and conflicts of interest over resource access and consumption. The vulnerable conditions are also results of inadequate local capabilities to improve their livelihood options and the change of community attitudes towards law practice and enforcement.

Apart from targeting economic incentives from environmental friendly interventions that could generate more village-based livelihood activities at local capacity and technology, most people in Khula Village also want to see positive changes in current management of the areas. They are concerned about conservation of natural environment and the risk of corruption prevailing rights to natural resource access and use. The management system is perceived by the local communities
as still being centralized and is disproportionately skewed to environmental protection. In this respect, the broader context of social and economic bases for community livelihood improvement Isimangaliso requires accompanying development framework which is equated to the concept of sustainable development. These facts correspond to the emergence of ecotourism initiative in the area that could be implemented to help address problems of livelihood context of Isimangaliso without endangering the natural resources and environment in the areas.

The use of ecotourism to contribute to the improvement of local livelihoods and current conservation process, while rectifying natural resource exploitation in Isimangaliso comes along with a question whether the area is potential for such development. The study found that the area has many natural resources and unique cultural attractions that could be developed as an ecotourism destination. The natural attractions vary from vital and inspiring undisturbed natural habitats, unique ecological and geological formations of the area, beautiful natural landscapes, and rich biodiversity resources and distinctive ecosystem (references). It was indicated in Chapter 5 that the area is home to abundant natural resources, encompassing endemic and illustrious fauna and flora species, some of which are environmentally regionally and globally significant (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2007). Besides being natural resource rich region, the area has an amalgam resource base of historic and cultural attractions. A variety of cultural resources have emerged from unique local settlements, livelihood activities, varied social organizations and adaptive strategies of the people to their surrounding natural environment. The presence of rich, and distinctive, natural and cultural attractions could enable the area to develop and magnify a range of possible ecotourism activities and services to attract tourists.

Despite having many natural and cultural attractions and positive demands of tourists and private business sector, the study indicates that there are various challenges for the development and operation of ecotourism business in the area. These include: lack of infrastructure to support and facilitate tourist visits; lack of skills, knowledge and experience among local communities and existing
developers and authorities; lack of stakeholder partnership, collaboration and participation; low awareness of natural resource management and conservation practices among the locals; inadequate law enforcement of existing fishery, forestry and environment laws; poor legal and institutional framework; conflicts over resource use and access; uncommitted community-based and participatory programs; conflicts between conservation and economic development that lead to unclear government support and political will; overlapped boundaries between environmental protection.

A concern on the opportunity for ecotourism development in the area was also incorporated into the focus of the third operational question of this research. It was found that the majority of local community members hold positive perceptions and attitudes towards ecotourism development in the area. They are attracted by the idea that ecotourism would help to improve the livelihoods of the people, to diversify and promote local economy, to foster community development programs, to support nature conservation. Yet, they are also cautious whether it could bring alternative economic incentives for conservation and local development which is not at the expense of local livelihood options.

Having all concerned internal and external stakeholders understand the possible benefits and risks of ecotourism development for the host communities was also one of the two integrated foci of this third question. It was mentioned in this study that possible positive social, economic and environmental benefits of ecotourism could be direct, indirect and induced. These include: increase additional local livelihood options and income; create jobs in the villages; diversify local economic activities and local products; enhance people’s abilities to work and improve their well-being; enhance community empowerment and participation in development and conservation; strengthen local ownership and access rights; improve awareness and cultural and natural appreciation among the locals; improve people’s skills and knowledge; revitalize and rectify social structure, system, network and relation among community members; revive local culture and social value; stimulate local development; increase markets for local products; improve the management and decentralization system and security; increase more
conservation projects and activities in the areas through ecotourism incentives and other funding supports; increase research activities related to biodiversity protection; and increase community support and volunteerism to protect the environment. It was also indicated in the study that a range of prospective negative impacts could be spawn from ecotourism development, such as: conflicts of interest; disparities in income generation and distribution; disturbance of natural habitats.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION

The development and conservation of Isimangaliso is very critical and subjective to the increase and improvement of living conditions and awareness of local communities. To alleviate poverty in Khula Village, there is an immediate need to raise additional village-based incomes through promising employment opportunities and other income generating livelihood actives. Progress in this direction could secure integration of the local economy and social solidarity throughout the region and improved security in all areas.

To balance economic development and natural resource management, it is important that the agricultural sector, particularly fishery production should be promoted on a small scale basis alongside micro industrial sector and ecotourism. The development should aim to promote the area as an integral part of the dynamic community development and biodiversity conservation oriented processes, which should be carried out regionally. Isimangaliso has great potential and comparative advantage for developing natural resource based industries of specific kinds, such as fishery-based, agro-based and service industries (tourism). The responsible development of these economic incentives to the point where Isimangaliso can sustain its natural resource use and economic growth will create jobs for the locals and add value to local economic products.

The study shows that Isimangaliso could be developed as a single ecotourism destination due to abundance and great variety of resources. The development of ecotourism on community-based level will provide more direct and indirect employment to the local communities. A wide range of local industries will be
revitalized, established and enhanced. These include accommodation, food, handicraft, and other service businesses. However, a number of challenges could hinder the success of ecotourism as a tool for conservation and development in the area. These challenges range from technique to politics including: capacities of the locals and responsible government institutions to sustain ecotourism process; participation and structural barriers; and community vs. market’s competing interests. Although ecotourism could contribute to the success of the three major principles of development, it is not the only remedy for current socio-economic and environmental problems in the area.

The current challenges facing Isimangaliso are to enhance local economic viability based on current livelihood activities, reduce poverty, and foster the implementation and succession of reform policies. These entail institutional and administrative reform, fishery reform, environment reform, structural reform, etc. To overcome these problems will require effective economic and environmental management and external assistance in order to support the completion of local economic self-sufficiency and conservation priorities. Considerable structural development frameworks to improve the quality of life of the locals (particularly vulnerable and marginal such as previously disadvantaged groups) and sustainable use of natural resources should be introduced into the area.

Development mechanisms should start from addressing local survival groundwork to medium and long-term strategic plans for rapid adjustment, local economic development and conservation supported by good micro and sectorial policies. In the medium term, developers and conservationists should aim to: eliminate illegal and destructive activities to natural resources by strengthening institutional and legal framework; ensure equal access to resources and fair economic distribution of benefits of development; promote and diversify local livelihood activities with less impact on human and natural environment; improve infrastructural and social services; and sustain growth within a stable microeconomic framework in Isimangaliso. In the long term, local communities and the government should aim to achieve: poverty alleviation defined in the Millennium Development Goals; the improvement of people’s well-beings and quality of life; community development
goals; and environmental governance in the area.

Sound community development and sustainable management and conservation mechanisms of natural resources in Isimangaliso should take place alongside nation-wide micro and macroeconomic frameworks in KZN province. There is a need for a holistic framework for sustainable biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement in the area.

It is necessary that adaptive management and effective integrated natural resource management and rural development should be put into practice. These would allow flexible plans and actions to address current needs of the locals and conservation in the context of the area.

Second, improved natural resource management and conservation in the area require two parallel interventions from all concerned stakeholders, both directly and indirectly. Suitable policies and laws on environmental management, boundary designation and demarcation, land use planning, and business concession in the area are the primary facet before any actions start off. Environmental management in this way refers to resource management (natural, human, technical and economic) and waste (solid and liquid) management. Fishery, forestry and other aquatic resource access, use and preservation should be stated precisely and practically in policy papers and functional and conventional laws.

The knowledge, capacities and skills of government and project staffs and local communities should be improved via diverse environmental awareness, education and outreach programs. It is widely accepted that to implement these activities and achieve development and conservations goals, financial resource is strongly needed. Yet, budget should be used up more at operational level, rather than at technical level.

All in all, an effort to sustain natural resource management and conservation in the area will be futile without actual enforcement programs to control and curtail illegal activities committed by local communities, SIMs and responsible government officers. All destructive activities are unlikely to disappear unless rules
or regulations are imposed properly and law enforcement is performed firmly. Law enforcement by government officials has created animosity in areas such as Kosi Bay. Perhaps it would be better to use local communities to “police the area”
REFERENCES


EFCOT ((2003). *A study into recommendations on establishment of Community Based Tourism Organization to promote, support the growth of Community Based Tourism in Ethiopia and to represent those involved in it*. Report paper by consultancy team, November/December p.4


Countries: ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).


APENDICE

ETHICS PROFORMA FOR TREATISE

*Please type or complete in black ink*

**FACULTY:** FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

**SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT:** Department of Development Studies

I, (surname and initials of supervisor) Dr. Snow, G. and Snow, B.,

the supervisor for (surname and initials of candidate) Masencho, S. E (student number) 206039514 a candidate for the (full description of qualification) MA Development Studies (Coursework)

with a treatise entitled (full title of treatise):

An assessment of the potential of ecotourism and community-based natural resource management as a rural development strategy with special reference to iSimangaliso Wetland Park

considering the following ethics criteria *(please tick the appropriate block):*

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<td>1. Is there any risk of harm, embarrassment of offence, however slight or temporary, to the participant, third parties or to the communities at large?</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>2. Are particular characteristics of the target groups required (e.g. age, cultural derivation, background, physical characteristics, disease status etc.)?</td>
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<td>3. Does the data that will be collected require consent of an institutional authority for this study?</td>
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<td>4. Will the participant's privacy, anonymity and confidentiality be disclosed?</td>
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<td>5. Will feedback be given to participants?</td>
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*Please note that if any of the questions above have been answered in the affirmative the student will need to complete the full ethics clearance form and submit to the Faculty Ethics Coordinator.*
hereby certify that the student has given his/her research ethical consideration and full ethics approval is not required.

SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER

DATE

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DATE

Please ensure that the research methodology section from the proposal is attached to this form.
Questionnaires for Semi-Structured Interviews with Rural Households

Questionnaire No: ..................  Date..............................................

Consent for interview given:...............................................................................................................................................

1. If you are allowed to prioritize development plans and strategies for your area, would you choose tourism as one of the major alternative livelihoods or vice versa? Yes /No

Why?..............................................................................................................................................................................

2. If no, what would you suggest to developers to help solve your livelihood loss and at the same time improve your quality of life?

..............................................................................................................................................................................

3. What are the challenges for tourism development in your area?

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4. Do you want tourists to visit your area? Yes/No.

Why?

..............................................................................................................................................................................

5. What type of tourists/visitors do you welcome? Please tick.

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<td>Others</td>
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6. How many kilograms of fish can you catch per day?

……………………………………………………………………………………

7. Is your daily fish catch (kg) sufficient for everyday consumption and goods exchange for your family? Please tick

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>More than enough and have surplus to sell or lend out</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Just adequate</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Not sufficient</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Entirely dependent on the fish price and on buying rice and other necessities</td>
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8. What should help you or your family to improve the fish catches?

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- 83 -
9. How do you think about infrastructure development in your area if compared to the past?

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........................................................................................................................................

10. Do you have access to common property resources located within your community? (1-Yes; 2-No) If 'yes', what types of common property resources?

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11. Do you think the means of access and the level of access among each local fisher to the common property resources is equal? (1-Yes/ 2-No) If no, why?

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12. If access to the common property resources becomes restricted, how will it affect your livelihood opportunities?

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<td>Will not affect because current benefits are very small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Will affect only little but can easily manage without these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Will significantly affect the livelihood because alternatives livelihood options are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. What values do these natural resources give to you, your family, your community, and country as a whole?

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14. Do you think these resources have been used, developed, and conserved properly? (give reasons)

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

15. What has been the trend of availability of natural resources in recent years?

(1=Increasing; 2=Decreasing; 3=Remained constant)
### Type of natural resources

| Trend |  
|-------|---
| 1-increased; 2-decreased; 3-remained constant |   

16. If the availability of natural resources is declining in your community / locality, what are the four main reasons contributing to this decline? (Please rank in order of importance)

|  
| 1. |   
| 2. |   
| 3. |   
| 4. |   

17. What kind of regulation or restrictions do you need to follow to access and use the natural resources in the area? (put ‘1’ if relevant, ‘0’ otherwise)
### Regulations /restrictions

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Need to buy licenses for cutting wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Need permission from head of commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Need permission from environmental officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Need permission from fishery officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Pay lease for seasonal use of land and water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Free and unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Have you ever been invited to participate in or informed about the meetings, discussions, decision-making, planning, and implementation for the development of your community? Yes / No

Give examples if yes

........................................................................................................................................

19. Have you ever initiated or been allowed to initiate any ideas for the overall development of your community? Yes / No

20. How could this process of engagement be improved?

........................................................................................................................................

........................................................................................................................................
21. To what extent do you think their missions are effective for natural resources conservation and social development in the area, as well as for improving your quality of life?

(1=strongly effective; 2=Effective; 3=Ineffective; 4=strongly ineffective)

22. How might more groups or other groups be involved in the planning, decision-making process, and execution?

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23. What would you suggest be addressed and developed to improve the management strategies for natural resources conservation and alleviating poverty in your area?

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Thank you for your time and collaboration!