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9

**THE POWER OF MEANING:  
PEOPLE AND THE UTILIZATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL RESOURCES IN  
SAADANI VILLAGE, TANZANIA**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy  
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2001**

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**I, Rosemarie Nyigulila R.G. Mwaipopo-Ako declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been presented in any other University for a similar or any other degree award.**

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11<sup>th</sup> December, 2011

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the natural resource utilisation and management patterns of people in the coastal village of Saadani in Tanzania, in light of the individuals' social and economic power. The study was conducted between August 1997 and March 1999. It focuses on people's access to and control of natural resources both within and beyond the household. It was prompted by the need to examine how pressures arising from external factors such as shifts in macro-economic orientation and environmental management policies which initiated new utilisation practices have impinged on coastal people's livelihoods and on their ways of using natural resources. At the same time, internal dynamics of the local society have created new interpretations on claims to and use of those resources. Applying contemporary understandings on power, the study explores the different ways in which individuals as social actors, construct their lives in ways that empower them and employ strategies to achieve goals that they define within their particular historical and social contexts to overcome the limitations that are generated by these various processes. Gender is also recognised as an important analytical category because it makes it possible to engage in the diversities in local power that go beyond the state versus local opposition. The study thus also explores how gender categories are culturally constituted to construct the way in which men and women each operate within distinct arenas and capacities in relation to natural resource management.

The ethnographic data presented in this study illustrates that local Saadani people have always responded to natural resource management processes by demanding to maintain the kinds of uses of resources that they have always had. This is because throughout their history they have learnt to identify themselves through the interaction with both people and with resources, developing different meanings and attaching different values to those resources. It is for the realisation of those meanings that the people demand to maintain their relationship with resources, and their ability to maintain this relationship follows from their own ways of understanding their power, which I refer to as the 'power of meaning.' The way in which local people make particular kinds of demands and perform particular kinds of practices in quest of their rights to natural resources is what I demonstrate in this study as autonomy.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Maps and Figures	vi
List of Tables	vi
List of Pictures (middle pages)	vi
List of Appendices	vii
List of Case Studies	vii
Note of Vocabulary	viii
Abbreviations	viii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Some Theoretical Considerations: The Power of Meaning, Autonomy and People's Livelihoods	12
1.3 Outline of the Thesis	20
1.4 Methodology	23
1.5 Overview of Coastal and Marine Resource Management on the Tanzanian Mainland	31
1.6 Conclusion	40
<b>CHAPTER TWO: SAADANI: THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE</b>	<b>42</b>
2.1 Introduction	42
2.2 Imagining Saadani	43
2.3 The History and Evolution of Saadani Village	52
2.4 Conclusion	64
<b>CHAPTER THREE: PEOPLE AND LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>65</b>
3.1 Introduction	65
3.2 The People of Saadani	67
3.3 Social Organization and Differentiation	74
3.4 The Situation of Women	82
3.5 Production Activities and Seasonality of Natural Resource Use	91
3.6 The Making of a Periphery: The Transport Infrastructure	98
3.7 Conclusion	102
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: POWER AND AUTONOMY IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>104</b>
4.1 Introduction	104
4.2 The Power of Local Resistance: Forest Management Programmes	107
4.3 Encountering the Power of domination: Fisheries and the Marine Environment	122
4.4 The Power of Exclusion: Wildlife Protection and Tourism	138
4.5 Creating Harmonious Power Relationships	148
4.6 Conclusion	151

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: THE POWER OF MEANING AND LOCAL PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	153
5.1 Introduction	153
5.2 Ownership of Coastal Space and Resources	156
5.3 Fishing for <i>Kitweleo</i>	171
5.4 Prawn Marketing Relationships	178
5.5 Respect and Good luck	186
5.6 Conclusion	195
<b>CHAPTER SIX: GENDER AND POWER IN THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL SPACE AND RESOURCES</b>	197
6.1 Introduction	197
6.2 The Gendered Use of Space: Appearances and Egalitarianism	200
6.3 Work, Roles and Responsibilities	201
6.4 Women in Fishing	207
6.5 Incomes from Alternative Fishing Related Activities	214
6.6 Women's Fish: Fried fish trading	216
6.7 Transcending Gender Work Boundaries	223
6.8 Continuity and Change in Understanding Gendered Use of Natural Resources	226
6.9 Conclusion	229
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS</b>	231
7.1 Introduction	231
7.2 Autonomy as Power	233
7.3 Power Relationships based on Gender	239
7.4 Conclusions: Policy Implications	240
Appendix (i)	242
Appendix (ii)	243
Appendix (iii)	244
Appendix (iv)	245
Appendix (v)	247
Appendix (vi)	248
Appendix (vii)	249
References	250

### List of Maps and Figures:

Map 2.1	Map of Bagamoyo coastal area showing location of Saadani	45
Map 2.2	Saadani and the location of neighbouring settlements	49
Figure 2.3	Saadani (central) settlement: A local artist's impression: Nov, 1998	(a)
Map 3.1	Communications network leading to Saadani Dec, 1998	99
Map 4.1	Map of Saadani showing area under border dispute	143
Figure 5.1	Diagram of <i>uzio</i> showing area called <i>kiwanja</i> .	164

### List of Tables:

Table 2.1	Saadani Village: Population composition – 1998	51
Table 3.1	Saadani Primary School – Enrolment Trends 1995-1998.	72
Table 3.2	Distribution of Types of Employment and Participation in Major Livelihood Activities in Saadani/Uvinje. 1997-1999	93
Table 3.3	Seasons, Symbols and Natural resource uses	96
Table 4.1	Recent Cases of Illegal Cutting of Mangroves around the Wami River area	112
Table 4.2	Licensed Prawn Trawlers – Tanzania Mainland 1992-2000	125
Table 4.3	Production of prawns from the Bagamoyo artisanal fishery 1990-1996	134
Table 5.1	Prices of prawns and shrimp: November-December 1998 (per kg)	177

### List of Pictures: (middle pages)

Picture 1	The Saadani Game Reserve Manager's House
Picture 2	The ruins of the Fish market, Saadani
Picture 3	SGR Staff, villagers and the tourist camp's employees and vehicle (preparing for patrol exercises)
Picture 4-5	Houses in Saadani and Uvinje
Picture 6	Bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu
Picture 7	Fishers at Saadani Bay
Picture 8	Mama J and daughter
Picture 9	The last haul
Picture 10	A local canoe ( <i>ngalawa</i> ) and a Bagamoyo boat ( <i>mashua</i> )
Picture 11	A prawn trawler
Picture 12	A <i>jahazi</i> and people apprehended near the mouth of the Wami River for illegally cutting mangroves (1999).
Picture 13	Illegal cutting of mangroves along the banks of River Wami
Picture 14	Mending nets ( <i>kurakai</i> )
Picture 15	Prawn dealer ( <i>tajiri mnunuzi</i> ) with some prawns and a container
Picture 16	Fish traps ( <i>madema</i> )
Picture 17-18	Local salt production unit at Marumbi, Saadani
Picture 19	Resting on a shelter next to their cultivation plot, Uvinje.
Picture 20	ZM the fisherwoman
Picture 21	MM attending Mzee N's fishing fence

- Picture 22 Coming back from collecting fuelwood at the SGR  
 Picture 23 T, on her way to Mkange to sell fried fish

### List of Appendices

Appendix (i)	Cape Argus Cartoon: Big fish v/s small fish	242
Appendix (ii)	Saadani central: Basic information – 1998	243
Appendix (iii)	Summary of statistics on the fishery of Tanzania mainland. 1994 to 1996	244
Appendix (iv)	Summary of major activities and incomes in Saadani, 1998	245
Appendix (v)	Costs incurred by a Prawn dealer	247
Appendix (vii)	List of most commonly used words in thesis	248
Appendix (viii)	Issues of study	249

### List of Case Studies

Case study 3.1	Inheritance on genderised terms	89
Case study 4.1	Outwitting the State	117
Case study 4.2	Collaborating with the State	117
Case study 5.1	From a fishing camp to a settlement	160
Case study 5.2	Communal claims to land rights	168
Case study 5.3	<i>Kitweleo</i> from my children	173
Case study 5.4	<i>Kitweleo</i> from her friend	174
Case study 5.5	Relationships around a woman's cooking place	175
Case study 6.1	Gender fitness	211
Case study 6.2	Operating a <i>hoteli</i>	215
Case study 6.3	Shifting domestic boundaries	221
Case study 6.4	Transcending gender work boundaries	224

## Abbreviations:

DFoB	-Division of Forestry and Bee-keeping
DFs	-Division of Fisheries
DPIO	-District Planning Officer
DT	-Division of Tourism
DW	-Division of Wildlife
FAO	-Food and Agriculture Organisation
GTZ	-German Technical Assistance Development Programme
ICZM	-Integrated Coastal Zone Management
MLHUD	-Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
MNRT	-Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
MP	-Member of Parliament
NEMC	-National Environmental Management Council
NRM	-Natural Resource Management
PFR	-Proposed Forest Reserve
SCDP	-Saadani Conservation Development Programme
SGR	-Saadani Game Reserve
TCMP	-Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership
TRC	-Tanzania Railways Corporation
TShs	-Tanzanian Shillings (local currency)
Tz	-Tanzania
URT	-United Republic of Tanzania
VEO	-Village Executive Officer
VG	-Village Government

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## Note on vocabulary

In this study I have used a number of words in the Swahili language (Kiswahili) particularly because, in many cases, the literal translation of the words in English do not capture the actual meaning of the words as they are used in daily conversations or in sentence construction. This is mostly the case with some idiomatic phrases, such as, '*mwiko haujala*', which if translated literally would be '[the] cooking spoon is not wet/damp', a sentence which is normally not used in daily conversations in Kiswahili. Hence, I proceed by providing the implied version, which in this case is, 'there is nothing to cook for the meal'. In these cases, I have started with the Kiswahili version and co-ordinated it with the implied meaning of the sentence or phrase. In those cases where a literal translation is available and whose meaning is similar to the way the word is used in Kiswahili, I have indicated it as the following examples illustrate; *mwanamke* (lit: a woman), or fisher (*mvuvi*). Appendix (vii) provides a translation of the most commonly used words in the thesis for easy reference. Throughout the study I have used explanations given in *A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary* (1999 [1939]) written by the former Inter-Territorial Language Committee for the East African Dependencies. Oxford University Press, and, *The English-Swahili Dictionary* (1996) written and published by the Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

## CHAPTER ONE: Background to the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

Contemporary natural resource management (NRM)<sup>1</sup> approaches have illustrated the need to accommodate local people's<sup>2</sup> understanding of natural resources and the ways they use those resources. The wealth of local people's knowledge of their environments, and the ways in which they apply this knowledge to make optimal use of the natural resources within their environments, has been acknowledged widely and has provided much needed insight to NRM strategies (Ruddle, 1994; Nuttall, 1998; Sillitoe, 1996; Kikula, 1997; IUCN, 1997; Tobisson *et al*, 1998). Equally significant has been recognition of local institutions employed to regulate natural resource usage, providing another justification for the importance of understanding local ways of managing natural resources (Little & Brokensha, 1987). Understanding local norms and values that underlie local uses of natural resources is now advocated as crucial for environmentalists to develop meaningful NRM strategies (Edmunds, 1997; Klooster, 2000) and, possibly, to learn from how some local institutions have enforced sanctions when natural resource exploitation restrictions are not adhered to.

However, an understanding that natural resource management is critical to people's livelihoods is being developed in a context where people's realities are being reconfigured and recomposed due to multiple social, economic and political pressures. A number of questions thus arise relating to the future of sustainable NRM policies in developing countries, in the context of those various pressures. One is the impact of globalisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which continue to reconfigure the realities of people's lives in developing countries (Reed, 1996;

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<sup>1</sup> Natural resources management (NRM) approaches in this study refers to the policies and strategies designed to manage natural resources, either through exploitative, tourist or conservationist processes. Throughout this thesis, when I use the acronym NRM, I only refer to imposed natural resources management approaches. When I need to explain local people's ways of using resources, I spell the words out clearly without using acronyms.

<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge the current uses of the term 'local people' in anthropological discourse to connote a historically determined and flexible people (Agrawal 1995), rather than previous understandings based on the conception of local communities as homogeneous and collectivist users and producers of knowledge (Green 2000). In this study, I use the term 'local people' also to refer to socially constructed, arbitrarily arrived at descriptions relating to people who have homes in the Saadani area, and their understandings of themselves in relation to their historical experiences of successive NRM processes in the area. These people use these descriptions to relate to other people.

Appadurai, 2000; Katerere, 2000).<sup>3</sup> Another issue arises from the socio-cultural and political situations in developing countries where poverty (Bagachwa, 1994; UNDP, 1998) and people's rights have come into question (Shivji & Kapinga, 1998). The major implications of these processes on local people has been their gradual loss of control of environmental and production processes. This loss has caused a gradual break down of the defence mechanisms of local populations with regard to their control of their livelihoods. Thus local people have had to redefine their realities and the meanings they attach to natural resources. New local understandings and meanings of natural resources in turn demand fresh insights on how local people understand themselves and their relationships with those resources. Altogether, the implications of these various pressures and the social processes that arise within changing contexts have compelled analysts concerned with NRM to rethink the understandings given to various analytical categories (such as gender and power) within the context of natural resource management, and how these categories influence the nature of local people's access to and control over resources.

My thesis develops from an understanding that current processes of NRM do not adequately tackle the fundamental issue of power relationships in managing natural resources, an issue which I understand people in local communities regard as essential to their lives. Power is an important analytical category in natural resource management processes. It mediates not only the inequalities of access to productive resources, but also the cultural construction of environmental resources and the ways in which people give meaning to their lives through natural resource exploitation. My aim therefore has been to explore practices of NRM as advanced by policy makers through an analysis of their implications for local people's practices and understandings of natural resource management. I use contemporary theoretical perspectives about power, which regard power not simply as a contestation between state-designed NRM and local people, but also as the basis within which local people lay claims to natural resources. Hence, my study is an exploration of local people's practices and understandings of power in relation to natural resource management in

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<sup>3</sup> Globalisation is a term that describes the prevalence of a single world market for goods, capital, services and technology based on neo-liberal (free-market) principles. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) were part of the globalisation and restructuring processes of the economies of developing countries which drew local economies into the free market economy. SAPs emphasised the deregulation of local economies and export oriented exploitation of natural resources.

the Tanzanian coastal village of Saadani where I conducted fieldwork between 1997 and 1999.

Among major trends to rethink NRM approaches, particularly in the 1980s, was a questioning of those approaches which tended to legitimise hegemonic NRM by governments. Most earlier approaches were influenced by institutions such as the World Bank (1989, 1991), the IUCN (1980, 1997), the WCED (1987) and the UNCHE (1972). The environmental agenda propagated by these institutions, which dominated environment and development policy in the developing nations especially in the 1980s, addressed the reality of a progressively degrading environment, increasing conflicts over natural resources and steadily declining livelihoods. These problems came to be widely acknowledged, particularly after the WCED conference in 1987. In response to demands for conservation, many countries emulated an underlying assumption of the World Conservation Strategy (1980) which regarded natural resource conservation as predominantly the preserve of 'conservation specialists', scientists to whose ideals societal behaviour regarding natural resource usage had to be transformed (Anderson & Grove 1987). In such conservation programmes, the government became the sole player protecting and effecting natural resource management.

Protectionist-oriented natural resource management approaches in developing countries reflected a continuity of previous ideas by colonial governments which effectively prioritised natural resource development over human development. And, even though there had sometimes been policy commitment to the resource rights of local populations, these rights were often defined in terms that did not clash with government interests. For example, the Land Ordinance (1923), passed under the British Colonial administration in the then Tanganyika, stipulated that people's traditional use of land resources should be assured, protected and preserved when designing measures to consolidate natural resource management programmes, such as establishing forest reserves (Neumann, 1997). Yet, and as Neumann (1997) contends, local people's rights to resources, recognised in most cases for reasons of administrative expediency, were considered within a framework in which all land in the Tanganyika territory was declared public land and was controlled by the British governor, who had vested in him the powers to intervene in all management of

resources as he found expedient (*ibid*). Such interventions often conflicted with local people's ways of using natural resources. Some contemporary NRM strategies illustrate similar tendencies, reflecting how dominant discourses and practices of power often override local concerns and needs.

From the late-1980s, and for various reasons, a range of approaches shifted in the direction of NRM by advocating sustainable utilisation of natural resources (use and conserve). Firstly was the cumulative negative implications of protectionist approaches, that increased conflicts over access rights and general demands for sustainable livelihoods. These demands made it imperative for NRM policy strategists to commit themselves to various local people-sensitive mechanisms that also embraced decentralised natural resource governance. People had to be involved in NRM. A proliferation of several related approaches followed, including concerns with development sustainability, equity, empowerment, people's participation and stakeholders' participation in NRM (Blackwell *et al*, 1990; Byers, 1996; Chambers, 1997; WCED, 1987). Yet, the outcome of these approaches to improve the nature of the relationship between people and natural resources proved contradictory in many respects, however progressive the sustainability agenda may have seemed. I discuss their implications below after first making note of the second factor which influenced, to a large extent, the implementation of approaches aimed to incorporate people's participation in NRM.

The second factor was the 1980s world economic situation. A combination of extreme national economic crises and poverty compelled most developing countries to concede to neo-liberal approaches to development as conditions for recurring financial aid. The need to encourage foreign investments and a much hoped for economic boost made these countries adopt economic liberalisation policies and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which aimed to establish an open-market economy, one impact of which was to facilitate extensive exploitation of natural resources (Reed, 1996). Many governments of developing countries thus found themselves offering favourable conditions for the exploitation of natural resources to private/individual or foreign/large scale bodies.

Yet such decisions often contradicted natural resource conservation ideals (Anderson, 1987; Reed, 1996; Repetto, 1994). Basing their judgements sometimes on biased impressions of an abundance of natural resources, many governments agreed to measures that prioritised exploitation at the expense of sustainability of people's livelihoods and the environment (Chachage, 1996; Fottland and Sorensen, 1996). In some cases, large-scale commercial exploitation of natural resources was conducted at the expense of people whose livelihoods depended on them. Such processes have had multiple consequences for local people, namely: the elimination of existing rights to resources; disruption of previously integrated production systems; limited access to once common resources; exclusion and even socio-economic disorientation (Neumann, 1997; UNDP, 1998; Repetto, 1994). Once again, then, local people's understandings of natural resources was overlooked as NRM processes commoditized the relationship between people and resources through the predominance of market mechanisms to influence human development.

The most recent NRM strategy to incorporate local people's situations and interests has been described as Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).<sup>4</sup> CBNRM, was introduced in the 1990s, and was designed to ground NRM processes to meet local people's needs. Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE programme, for example, interlinks the goals of NRM with local people's livelihoods and sharing of power in management issues (Rihoy, 1995; Sibanda, 1996). One assumption of the Zimbabwean CBNRM strategy is that it is necessary to give a natural resource a measurable value to enable the community "to determine whether the benefit of managing a resource exceeds the cost" (Rihoy, 1995: 15 quoting Murphree, 1993).

In Tanzania, CBNRM approaches have predominantly been introduced within project frameworks, but some of their basic assumptions have also been relevant to general NRM policies. The recently formulated NRM Policies in Tanzania appear to adopt the basic ideals of CBNRM by advocating the establishment of village and community natural resources management areas under the control of local people (MNRT-For,

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<sup>4</sup> In other literature, the CBNRM is termed CNRM which refers to Community natural resource management whose range of objectives are similar to CBNRM since both prioritise community involvement in the management and conservation of natural resources (Kellert et al, 2000)

1998).<sup>5</sup> These approaches also perceive effective NRM to be achievable particularly if primary users of the natural resources can value resources and can expect to benefit directly from the management strategy.

A positive aspect achieved by strategies recognising local people's stakes in NRM is the creation, at least in theory, of a foundation for addressing power issues. Yet several practical experiences have illustrated that, although these strategies are an attractive incentive, they are still limited by issues concerning modalities of access to and control of NRM processes. For example, in some cases the actual material benefits local people can anticipate have been limited as a result of complicated benefit sharing and distribution among the various categories of resource users who expected to benefit from the resource management enterprise (Kellert *et al*, 2000). In addition, NRM programmes have sometimes found it difficult to reconcile the ideals of various different categories of users as a result of diverse needs or philosophies. Conflicts thus may arise, for example, between demands to pursue individual desires and communal programmes (Schade, 1999) or, in a few cases, where wildlife rights are advocated over human rights and needs (Steenkamp, 1996). Many recent NRM strategies have also had difficulty in establishing a harmonious balance between local interests and the interests of the state and state-backed resource users. An example is South Africa's Marine Fisheries Policy (1997) which introduced a fishing quota system as a strategy to regulate the fisheries and to provide access rights for both big private entrepreneurs and local fishers on a redistribution basis (DEAT-SA, 1997). The policy has, however, proved disadvantageous to many local small-scale fishers. The procedures for registration for a quota were so complicated and expensive that the quotas that local people could afford proved economically unfeasible for them to operate at a small scale, and with comparatively low technological capacities, management expertise and assets. They were thus unable to benefit significantly from the quota system (Isaacs, 2000). Had an adequate study been done of the situations of small-scale fishers, the redistribution policy might have been able to accommodate people's requirements, and

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<sup>5</sup> The Tanzanian Natural Resources Management Policies are presented in The Wildlife Management Policy of 1998; The Forestry Policy of 1998; The Bee-keeping Policy of 1997; The Tourism Policy of 1997 and The Fisheries Development Policy of 1998, each of which reflect the ideals of the overall Environmental development framework as provided by the National Environmental Policy of 1997 and the National Economic policy orientation.

therefore to create a people-centred NRM.<sup>6</sup> Such imbalances in technological capacities and socio-economic situations have often proved disadvantageous to local people who increasingly find themselves dislocated and unable to make ends meet from the minimal shares they gain through these arrangements (Kellert, 2000). In these circumstances even political decisions such as NRM policy may not necessarily bring about equitable distributions of resources.

Moreover, some people-oriented NRM approaches have tended to avoid confronting the potential for conflict over natural resource use which impinges on people's livelihoods, particularly when it involves access to and the use of what people regard as their major resource base. These conflicts are aggravated where people live in areas of limited resources, such as in marginal lands (Botelle & Kowalski, 1997). Strategies that fail to realise how people in such situations perceive their environment may in fact exacerbate the situation. In situations relating to the use of marine resources, where multiple uses and often arbitrary territoriality is practised, such conflicts become worse (McCay, 1993).

Altogether, strategy analysts for many NRM approaches have failed to address adequately the issue of local people's rights as regards access to and use of natural resources.

The rise of civil society has also raised the question of people's rights over natural resources. Several cases illustrate how, when local people have reacted negatively to unfavourable NRM approaches, their reactions have helped inform changes in thinking amongst NRM policy makers. The Chipko movement in the Himalayan region of Garhwal, India is a case in point (Shiva, 1989). In this movement, local people's dissatisfaction with the uses of the forest in their region manifested in reaction against the Indian state's support of extensive logging and private control of the forest. They symbolised their protest through women hugging the trees. Yet, most

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<sup>6</sup> Ref. Appendix (i) for a cartoon carried in the South African newspaper, *The Cape Argus*, of Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 1999 which captured my interest by the way its message represented the situation of many local small-scale fishers in developing countries. I occasionally (1999-2000) also heard the grievances of Western Cape small-scale fishers through South Africa's E-TV channel, especially on the way they had been forced out of the activity since the small quotas they could afford were not able to sustain them. Neither did they have the capacities to expand and qualify for bigger quotas.

contemporary strategies have been slow to develop a democratic platform to ensure that local people have the capacity to question fundamental issues such as control over, access to, and use of natural resources without being compelled to protest. This lack of democratic platforms has even led to conflicts between people in neighbouring communities over the inappropriate exploitation of natural resources that disadvantages other users (Menai Bay, 2000).

In several more recent cases, local environmentalist movements have challenged NRM policies to protect local people's ways of subsistence living (Nuttall, 1998; Arnold, 1998). Shivji and Kapinga (1998), for example, have demonstrated how the rights of Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania, who had lived for centuries within the Ngorongoro area, came under severe stress as successive programmes to conserve the area for tourism were developed (1998: 5). The rights of Maasai people to natural resources is currently an issue taken up by the Tanzanian NGO, HAKIARDHI which concerns itself with local people's land rights.

The fact that many contemporary NRM approaches continue to maintain several misconceptions about the relationship between people and natural resources illustrates that NRM strategists have failed to understand how people themselves understand the natural resources around them. Firstly, they have failed to recognise the relational and dynamic constructs of local people, which are constantly being reconstructed in a context of changing power relations (Sawicki, 1999). Secondly, though it is recognised that people in small local populations have diverse ways of using and understanding the natural resources around them, this recognition has often stopped short by merely identifying these differences without fully comprehending how they reflect and are used in local power configurations. Local populations are never homogeneous. They can be differentiated in terms of many factors, including age, gender, religion, socio-economic status and residential location (Guijt & Shah, 1998; Seeland, 1997). Often, the heterogeneity of a local population is reflected in the diverse ways it uses and understands natural resources. The same diversity can also be seen in responses to externally introduced forms of resource utilisation, which have resulted in further variations in local perspectives about using natural resources. Many such new uses have, however, contradicted or conflicted with the ways local people had previously used and understood the resources around them. The extent of these

various diversities, including the dynamisms and diversities in local people's uses and understandings of resources, makes even well-meaning NRM policies difficult to implement.

What forms should NRM policies and programmes take to understand and accommodate the diverse ways in which local people relate to resources? Under what conditions, and how, should NRM policy relate people's use and understanding of their environment to other concerns with environmental management, such as the management of conservation projects or of processes that demand resource exploitation? Equally important is how NRM strategists comprehend local people's rights in the context of people who understand themselves in very different ways, according to their own distinct histories and social situations (Nuttall, 1998; Kottak, 1999). Until we acknowledge and understand how these processes are dialectically related to the diversified patterns of local people's use and understanding of natural resources, and the meanings they attach to their livelihood activities, we cannot fully comprehend what NRM means to local people. Failure to do so means that NRM policies and approaches cannot accommodate or fully meet the aims of a sustainable NRM which embraces the ways in which local people use and make sense of the natural environment and its resources.

A major objective of my study is to relate the observations and discussions that I have made to this point to the policies and practices of NRM introduced along the coast of Tanzania mainland. I also hope to influence the recently developed Coastal Zone Management (CZM) policies and programmes in the West Indian Ocean region, policies which advocate strategies to incorporate local people's participation and aim to create space for joint management approaches between state institutions and local people (Semesi & Ngoile, 1995; TCMP-1, 1998).<sup>7</sup> This requires them to give priority to the role of human activities, ostensibly in order to understand the state of the coastal environment (Lundin & Linden, 1993; Ngoile & Horril, 1993). The management approaches that have been developed from these concerns take cognisance of activities such as people's use of mangrove forests, coastal sand and stone quarrying, the

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<sup>7</sup> In the West Indian Ocean, the current management programmes are regionally and nationally co-ordinated under Integrated Coastal Zone management programmes. The CZM processes include natural resource exploitation strategies as advanced by national development policies.

extraction of corals and various fishery practices. But they also regard some of these activities as having direct negative impacts on the environment itself as well as on coastal livelihood systems.

Despite the social-environmental emphasis of these approaches, one finds beneath the rhetoric, a persisting tendency to subscribe to the same position as Pollnac (1998) when he says that “humans are one of the major predators of reef fishes in many parts of the world” and that “humans also cause direct damage to corals by using destructive fishing techniques, improper vessel anchoring and recreational activities, and coral mining for building materials and ornamental uses” (1998: 1). A number of reasons have been given as to why people exhibit such destructive practices, poverty being particularly important. Most CZM approaches have thus related the effects of poverty to extensive human exploitation practices, a circumstance which is said to limit people’s choices in accepting environmentally sustainable livelihood systems (Mascarenhas, 1995; Shields *et al*, 1995; TCMP-2, 1998). However, as Taylor (1998) notes, people are often themselves already aware of the impact of degradation since it has direct consequences on their lives. Thus, it is inappropriate to isolate poverty as a sole cause of degradation particularly since focussing on poverty means less emphasis on the political aspects of power contestations and decision-making between various resource users over access rights to, and control over, resources.

It is of course easy to acknowledge that human activities provide one variable for understanding the management of, and change to, natural coastal resources. It is also easy to say that one should be sensitive to local people’s circumstances and behaviour patterns. But there is a danger in seeing these behaviour patterns simply as adaptations of a static local social structure. This is because the socio-political, environmental and contextual pressures experienced by local people are continuous and dynamic, creating dynamic relationships between resources and people’s needs, and between resources and the meanings people attach to them. If, as is often the case, CZM policy works from a perspective that regards local communities and cultures as static, the management problematic comes to be structured only according to “the what and the why” of people’s current activities and it consequently focuses inadequately on how

multiple processes impinge and impact upon individuals' life historical projects, and limit the contexts in which they are lived.

The kinds of processes I consider are experienced in the form of increasing external socio-political and ecological pressures on the coastal area and on local people's ways of using and understanding resources. The coastal zone of Tanzania, in particular, has experienced pressure from activities which have developed from shifts in macro-economic orientation and natural resources management policies. Often these activities initiate new resource utilisation practices at the expense of local people's livelihoods. National economic interests, such as state responses to private and external commercial interests, which are in line with economic liberalisation policies, have generated varying impacts on the coastal zone. Some have impacted negatively upon local people. For example, the construction of tourist hotels and resorts along the Tanzanian coast has, in various ways, limited local people's freedom of access to resources such as the beach. In addition, unregulated tourist-oriented activities, and the promotion of large-scale marine exploitation projects (such as industrial prawn trawling), have contributed to the depletion of coastal and marine resources which local people have been using for subsistence for many years (Holdgate, 1993; Lundin & Linden, 1993; Mkiba, 1999).

With external pressures having their effect, and with changing local political and social circumstances in the Tanzanian coastal region, a situation is developing in which new and different interpretations of ownership and access appear. One consequence of external interventions is that previously accepted common property rights regarding sea and shore resources are gradually being undermined by the imposition of new forms of property ownership, such as private property and the titling of resources (Bromley & Cernea, 1995: 5). The acquisition of title deeds, both by the state and by private individuals, as occurs with establishment of prawn farms, industries or hotels within local people's livelihood settings, are vivid examples (Fottland & Sorensen, 1996; NEMC, 1997). In addition, the activities of various interest groups with externally supported power sources (both corporations and individuals) diminish local users' access to resources, either through political manipulation or by virtue of superior extractive technologies. A further consequence, which my study also investigates, is how macro-economic policies that provide the

framework for such outside intervention impact upon patterns of production and distribution along the coast, and the extent to which such policies have influenced local meanings of natural resource management.

My concern is thus with political struggles related to the meanings that local people attach to natural resources and the ways in which, through these meanings, people define themselves. It is through these meaning-making processes that we can unveil the power relationships in issues of access to, use rights and control of natural resources.

I base my approach on an assumption that individuals construct their identities from the ways they live, work and relate to each other and to their environment. Through such social-cultural processes, people give meaning to and locate themselves in society. Individuals learn to identify themselves through interaction both with other people and with resources, developing meanings and attaching values according to the nature of their interaction with those various resources. Often resources are regarded as bearing various cultural values and social significances, all derived from the meanings attached to each such resource, how these meanings have been constructed, and how they change with time. It is through the realisation of such meanings that individuals relate to NRM processes in general. And the essence of this realisation lies in the individuals' ability to maintain their relationship to resources, which I refer to as 'the power of meaning.'

## **1.2 Some Theoretical Considerations: The Power of Meaning, Autonomy and People's Livelihoods**

Power is closely related to people's livelihoods since it influences the livelihood opportunities of people in any given social circumstance. Power determines capacities and rights of access to and use of resources. Power is thus a central issue regarding the situation of local people in natural resource management processes. My primary point of entry into the issue of power is through examining the relationships people have to natural resources and their relative capacities to use them in terms of access to and control over those resources and thus their livelihood endeavours. I therefore also

explore the processes of decision making in the use and control of natural resources through which individuals define themselves and their place in wider social and political struggles (Fairhead & Leach, 1997). My study focuses on the sites of power which give individuals the capacities and rights to act as they do as regards the use of natural resources. I also explore how individual and local power is claimed and maintained. My intention is thus to trace how, with time, power and its use weaves into and constructs relationships around natural resources and individuals.

Earlier conceptions of power in social theory linked power to domination and hegemony. These conceptions presupposed a situation whereby structured systems of control (such as of the state and its institutions) have the power over and/or authority to determine or influence social relationships (Hindess, 1996). Power as a process of domination was understood to be exercised in the form of an ability of the state to make decisions and to effect its intentions as regards the modalities under which social processes and relationships were undertaken (Kronman, 1983: 38). This kind of power, described as 'power over', was reflected in wider social and economic relations in society, and influenced people's lives and relationships at many levels, sometimes limiting the choices people had with regard to their cultural and political perspectives (Sawicki, 1991).

Several experiences in natural resource management approaches illustrate the practice of power as domination. In these experiences, state power has been used either in the form of a repressive institution, or as propagating forms of exclusion from and inequality in control of natural resources. For example, power has been used in the form of NRM policies and legal mechanisms which, as I have discussed above, have more often than not established ultimate state-backed control over resources (Chachage & Mwaipopo, 1999). This is particularly the case in developing countries where devolution of decision-making power over natural resources has been incomplete, creating considerable ambiguities over who has legal access to resources (Little & Brokensha, 1987), rendering local people the losers. Projects which established boundaries and demarcations that reserved natural resources for exclusive management have, in many places, generated contested and unequal access to resources, and often only provided legitimacy for structures such as the state to control the resources within those boundaries (Botelle & Kowalski, 1997). This is

because the whole notion of boundaries is based on the logic of exclusion and control, its implications for resource utilisation illustrated by the way resources come to be accessible or inaccessible to different groups.

Other uses of dominating power have been evident where multiple forms of resource use are practised in a dominant-subordinate relationship within the same environment. For example, many governments have allowed the use of superior resource extraction technologies in areas where small-scale, often rudimentary, methods are also common (Derman & Ferguson, 1995; Msacky, 1999). These decisions have threatened the livelihoods and sometimes caused the dispossession of many people dependent on the local resource base.

Hegemonic power on the other hand operates through strategies other than the use of overt mechanisms typical of dominating power. It is understood as that kind of power more often applied through the use of consent and persuasion (Gramsci, 1971) to articulate and proliferate throughout society's cultural and ideological belief systems and ideas about a desired end (Fontana, 1993: 140). According to Musolf (1992) this kind of power has the ability to transform and reproduce codes of life, and to reflect them back to people as versions of themselves, while simultaneously working as extensions of legitimated state power. Hegemonic power can be found in contemporary NRM practices that use 'democratic management-style discourses' in project development (James, 1999). Strategies that rhetorically call for people's empowerment or people's participation are sometimes simply strategies of hegemonic power, particularly when used to institutionalize state-local people management of resources and to win consensus among local people. Often such strategies have thus been used to conceal a skewed distribution of power over resources, ultimately at the expense of local people's rights.

Many studies of NRM approaches have exposed the nature of this skewed relationship of power between the state and local people but based on conventional understandings of power. They have contributed much to our understanding of how the processes of inequality are formulated and developed. But most have failed to explain the circumstances under which people's use and understanding of natural resources have developed. They have also often failed to explain how power has been constituted in

local discourses and practices which have enabled local people to pursue their claims to resources, even against multiple limitations. In addition, the studies have often tended to obscure the worlds and realities of the different population groups, thus creating further limitations to their claims and rights to certain resource utilisation patterns.

New insights about the question of power provide a more meaningful understanding of the relationships between people and natural resources. The new theoretical insights have demonstrated that a focus on power as closely identified with the state is analytically restrictive, since it fails to grasp the multiple ways in which power is actually deployed (Foucault, 1980). This is because power is not fixed, but circulates in an arena that Foucault terms 'a social field of struggle', and is exercised on and by individuals over others as well as between themselves (Sawicki, 1991: 25). Contemporary theories of power hence suggest that we advance from conventional notions of power as based upon the ownership and productive use of resources, or upon the control of people through historically established political formations in which legitimacy was invested and specifically located (James, 1999), to focus instead on "discursive practices and their politics and efficacy with decentered fields and their contestations, rather than with structural systems *per se*" (Biersack, 1999: 13). These understandings have increasingly shifted the location of power from the conventional institutional arena (in the state and public organisations) towards locating power in a number of settings previously regarded as non-political (such as the workplace and the home). Within these understandings, power has also been located in the person (Dirks *et al*, 1994; Foucault, 1980).

These shifts in the understanding of power have had several implications for theoretical perspectives on the relationship between people and natural resources. First is the recognition that individuals, in whatever relationships they may be, are constantly negotiating questions about power, authority and control of definitions of reality (Dirks *et al*, 1994: 5). In this view power is experienced as an encounter in our everyday lives that we also practice in personalised, face to face relations, such as those within a household and in gender relations (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Within these encounters, individuals sometimes contest and sometimes embrace various notions of power that affect their livelihoods. This understanding has in effect

politicised social and personal relationships in our everyday lives turning meaning-making into a political process.

Linked to the above, power can also be understood as productive, particularly when individuals resist dominating forms of power and are successful in modifying what had originally been restrictive or limiting forms of power relations. The experiences of the Tlingits of Southeastern Alaska (Arnold, 1998), who manipulated and contested externally-derived NRM practices to resist economic dependency and social marginalisation in the Alaskan market economy provide a good example. Yet, in other cases, the assertion of local people's rights, as propagated by social movements, has sometimes been accused of not being entirely representative of the diversity in individual needs and everyday experiences (Guijt & Shah, 1998). In such cases, it is argued, power struggles occurring at the micro-levels of society, such as in the household, or between individuals of different socio-economic backgrounds, come to be overridden, to the extent that the struggles lose their local representativeness. Recognition of local level social diversity thus calls for deeper conceptualisations of power relationships, to be able to appreciate the multiple forms in which power is exercised, negotiated and understood (Moore, 1993).

The application of a gender analysis makes it possible to engage in such diversities of local power in relation to natural resource use and management that go beyond the state versus local opposition. Most contemporary gender interpretations have influenced our understandings of power and the elaboration of hierarchical differences between and within men and women (Cole, 1991; del Valle, 1993; Herbert, 1993; Ilcan, 1996; Kabeer, 1994; Komter, 1993; Moore, 1993; Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996). They have thus contributed to our understanding of how the processes of inequality and differentiation are formulated and developed, and how gender categories are culturally constituted to construct the way in which men and women operate within distinct arenas and capacities in relation to natural resource utilisation.

This fact raises a number of issues as regards the question of power. It recognises that power relations can also be based on inequalities in access to or control of natural resources between individuals (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996). A gender analysis also makes it possible to understand how, sometimes, power differentiations between individuals

draw legitimacy from local discourses related to taboos, prohibitions or to gender responsibilities (Herbert, 1993). Feminist research has focussed on the inequalities between men and women in natural resource management. For example, time-budget studies have illustrated that, in many developing countries, women's workload in utilising resources is heavier than men's because of their multiple responsibilities concerning the livelihoods of their households (URT-c, 1993; Rugumamu, 1997). Similarly, comparative studies of household economics illustrate that women and men benefit differently from their utilisation of resources in a single environment (Dwyer & Bruce, 1988), with women being relatively disadvantaged compared to men.

The relevance of such studies of gendered power differentials notwithstanding, there have also been different theoretical positions on how the powerless should empower themselves. In gender-related cases it has been argued that the most appropriate way to women's empowerment is for them to cross over to the domains of those regarded as powerful in order to be recognised as having power. This perspective has been criticised by several theorists (Amadiume, 1987; Sawicki, 1991; Scott, 1995). Scott (1995), for example, who studied revolutionary politics and practices as regards women's liberation in certain Southern African countries, has criticised approaches that regard women's liberation to be achievable through their participation in the public sphere. She developed her argument as a critique of dependency and modernisation theories which analysed gender differences as a result of a contradiction between traditional (women's) and modern (men's) worlds. These theories, says Scott, contend that the kinds of work that have historically been performed by men are more modern and superior to work done by women (Scott, 1995: 123), and that women will therefore only be empowered if they join the 'modern' world of men. But, according to Scott (1995: 29), such understanding disregards the situations and relationships that women represent, since men and women have different ways in which they represent their subjective lives, interests and experiences. My study will illustrate the point.

Some studies illustrate that women cope with disempowerment through unvoiced, suppressed conflict and indirect manipulation (Askew, 1999), a position which other theorists view as perpetuating inequality and the subordination of women (Cheater, 1999). Yet women themselves often exemplify several capacities in dealing with

empowerment with regard to natural resource use and management that have not been recognised by conventional theorising on NRM.

For example, my findings about local people in Saadani illustrate that women themselves had their own various ways in which they chose to empower themselves, and that most of their choices were made within the socio-political and ideological frameworks they lived in. To each individual, the ability to make autonomous decisions about one's relationship with natural resources, and to act upon those decisions, was paramount. However, and as my discussion in the rest of the thesis illustrates, local women's and men's interests were not often deployed or directed to capture power in its conventional sense, but rather, to assert their autonomy in pursuing the choices they made in natural resources utilisation. For example, some women contended that they realised their autonomy when they engaged in activities in which they were able to organise independently and to control the income realised. Hence, in circumstances where they felt that their autonomy was being interfered with, women (and men) frequently resorted to individual forms of resistance. These "everyday forms of resistance" (Dirks *et al*, 1994: 5), such as the ways in which individuals strive to define their identities, their boundaries, their self-respect, and their space against an established order are important in analyses of power.

Local Saadani people also understood that even though they insisted on pursuing their individual claims to autonomy, they still existed in a social field with multiple forms of power, one source of which was the state. Saadani people's experiences regarding natural resource management had made them understand that, despite attempts to shift powers to local people through representation or attempts to grant decision-making powers to local people, the powers of the state have remained intact. This is so because, despite processes for power devolution, the state has retained its power to establish the legal environment for rights and authority with regards to NRM in Saadani. Even with representative structures, such as village resource management committees co-ordinating natural resource management at the local level, the state has remained in control of almost all the local level processes of natural resource management through its control of those committees. James' (1999) query as to whether the language of empowerment, so often used by the state, is really so benign, democratic and liberal is pertinent here, as is her suggestion that it masks the practical

realities of the political [and financial] decisions shaping local development processes and people's realities without producing changes in their access to power in NRM (1999: 14). It is imperative therefore that one does not lose sight of the state and the power it exercises locally as one attempts - as I do in this thesis - to recognise that power is not simply the domain of the state and its apparatuses.

My understanding of the situation that local Saadani people encounter in natural resource management processes thus corroborates the Foucauldian contention that we need to acknowledge the co-existence of multiple forms of power. Local people know of the existence of dominating or hegemonic kinds of power, as held by the state and its institutions. But they demand separate kinds of power, and separate practices of power from the dominating or hegemonic tendencies.

For the people of Saadani, the value of coastal resource utilisation is realised when they are able to retain their autonomy in utilising resources, retain a sense of their potential, and feel that their lives are secure. They may not necessarily, or always, want to participate in the same kind of power as the state has - not because they do not know of it - but because they try to resist becoming subsumed in external processes of power which would make them exist as meaningless beings. Despite the overwhelming pressures of external NRM processes, my data illustrate that local Saadani people have, over time, maintained their livelihoods through their own direct exploitation of the natural resources within their environment. My data also illustrate the ways in which local people have struggled to resist alienation from these resources. Local people understood that their continued survival depended on their relationships with and use of coastal and marine resources. Yet they understood that they were also incapable of averting other externally imposed ways of using natural resources within the Saadani environment. But still, they did not want to be entrapped by these other ways of using local resources. They demanded the right to achieve their livelihoods according to the means and methods derived from their own ways of understanding their environment. It is this aspect of power as autonomy which my study explores.

I regard autonomy as an important dimension of power that analysts of NRM often avoid due to its inherent contradictory understanding, particularly since it is

conventionally linked to self-determination which demands individual control over sources of livelihood (Nuttall, 1998). Yet, people increasingly claim rights and engage in a range of practices that compel us, as social analysts, to explain the same as practices of autonomy. People's quest for autonomy usually occurs when they value something in their lives and "choose to pursue it, or to critically assess its subsequent experience" (Kupfer, 1990: 1). Autonomy is the recognition of the ability to exercise particular forms of power which are not necessarily aimed at achieving the same goals as what conventional thinking (or umbrella institutions, such as the state) may want to achieve. Autonomy is having the freedom to exercise power for oneself and to serve interests not necessarily the same as dominant institutions. It thus also incorporates the function of human agency and a quest for self-determination in decision-making and practice related to natural resource management. Phrased differently, the point is that, in whatever contexts local people may find themselves, autonomy is the ability of individuals to pursue and act on their own situated interpretations of themselves, and of their desires and beliefs, whether in terms of natural resource management or other concerns.

In the following outline of the contents of my thesis I draw on these theoretical insights to reflect the way in which issues about power and autonomy are interwoven in a range of concerns regarding people and natural resource management.

### **1.3 Outline of the Thesis**

In the first two sections of the first chapter, I present the empirical context within which I situate my study of local people's utilisation and management of coastal resources in Tanzania, and the implications of externally-driven NRM approaches for local people's lives. I illustrate how government designed NRM approaches have failed to acknowledge how local people perceive natural resources and the environment around them and how they have thus failed to create meaningful people-sensitive NRM policies. The introductory context is followed by a theoretical discussion about the articulation of power and meaning in the use and management of natural resources. My theoretical framework considers new approaches to power which acknowledge that local people's power is different from state power. Against

this background, I go on to present the methodological considerations and the variety of techniques employed to explore the extent to which NRM approaches and their implementation have influenced the livelihood choices and options of local people in Saadani.

The second and third chapters together present the background context of Saadani village and its people. In Chapter Two, through exploring the general evolution and political history of Saadani village, I discuss the changing nature of natural resource use from the pre-colonial period, through the period of European colonialism and post-Independence after 1961. The various NRM strategies in all of these historical phases have each had implications for patterns of resource use in the contemporary period. In Chapter Three I illustrate how historical experiences have evolved to create a range of understandings and practices regarding the use of resource utilisation. I also discuss the implications of environmental factors and the physical infrastructure on people's relationships with natural resources.

Chapter Four relates these histories and multiple experiences to the development of government-driven NRM approaches and their impact on people's ways of managing natural resources. I explore how such policies, which form the basis of government intervention in local settings, have sometimes removed or restored the legal means through which local communities are able to defend their access to resources, and thus their livelihoods. I also demonstrate how in those situations where local people felt that they were losing the means to defend their resources legally, they designed ways through which they could outwit the state by using strategies of manipulation or resistance.

Together with the fourth chapter, the fifth and sixth chapters reflect my major concern in this thesis, namely an understanding of power as being located in settings which have previously been regarded as non-political, such as in the household and in the individual. These chapters thus discuss the sites of people's power as regards access to and control of utilization and management patterns of natural resources in Saadani.

Chapter Five begins by illustrating the processes that have shaped local people's perceptions and claims to natural resources. I explore the basis on which such

perceptions have developed, and examine how people interact with coastal resources, how they utilize resources, and why they use such resources as they do. I also illustrate how people find expression in symbolic forms such as phrases and rituals, and how these symbols provide meanings for the individual's interaction with nature. The chapter also examines the ways in which people value resources, how resources are prioritized, why and how these values change within broader political and economic changes, and how the people have responded to such changes.

Chapter Six illustrates several notions of power deriving from women's interaction with coastal space and resources. I address the dynamic ways in which gender and forms of power converge and are articulated in local logics regarding the use of coastal resources. I assume here that power shapes the patterning of resource utilisation and management through the disposition of rights over opportunities, control and access to resources between men and women. I thus demonstrate how women through individual perceptions achieve power as they understand it through their interaction with natural resources. I also illustrate how women believe that their participation in coastal resources utilisation can be socially negotiated.

I conclude the thesis in Chapter Seven by discussing the power of meaning as understood by local Saadani people themselves and derived from their ability to maintain their relationships with natural resources in their environment. I discuss how this power corresponds to what local people aim at with regard to natural resources management. The thesis then ends with a discussion on whether meaningful NRM processes can be adopted to accommodate local people's interests and claims to power.

In the rest of this first chapter, I discuss the methodological considerations and the background context within which coastal and marine management approaches are being practised in Tanzania.

#### 1.4 Methodology: Exploring Natural Resource Management in Saadani Village<sup>8</sup>

The main methodological thrust of my study has been to explore the implications of NRM policy for the livelihoods of individuals in the Tanzanian coastal village of Saadani. I looked into the ways these policies and their implementation have influenced the livelihood choices and options of Saadani people. My analytical project was to explore the extent to which ideas and practices of power, held and exercised by local people, were played out within the whole process of natural resource management.

Klee's (1980) description of systems of natural resource management as "both inadvertent and intentional conservation practices" (1980: 3) informed my considerations of the practice of natural resource management in Saadani. According to Klee (1980), natural resource management includes local practices of prohibitions, seasons and resource tenure systems which, "whether inspired by conservation or not, had and still have some effect on the availability and exploitation of local resources" (Klee, 1980: 3). Since my study was primarily designed to understand local people's ways of using natural resources, I adopted a description of natural resource management which incorporated the lived experiences of the people of Saadani and the diverse ways in which they used natural resources. Because local patterns of resource use are complex, I focussed on the processes and factors which influenced such uses in cultural, spatial and temporal configurations. The analytical method also relates what is done at the macro-level to what is actually happening at the micro-level, in this case in Saadani village. I regard this type of analysis as imperative for gaining insight into the inner workings of NRM to be able to determine whether even apparently sound NRM policies address local people's situations.

I generally understand resources to refer to material and non-material resources over which individuals have certain rights of access or control, either as members of a

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<sup>8</sup> According to Section 3 of the Tanzanian Local Government Act of 1984, a village is the lowest administrative unit under the Tanzanian local government structure. This act provides for villages to be registered and recently, encouraged to have land ownership titles for the area under their jurisdiction.

household or as members of larger social units. Such resources may include trees, fish, money, houses, boats, clothes, knowledge and information. These 'things' become resources only when people appropriate them for their own uses (Ingold, 1987) and find them essential to their lives (Klee, 1980). The term 'natural resources' in my study refers to the naturally occurring materials in the biophysical environment which individuals extract and utilise for their livelihoods (Rees, 1985). Often these resources bear diverse cultural values and social significances, reflecting the social and cultural meanings attached to each such resource, the ways in which different meanings are constructed and reconstructed, and how they change over time. I thus explored these meaning-making processes as people interact with natural resources, with the assumption that it would be possible to understand why people used such resources as they did. I took into consideration the interaction between agency and structural determination since they are closely related to the abilities an individual has in utilising natural resources. By focussing on agency, my study emphasised the relevance of examining the intentional subject in the social and cultural process of resource management. The study also noted that, although people made their own choices and sometimes acted on those choices when using resources, they were also related to each other and with the wider society by complex and specific systems, institutions, organisations, production and consumption patterns, eco-systems and other relationships, all of which influenced patterns of resource use. Hence, I explored the nature of interactions which arose from such multiple relationships to resources.

As the focus of my study was on the coastal environment, I addressed coastal and marine resources occurring within the Saadani coastal environment which people in the coastal village of Saadani appropriated and depended upon for their livelihoods. These resources included the sea and marine resources, the land on the coastal strip and the beach, coastal and mangrove forests, and wildlife. I also considered how people managed certain processed resources, such as salt, which were of significance to people's livelihoods and natural resource management processes. I should explain that I also included wildlife management in Saadani because, for one to grasp in holistic terms the reality of the life situations of people in Saadani, one cannot exclude the implications of the establishment of the Saadani Game Reserve on local people.

I thus set out to study and explore the following issues: -

- (a) The relationships between people and production and distribution processes in respect of coastal resources in a coastal community in Tanzania;
- (b) How gender roles constitute production and distribution processes and how gender roles are recursively constituted by those processes;
- (c) The historical processes whereby the cultural determinants of production, and of household activities and roles have been constructed over time;
- (d) The various categories of people in natural resource utilisation and their different impacts on resource utilisation practices;
- (e) Natural Resource Management (NRM) policies and approaches more generally occurring in Tanzania, which to a great extent provided the framework for natural resource utilisation processes in Saadani.

#### **1.4.1 Choice of Saadani Village - The Study Area**

The above objectives led me to choose Saadani village after a lengthy survey of settlements along Bagamoyo district's coastline in which I made general assessments of the social, political and economic circumstances regarding the use of coastal and marine resources. I visited and made an appraisal of Kondo, Mlingotini and Kaole settlements which are to the south of Bagamoyo town. I then landed at Saadani which is the only settlement categorised as a village north of Bagamoyo town.<sup>9</sup> All settlements satisfied the initial criterion I was looking for, namely, a population predominantly reliant on coastal production systems for a livelihood. Yet Saadani stood out for its unique experiences as regards the politics of access to and use of natural resources, perhaps as a result of its rare natural biophysical endowments. The village is endowed with a rich natural resource base and its residents enjoy proximity to a variety of marine and terrestrial resources which include a rich coastal and mangrove forest, wildlife, fisheries and the beach. Its proximity to the lucrative

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<sup>9</sup> The Acting Principal of Mbegani Fisheries Development Centre at Bagamoyo (Sept. 1997) advised me on the visit, after suggesting that apart from a few people settled around salt works, it was only at Saadani where one finds a village in northern part of the Bagamoyo district coastline.

fishing grounds north-east of Dar es Salaam accounts for Saadani's prominence in the fishing industry.

Moreover, Saadani village has also experienced a range of outside intervention in the management of local natural resources which have had significant implications for local people's livelihoods. Arab and Shirazi settlers and later European colonial administrators introduced the earliest forms of intervention. Other externally induced interventions have been exemplified by the current co-existence of different kinds of utilization of natural resources. The multiple processes initiated by the government include the establishment of the Saadani Game Reserve (SGR), the institution of a Mangrove Management Programme, and the resource exploitation methods of commercial prawn trawlers. These various processes, including the production activities of the people themselves, have led to different kinds and modalities of natural resource management which, in many ways, have impinged upon local people's livelihoods. In this respect, the combination of local people's opportunities and limitations in relating to natural resources for their livelihoods, the social history of Saadani village, and local people's experiences of contact with different peoples and systems of governance regarding the utilization and management of natural resources, all related very well to my study objectives.

#### **1.4.2 Fieldwork in Saadani**

I commenced fieldwork with a three-month preliminary research period during which I conducted a population and household census of the village. I then undertook a household social and economic survey of ten percent of the total household population in Saadani central village and Uvinje hamlet, the coastal hamlets of Saadani village, which have shared a similar pattern of historical development. The survey aimed to grasp the average household sizes and gender distribution, household resources, employment and occupations by gender and age, average incomes (including subsistence incomes), and educational levels. The household survey also enabled me to understand the multiple production activities of the households and get a sense of the local economic strata from the villagers' own categorisation. I was also able to map out the general situation in the village as regards natural resource

utilisation. After this preliminary survey, I selected 10 households as representative of my study population and concentrated on the activities and life situations of their individual members (women and men) of different ages and the socio-economic status of those households. The households and respondents were selected using purposive sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: 78) in order to reflect the heterogeneity of the population in social and economic terms (gender, age, wealth status, household composition and locality) and in their diverse relationships with natural resources.

My study population included individual women and men. I took into account marital status in order to be able to analyse gender-related aspects without simplistic biases and stereotypes of a kind propagated by some earlier studies on gender relations (Moore, 1993). Therefore, the sample included married men and women of varying ages and social economic status, single men and women, and *de-facto* female household heads (women whose husbands were away).

In my analyses of households, I have borrowed from Torry's (1983) construct of the Household Organisational Environment System (HOES) in which he considers the household as a set of relationships and interactions in an institutional patterning (1983). According to Torry, the household does not include the physical environment, only what human beings have created to deal with that environment. He also acknowledges that each individual household responds differently to natural resource utilisation and management processes, depending on composition, socio-economic status and knowledge. I thus focussed on individual dispositions of power and property within the selected households, an issue that is directly relevant to individual participation in the production of household sustenance.

I also explored the nature of the division of labour, trying to understand the processes that had established or maintained the division of labour in a household, and in the community in general. Since I began by identifying individual status based on socio-economic, marital, and age aspects, I then considered how these statuses conditioned the individual's choices of livelihood strategies.

My field work was conducted as an ethnography where I observed and engaged in the daily lives of local people (Marcus & Fischer, 1986: 18). My experiences of doing lengthy ethnographic research in Saadani village had both its enlightening and sometimes quite discouraging moments. The El Nino rains of 1997-98 hindered my study severely since, for several days during that period, the Mvave River, burst its banks and cut me off completely from many of the villagers. The El Nino rains also disrupted local fishing and farming activities between November 1997 and April 1998. A few visiting fishermen who one day braved the rain and camped along the beach a short distance from the River Mvave, were woken up one night by flood waters and had to climb nearby trees to save their lives. The remnants of an old German fort and the fish market which had been built near the banks of river Mvave also suffered considerable damage from the rains.

I spent about 18 months in the village, from October 1997 to March 1999, with brief periods away. Between rainy days and wading through the river, assisted by my two assistants, I stayed and sometimes spent days with my sample households. I collected both qualitative and quantitative data, but with primary emphasis on the former. I employed various research techniques to complement one another, a strategy which Brewer & Hunter (1989) have termed the multimethod research approach, often described as triangulation. This strategy was necessary in view of the variety of information I needed in order to understand Saadani people's livelihood systems. In applying the multimethod approach, I used informal discussions, observations and interviews in order to obtain a range of data and to be able to crosscheck the information I obtained. I was also assisted by two local collaborators who introduced me to a wide range of issues and experiences that I subsequently followed up. They helped me with the trying logistics of moving from one hamlet to the other. With them, I came to experience and appreciate the situations of people in such remote areas of Tanzania and some of the circumstances that compel them to strategize their lives in terms of the limitations and opportunities available.

Participant observation enabled me to interact closely with the villagers, gain their acceptance and confidence, and establish rapport with them. Being a member of Tanzania's so-called 'educated category', (*msomi*), my presence was regarded initially by several people with mixed feelings particularly when someone spread the rumour

that I was a government spy, a rumour I let pass until it was established that I was only a 'msomi'. I also found that my being a woman did not prevent some men from discussing openly the various ways in which they used resources. Yet I sometimes felt that people did not always openly disclose issues regarding actual incomes or major expenditures, particularly if the person regarded the issues as personal. For example, I found that women felt more at ease talking of the bride-wealth for a daughter or the money paid for a pair of wrapping clothes (*khanga*) because, to many, it was socially prestigious, than to discuss the actual profits they obtained from their multiple income-generating activities. In some cases this lack of disclosure was due to reluctance, while in other cases the incomes realised or costs incurred were so small and erratic that respondents could not account for every detail. In such instances, I settled for generalised figures.

My study enabled me to observe directly events, behaviour and practices in their local settings, and to observe how local people, visiting fishermen and other people interacted and related with each other and with resources. I also experienced the limitations and opportunities in access to resources that individuals experience with regard to social boundaries such as age, class and gender.

I also conducted a series of interviews and informal discussions with targeted individuals to complement my observations and informal talks with villagers. Formal discussions were conducted with Government officials at the village, at Bagamoyo district and Kibaha regional offices, and with Officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) in Dar es Salaam. Others were conducted with officials of the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC), and the Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP), and with business people and individuals involved in one way or another with developments regarding NRM in the Saadani environment. From such people I sought information on policy issues and practices regarding environmental management in the country. I also obtained descriptions of the legal and political institutions concerned with resource management along the Tanzanian coast, and their provisions in terms of policy decisions and plans. I also sought information regarding gender equity and women's status in natural resource management in Tanzania.

I consulted extensive primary literature on the topic. The Tanzania Government Archives proved valuable for its records and information on the history of Saadani since European colonial times. Most of the information I obtained there corroborated oral historical accounts from local people. Hence, despite the on-going debates about the accuracy of oral history in the social sciences, I found that the narratives of the few old local folk were in fact very informative. Koponen (1988) mentions that anthropologists have often had to rely on 'older men or women' as informants whose recollection of the past may be a "reified version ... idealising a circumscribed power and influence which they had lost, thus buttressing their own position against juniors, (and hence) conflating social norms with social practices" (1988: 31-32). Yet local people's narratives and memories of events and names offered me valuable leads about Saadani's history and the evolution of natural resource management in the village. But, as Koponen (1988) says, I also could feel how the older generation expressed, with nostalgia perhaps, how their own lives, feelings and struggles in relation to resource use along the coast have been affected by NRM processes over time.

In general, local people were very willing to talk about the implications of NRM processes and confident to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various natural resource management processes implemented in their locality. People discussed with me various aspects of their knowledge, attitudes and feelings about those processes and their impacts on coastal resources. We also discussed the practices and rules regarding people's behaviour, interaction and decision making as regards coastal resources. However, it took me some time to grasp the depth of their words and to understand that the people did not simply hate intervention in resource use by a foreign participant. Rather, they objected to the manner in which such interventions were conducted and their implications for people's livelihoods. People understood that even small rural communities such as Saadani village could not operate as adaptive isolates. Their whole history and interaction with other people has proven that to them. Thus, although local people had their own perceptions of what is appropriate, and sometimes acted on them when using natural resources, their various perceptions are related to each other and to the wider society by complex and specific systems. These include institutions such as market networks, state directed policy, organizations (some local), production and consumption patterns, eco-systems and

other specific relationships, all of which influence patterns of natural resource use. Hence, I also explored the nature of interactions which arose from people's multiple relationships to natural resources, and the implications of these relationships for the people of Saadani.

Many local people admitted to having nurtured some of the externally imposed intervention processes, consented to others and collaborated with yet others, but within certain parameters. Local people's main concern was to be able to pursue and maintain their livelihood generating activities without being compelled to succumb to external ways of using resources. If they felt they could retain a sense of their own autonomy by collaborating with or consenting to outside interventions, they did so. Otherwise they chose to resist.

With this understanding in mind, I pursued my interest in describing a conception of power based on local people's reality, and how it informed their behaviour and relationships with natural resources. I thus probed the following issues: - how do local people survive; how do individuals acquire their power, and how do they, on acquiring this power, apply and manipulate it within natural resource utilisation and management processes. I also aimed to establish how this power informs their relationships with other people.

In order to set the background for a discussion of local Saadani people's patterns of resource utilisation, and their response to NRM policy, I begin by presenting an overview of NRM processes in the coastal and marine environment of Tanzania mainland, and the issues that arise as regards people's livelihoods.

### **1.5 Overview of Coastal and Marine Resource Management on the Tanzanian Mainland**

The Tanzanian coastal zone is an important social, economic and ecological area involving a distinct set of interactions between the natural environment and the people who depend on it (Semesi and Ngoile, 1995; TCMP-2, 1998). Tanzania's mainland coastline stretches 800 kilometres along the western shores of the Indian

Ocean.<sup>10</sup> It is part of what is widely known as the Swahili coast of East Africa which runs from Mogadishu, Somalia in the north, southwards to Mozambique (Middleton, 1992). It is home to about 8 million people, the largest concentrations in the urban centres of Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi and Mtwara. Most people live in small coastal villages. This coastal strip also encompasses a diversity of ecosystems, including sandy beaches, rocky out-crops, coral reefs, sea grass beds and extensive mangrove areas (Howell & Semesi, 1999).

Local communities use and manage of coastal natural resources along this coastline along with NGO-directed initiatives, private individuals and government institutions, sometimes separately and sometimes in concert. All have evolved through time. The management systems have been differently influenced by the historical and commercial connections developing from the Indian Ocean trade between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD (Mpangala, 1992), the European colonial administration, and now the varying resource exploitation strategies of the Tanzanian government.

Coastal resources have been central in providing for the subsistence and livelihoods of many households. Most coastal people depend heavily on artisanal fishing, gleaning and farming as primary sources of food and income, especially outside the Dar es Salaam urban center (TCMP-2, 1998). Coastal lowland forests and mangrove forests have supplied foods such as edible fruits, plants and leaves, traditional medicines, fuel wood and construction materials (Mwaipopo & Ngazy, 1998, Chachage, 1996; Semesi *et al*, 1990). Mangrove areas in particular have provided valuable nursery grounds for prawns and fish (Mainoya *et al*, 1983; UNEP, 1989). Small-scale

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<sup>10</sup> According to a TCMP (1998) report, Tanzania does not have a legal definition of its coastal zone. The country's whole coastal zone includes the six mainland coastal districts of Tanzania and the Islands of Unguja, Pemba and Mafia and the description therefore is implied "to cover the 800km coast line. On the terrestrial (dry) side it extends from the high water mark to the coastal ridge bordering coastal plains, and, depending on the issues being addressed, it may include catchment areas of rivers entering the Indian Ocean. On the marine (wet) side it extends from the high water mark to the 200m limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone as defined by the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Act of 1989" (1998: 20). Another description states that "the coastal zone is defined as the terrestrial areas that have direct impact on the marine environment, as well as the ocean up to 200 nautical miles of the EEZ" (Kamukala 1997: 40).

quarrying, for products such as sand and stone (Jambiya *et al*, 1997), lime for chalk making (TCMP-2, 1998), and small-scale industrial salt production (Rais, 1999) have all provided alternative incomes and, to some, their sole means of livelihood. The beach (shoreline) has been accessible as a passage for fishermen, for boat construction and for recreation. Women's small-scale income generation projects have also been conducted along the beach. They include burying coconut husks to make rope, seaweed farming and selling food to fishers and fried fish to other consumers (Mwaipopo-Ako, 1995; Shechambo *et al*, 1996). The nature of usage varies across different communities, but many people have all depended on these shared natural resources.

Economic infrastructural developments such as ports, beachfront hotels and industry are characteristic of the urban centres. Yet much of the coastline remains relatively undeveloped with only small-scale production enterprises and subsistence activities. Yet these are major zones of resource exploitation and have been targeted to achieve sustainable resource management programmes. Major large-scale/industrial resource use developments in these areas, a few of which provide employment for local people, include fish and prawn trawling, mariculture, salt production industries in Bagamoyo district and the establishment of natural gas production enterprises in Mnazi Bay, Mtwara and at Songosongo Island in Lindi regions' rural coastlines.

There is at present mounting pressure in Tanzania to reverse what is currently regarded as an increasing rate of decline of the coastal and marine resource base. Some reasons given for this decline include the production activities of large-scale exploitation practices, unplanned coastal development, destructive local fishing methods, uncontrolled harvesting of mangroves and disposal of waste into the ocean (Kashaija, 1998). The emphasis placed on human beings is, however, significant. It is noted that, as the coastal population continues to increase, destructive and unsustainable resource exploitation practices place increasing pressures on the resource base. Another study noted that, "uncontrolled multiplication of activities in the coastal zone [have inevitably led] to environmental degradation and sometimes social conflict" (Mwandosya *et al*, 1997). For example, a now long-standing conflict among the fishers of the seven settlements (Shehia) of Chwaka Bay, on the east coast of Zanzibar, is said to have developed after disagreements about the use of beach seines by some

people.<sup>11</sup> Beach seines, whose use - like gill nets - requires manual trawling, are claimed to have caused considerable destruction to the marine environment, to the detriment of all users around the Bay. In addition, people in some settlements around the Bay have claimed that beach seines have damaged several of their fish fences and traps, in addition to compelling fishers using fishing lines to make space for manual trawling, activities which have inconvenienced some people (Menai, 2000).<sup>12</sup> The government of Zanzibar is currently (2000) working to resolve this conflict which, in 1999, had led to the death of one person and the injury of several others.

Modernisation and new ways of exploitation have also generated conflicts over usufruct rights (NEMC, 1997). Struggles over resource use are thus frequent and people take advantage of once subtle conflicts about the use of resources to create platforms for local political contestations.

Attempts to regulate coastal and marine resource use through top-down strategies, policy and legislation use have long been evident in mainland Tanzania (Kamukala, 1997). Efforts to control beach erosion along Msasani beach in Dar es Salaam exemplify.<sup>13</sup> These efforts involved short and long-term beach conservation strategies to prevent beach erosion by several tourist establishments and beach hotels. In 1992, the Town and Country Planning (Public Beaches Planning Area) Order, retrospectively made operative with effect from 24th November 1989, allocated that only 60 metres should be left undeveloped for beach area conservation. This provision was a reduction from an earlier proposal of 200 metres. To some observers, the instituted provision defeated the concept of sustainable beach management.<sup>14</sup> One reason given by these observers was that, given the current rate of uncontrolled construction along the littoral, especially around urban centres such as Dar es Salaam,

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<sup>11</sup> The techniques that local people of Chwaka use include fishing lines and hooks (*mishipi*), fish traps (*madema*), fish fences (*uzio*), gill nets (*nyavu za kukokota*) and beach seines (*jarife*) (Menai 2000).

<sup>12</sup> I got this information from Officials of Menai Bay Marine Conservation Area, Zanzibar, who are part of the conflict resolution team. This team noted that lack of other more efficient equipment, and the desire to make quick money were among the reasons why fishers in three of the settlements used beach seines, which had the ability to catch a large number of fish within a short time but were prohibited.

<sup>13</sup> Pers. communication with NEMC officials, March 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 6 of the Tanzanian Town and Country Planning (Public beaches Planning Area) Order states that "Where the planning scheme is prepared for a planning area which fronts the ocean a strip of land of width not less than 60 metres from the high water mark shall be reserved exclusively for conservation and for strictly water related human activities" (Government Notice No. 76 of 22/5/92).

and the nature of wave movements, the coastal area would soon be seriously degraded.<sup>15</sup>

Another strategy for coastal management was the institution of a Tanzanian Mangrove Management Plan in 1991 (Semesi, 1991) which established a coherent management framework and direct support for the conservation of mangroves throughout Tanzania. The recent processing of an action strategy for mariculture management (TCMP-4, 1999) is yet another and comes in the wake of conflict since 1996, involving the government, the people of Rufiji area in south Bagamoyo and a private investor who was planning to establish a prawn mariculture project around the Rufiji area (Chachage, 1996; Fottland & Sorensen, 1996). According to a government official, this project was suspended due to a court case filed by the Rufiji people against its 1997 government approval.<sup>16</sup> Although the project's development is beyond the scope of my study, I mention it here to illustrate how conflicts between people and state-introduced NRM approaches are common, and have sometimes been starting points for major debates about NRM approaches in the country as a whole.

Global concerns about the reportedly alarming rates of coastal degradation world-wide were also partly responsible for the relatively 'new' wave of coastal environmentalism in Tanzania which led to adoption in the early 1990s of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach (Lundin & Linden, 1995). Only recently, the World Bank expressed concern by stating that global action will be necessary to protect marine resources and the environment which sustains them owing to the damaging rate of unsustainable harvesting of these resources (WB, 1998). Yet a call made by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Agenda 21 of UNCED) in 1992 reflected the prevailing policy principle of ICZM that human rights should go hand in hand with conservationist principles. A UN report also stated that the goal of coastal management is "to improve the quality of life of human

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<sup>15</sup> While ministry officials argued that the 60m coastal strip was a manageable area and putting it into effect as an exclusive area for beach conservation would not involve the displacement of many local people, some other people wondered whether its hidden agenda was to safeguard the property of the rich, which were extensively erected along the beach areas.

<sup>16</sup> According to this official the government has been by June 2000 unable to give a go-ahead for the development of the project until the court case is completed. Yet, the government had appointed a National Task force to ensure that the developer follows all of its initially laid regulations.

communities which depend on coastal resources while maintaining the biological diversity and productivity of coastal eco-systems” (TCMP-1, 1998: 9).

The Tanzanian government has also ratified the Nairobi Convention on the Protection and Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the East African region (TCMP-3, 1998). Other consequent strategies include conducting baseline surveys of the bio-diversity (Mwandosya *et al*, 1997), and of the social and economic situations along the coast (TCMP-2, 1998).

The government has also confronted the prevailing lack of co-ordination between the numerous institutions responsible for natural resource management in mainland Tanzania (Linden & Lundin, 1993; Kamukala, 1997). Such institutions include the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT); the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD); the Department of Environment, which is in the Vice-Presidents Office, the Land Commission, and the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC). Each such institution had placed emphasis on its own sector and each, to some extent, has undermined concerted management efforts for sustainable utilisation of resources.

The Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP) was thus officially initiated in 1998 as a joint initiative between the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the University of Rhode Island’s Coastal Resources Centre (URI/CRC). It is part of USAID’s Strategic Objective Two (SO2) to establish the foundation for adoption of environmentally sustainable natural resource management of the coastal zone (NEMC/USAID, 1997). The TCMP’s major objective is to enable the government to establish a national ICZM policy and programme that will ensure sustainable development of coastal and marine resources. There are currently (1999) six designated Coastal and Marine Protected Areas which promote particular administrative structures in site specific areas along the Tanzanian mainland coast. These programmes try to practice ICZM principles and have had considerable success in addressing coastal management issues. But all have had to rely heavily on

external donor support, which questions their long-term sustainability.<sup>17</sup> Local communities in designated areas have been identified as target groups to benefit from management strategies and also as primary players in the management processes of their areas. Through village representatives, local people are supposed to be incorporated in participatory processes for planning and decision making of development strategies and management capacity building.

It is also important to note, however, that the ideas for the devolution of decision-making powers in natural resource management to local level administrations is not a recent phenomenon in Tanzania. It has been in existence since the 1970s, as provided for by the Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act (1975) and subsequent other development projects, as I will explain in Chapter Two. And it falls in line with the recent national trend of restructuring and shifting decision-making authority to local administrations, as the government attempts to reduce its role in NRM. Yet, in effect, the devolution of decision making to village level has merely occurred mostly on paper because of continuing interference by higher authorities even in what are essentially village-based issues. For example, powers to establish and enforce local resource management by-laws, ostensibly devolved to these village administrations, have often been overridden by district or central government authorities (Ngware & Haule, 1993). In addition many local (district) administrations lack the institutional structural capacity to adequately carry out this function (TCMP-2, 1998). These weaknesses have compelled most coastal zone management programmes to rely on foreign institutional and technical support to facilitate a framework within which the ethos of sustainable management can be instilled and possibly maintained.

However, foreign reliance creates dependence. And, although many projects in Tanzania have demonstrated that local people's interests may be more easily accommodated by foreign institutions, this normally lasts only during the duration of the programme, during which time foreign support can guarantee monitoring capacity.

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<sup>17</sup> The Tanzania mainland coastal and marine protected areas include The Tanga Coastal Management Programme which is supported by Irish Aid; Kunduchi Integrated Coastal Area Management Programme (KICAMP) supported by Sida-SAREC; Mafia Island Marine Project (MIMP), funded by the WWF; and The Rural Integrated Programme Support in Mtwara region which has received support from the government of Finland for more than 10 years up to 1999.

Moreover, many programmes still apply considerable 'policing' to combat what is regarded as unsustainable human production activities, which might not have been necessary had full total commitment to sustainable resource use been reached by all resource users and beneficiaries during implementation of the programmes. One day in 1998 during my fieldwork, fishers operating the waters adjacent to Buyuni Kitopeni settlement, north of Saadani village, were arbitrarily whipped by coastal management enforcement officials for using 380mm (1.5 inches) mesh fish nets. The local fishers wondered why they should be whipped while prawn trawlers that comb the sea deep down and disturb the marine environment, should be left to operate as usual.<sup>18</sup> I believe a government apology for using such tough measures to enforce a ban on the use of destructive fishing techniques which appeared in a local newspaper in 1999, may have been in response to local fishers' complaints (Sembony, 1999).

A number of coastal villages including Saadani between 1997 and 1999 were still not part of an integrated resource management programme, and have thus had not benefited from CZM concerted efforts, although central and district government NRM officers do conduct periodic visits to patrol or to collect resource exploitation license fees, effectively imposing top-down controls.

In addition, one has to understand that contemporary coastal and marine management policies are being introduced within the context of global neo-liberal economic determinism as regards natural resource management. The World Bank (1998), under its Marine Market Transformation Initiative (MMTI) for example, intends to promote market-oriented resource exploitation alternatives in order to reduce pressure on already degraded environments. The strategies advocated by the World Bank include eco-tourism, offshore marine fisheries, mariculture and trade in live coral reef fish and ornamentals. The World Bank further proposes that such strategies should follow the institution of regulatory and policy frameworks. It has also stressed the need for partnerships among various levels of institutions, including the government, NGOs, the private sector, bilateral organisations, local stakeholders and others (WB, 1998). According to the Bank, local stakeholders need to have an organisational structure if they are to benefit from local resource exploitation. My understanding of the focus of

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<sup>18</sup> I was in Saadani during the incident and noted that it affected local Saadani people as they are closely related to the people at Buyuni Kitopeni.

the Tanzanian Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP) is that it too aims to encourage market-oriented opportunities to enable local people to engage in activities such as eco-tourism and mariculture. It is thus not surprising that it was instrumental in the establishment of a mariculture management action strategy.

The government of Tanzania is also continuing to make economic structural changes that promote free trade, embrace an open market system and reduce government involvement in productive activities (URT-d, 1993). These economic adjustments, ostensibly designed to promote economic growth, place increasing pressure on natural resources and the environment through market-oriented developments (URT-e, 1994; Reed, 1995; Howell & Semesi, 1999). The National Environmental Policy (1997) and related sectoral policies for NRM (Bee-keeping 1997; Forestry 1997; Fisheries 1998; Tourism 1997; & Wildlife 1998) have all responded to the general objectives of the national macro-economic framework. Simultaneously, the policies make a commitment to improve people's welfare, especially through poverty alleviation, in the processes of developing sustainable management systems for natural resources through the market-oriented approach. The implications of a market-oriented approach such as this have been summarised by Little & Brokensha (1987) who said

First, increased commercialisation attracts outside entrepreneurs who are likely to have a different set of interests and, in general, may be less concerned with resource conservation than the local community. Second, these individuals are often from groups with powerful linkages to the state and may, in some cases, be supported by state enforced legislation. Thus, even where local regulations of natural resources exist, these outsiders are able to operate outside indigenous controls and, when necessary, invoke their ties to more powerful groups. Finally, where the market value of the resource increases, there are likely to be pressures from both outside interests and local elite for the privatisation of lands and other resources (1987: 195).

All these factors bear in different ways on local people. Most important is the challenge they pose to local people's capacities to maintain their rights of access to natural resources. Yet, since the Tanzanian government is convinced that resources to improve the people's welfare will accrue from economic expansion, it plans to continue with neo-liberal economic policy and institutional reforms that aim to revitalize the economy by facilitating market based entrepreneurial expansion (URT-

e, 1994; URT-f, 1996). This is despite the experience of conflicts arising from attempts to balance macro-economic agendas and local people's livelihoods.

As mentioned earlier, it is appropriate for concerns with coastal and marine degradation to be followed by legislation and policy. But it is dangerous to assume that such measures will automatically be accepted or understood by local people. It is also necessary to ensure that such legislation is not simply instituted to facilitate the redesignation of what was previously regarded as common property into private property. In addition, unlike terrestrially based resources such as land, where titling and recognition of community or traditional tenure rights have been relatively easy to recognise, experiences in Tanzania illustrate that the territorialisation of sea areas, even if only for purposes of demarcation, has sometimes proven extremely complicated to control. Conflicts generated by competition and the use of new technologies are becoming ever more evident between different categories of the population (Mwaipopo & Ngazy, 1998), especially between local people and large organisations such as those that operate prawn trawlers (Msacky, 1998). In the context of sustainable and modern NRMs, such changes to patterns of utilisation of resources also need to be considered with regard to the changing contexts they provide for local people.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce the broad empirical and analytical concerns related to current coastal and marine resource management especially in Tanzania, and local people's situation as regards NRM approaches. The overall scenario that emerges indicates that the approaches and practices introduced within current NRM policies expose underlying power contestations between the various individuals and institutions involved in coastal and marine resource utilisation and management. The implications bear negatively on local people, as I illustrate in the following chapters. A common implication is the steady decline in local people's autonomy to utilise and manage natural resources. Yet, NRM practitioners still fail to adequately address this situation, due to their inability to recognise local people's understanding of natural resources.

As I have indicated in this chapter, the ultimate objective of my study is to explain the way in which local people give meaning to natural resources. I believe that, through such understanding, NRM approaches can meaningfully address local people's situations. The thrust of my thesis is to develop an argument that local people have their own ways of understanding natural resources, and diverse ways in which they exercise power through this understanding. I also argue that people's understanding is dynamic and constantly evolving to meet the demands of continuous changes in the social, economic and political environments. I draw on these theoretical insights to discuss the workings of power. My findings enable me to conclude that power entails a quest for autonomy in dealing with natural resource utilisation and management that local people demand to maintain. Moreover, local people recognise that they are socially differentiated and thus individual conceptualisations and meanings of natural resources also influence individual claims to natural resources. As I illustrate in Chapters Three, Five and Six, these social and culturally based differences are not always taken as givens, but are incorporated into the dynamic social environment to meet individual needs and, in the process, maintain individual and also common claims to power.

Before I examine these issues, I use the following chapter to discuss the evolution of my study village and the background history of natural resource management experiences in the area for the purposes of grounding my analysis of NRM issues.

## CHAPTER TWO: Saadani: The Political and Historical Development of the Village

*"Saadani, wacha waseme"<sup>1</sup>*

### 2.1 Introduction

Ortner's suggestion that "society is a system, that the system is powerfully constraining, and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction" (1994: 403), gives rise to two presuppositions. The first is that human agency - human intention and action - plays a significant part in the production and reproduction of society, irrespective of the constraining elements of the system within which the people are operating. The second is that human agency manifests itself in the continuous construction and reconstruction of the rules and regulations that make up society. Societal dynamics thus cannot be divorced from human agency.

The assumption that people construct and reconstruct their society suggests a useful approach for a historical study of people in a small village such as Saadani. It can also be used to analyse processes of micro-level dynamics of power and autonomy in space and time. Yet it places too much emphasis on human agency and the role of the person, and undervalues the workings of continuous and largely externally driven processes. This is because the multiple experiences and encounters that people in certain circumstances have had to face, constrain the ways in which their lives can be understood. These experiences also form the framework within which particular relations of power and domination emerge and, to a great extent, these relations, in turn, continuously influence local patterns of natural resource management (Kjekshus, 1989).

In this chapter, I adopt an approach that uses historical events to demonstrate how cultures of production and consumption have been created and evolved, within the

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<sup>1</sup> *Saadani Wacha Waseme* (lit: Saadani, let them say) is a phrase coined by local Saadani people in proud reference to the economic success of their village during the early years of Ujamaa villagisation programme between 1974 and 1980. The subsequent decline in the village's economic and socio-political situation left the phrase as a nostalgic reminder of a past which is no longer in existence. In this chapter, I use the phrase in this latter respect, referring to a Saadani that had witnessed significant economic successes in comparison to the Saadani of 1997-9.

limiting framework of dominating institutions such as the colonial and later the independent state. I do so because the practices of natural resource management in Saadani are embedded in the people's cultural histories and in the meanings they have given to natural resources over time. The approach also makes it possible to illustrate how changing macro-level circumstances have influenced these cultures - circumstances which in turn have had multiple implications for the general population's and individual's patterns of resource utilisation. Hence, I explore the cultural, political and economic experiences of local people that have influenced their relationships with natural resources, and the diverse ways in which, through these experiences, local people have engaged in struggles over meanings and uses of resources in their daily lives. I then examine how these relationships have changed over time and the implications these changes have had for Saadani people's current understandings of natural resources in their environment.

I begin by describing the settlement and the various patterns of resource use that first impressions create and whose understanding has a direct bearing on the political history and administrative development of Saadani village.

## 2.2 Imagining Saadani

The name 'Saadani' comes from the Kiswahili words, *saa ndani* (lit: the clock inside).<sup>2</sup> Local people explain that, during the times of the village's economic prime, a certain Indian (Banyan) trader had a clock in his house. On being asked the time by indigenous traders from inland, he used to reply, "*sijui saa dani*" (lit: I do not know of the clock inside), thereby implying that he could not tell them the time because the clock was inside. Another version claims that traders and other people who used to come for supplies at that Banyan trader's shop would hear the sound of a clock every hour and, when they asked him to explain the origin of the sound, he would jokingly answer, "*ni saa dani*", (lit: it is the clock inside). His pronunciation of the word *ndani* without the 'n' led local people to coin the phrase "*pale, kwa saa dani*" (lit: there, at

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<sup>2</sup> The origin of the word Saadani is among the first accounts one learns of the history of the village from local people themselves.

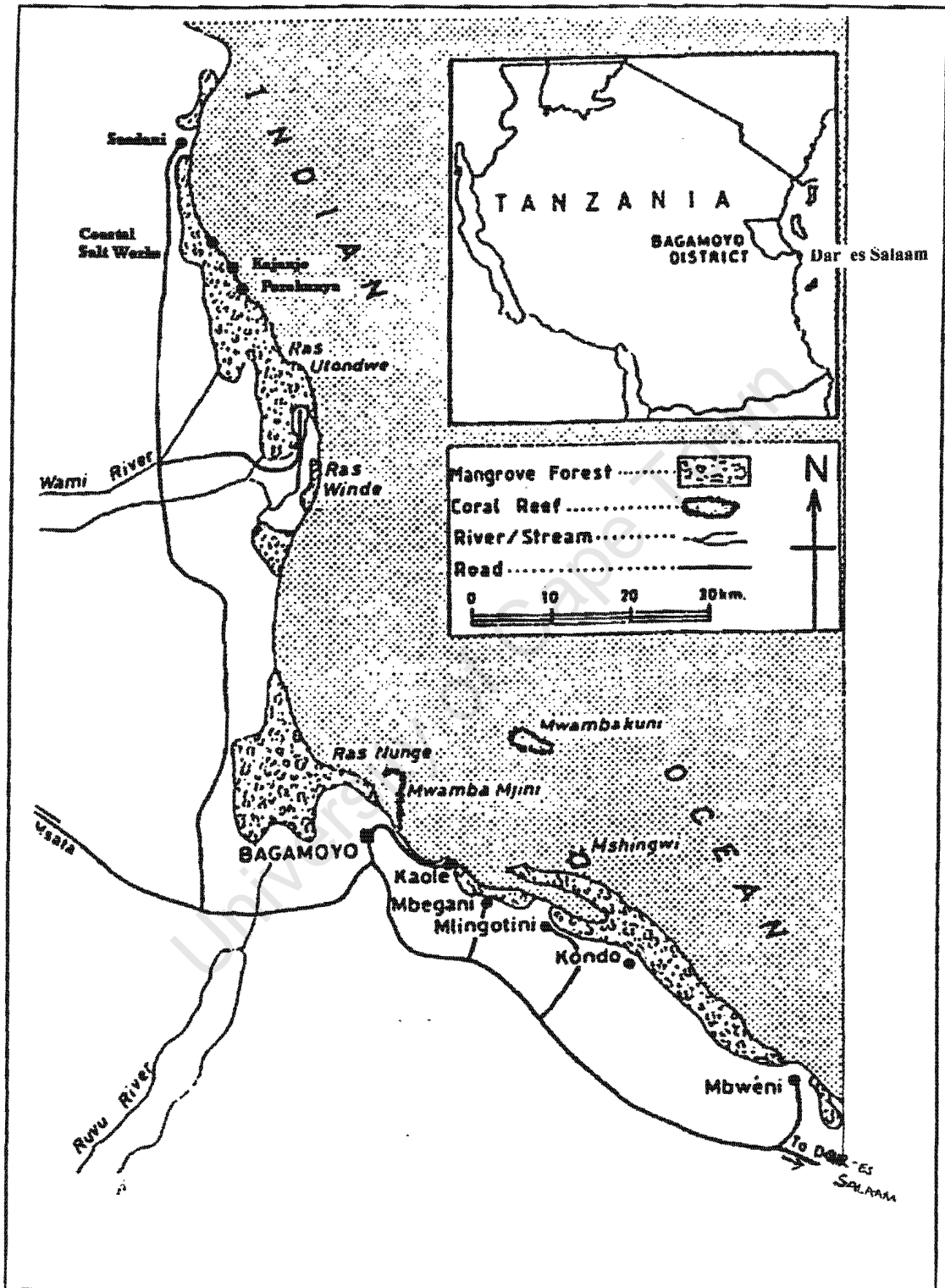
saa dani's place) when referring to the locality in which the Banyan trader lived. And thus, they say, the name Saadani came about.

Other oral sources claimed that Saadani was originally part of the settlement of Utondwe, which was located in what is now known as Ras Utondwe (see Map 2.1). Later, during the peak of the Indian Ocean trade between East African coastal people and Asian and European traders, Saadani was established as an independent coastal settlement. Middleton (1992) notes that Utondwe was one of the early Swahili towns along the coast of mainland Tanzania (1992: 7). It is possible that it may have had strong relationships with Saadani. By 1997 the settlement was no longer in existence but local Saadani elders still revered the Utondwe area, claiming it was a sacred location and the burial site of their ancestors.

Other sources of primary information, historical texts, refer to Saadani as having had a long flourishing economy before and during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century monsoon trade. Through these trade connections, the settlement was influenced by Arab-Islamic ways of life similar to that which occurred in other states along the coastal belt of East Africa (Kjekshus, 1989; Koponen, 1988; Mpangala, 1992). Saadani later came to be a late nineteenth century German and then British colonial administrative centre. Saadani's recorded history includes the names of Bwana Heri and Abushiri *bin* Sultan who led armed local resistance against German colonialists in the area in 1888 – 1889 (Iliffe, 1979; Hailey, 1950). I went to Saadani with this historical information in mind.

In November 1997, travelling by sea to Saadani from Bagamoyo town, south of the village (see map 2.1), I passed beautiful forests of mangrove which thickened around the mouths of the Ruvu River and then the Wami River, from where I could see faint signs of smoke rising from places within the mangrove forest. I later learned that illegal charcoal makers often cut mangrove trees and burn the tree trunks to prepare charcoal. The smaller pieces of timber were finely chopped for sale as fuel wood. Unfortunately for them, the rising smoke revealed the hiding places of these charcoal makers in the depths of the mangrove forests, telling of their presence.

Map 2.1 Map of Bagamoyo Coastal Area showing location of Saadani -1998



Source of base map: A. Semesi & K. Howell (1999) *Coastal Resources of Bagamoyo District, Tanzania*. UDsm. P 18.

I had hired the MV Taaluma, a 25 horse power in-board engine boat, from the Mbegani Fisheries Development Centre at Bagamoyo. The boat passed four prawn trawlers, with engines booming and dragging nets over the vast expanse of water. It took us four and a half hours in the scorching sun to reach Saadani. I had no alternative but to hire the boat because, during that period, the choice of transport was limited. Travelling by road or rail would have been possible but difficult as reaching Saadani was complicated and involved walking/or cycling over considerable distances. Now, as we reached Saadani Bay, we could see black dots which I later recognized as pairs of fishers close to the beach.<sup>3</sup> Other earlier apparent dots turned out to be a cluster of 6 tents and a recreation shelter with a grass thatch roof. They were located just next to the beach. I later learned that this was a tourist setting owned by a British national in a joint venture with two Tanzanian nationals who were not local Saadani people.

In June 1996, this tourist camp had been granted a temporary permit to operate a beach camp within the Saadani Game Reserve (SGR) by the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT).<sup>4</sup> The tourist camp, called Saadani Safari Camp, has since been offering wildlife viewing safaris within the Saadani environment. In 1998 the camp could accommodate 16 visitors in its tents, and received an average of 140 tourists annually. Most were tourists from the UK and Canada, and a few from other European countries. They came on package deals in collaboration with the Selous Game Reserve in central Tanzania. Resident foreigners who lived in Dar es Salaam or Tanga, also occasionally visited and stayed at the camp.<sup>5</sup> The only Tanzanian nationals who lodged at the camp on a few occasions during my fieldwork were some government officials, including the Member of Parliament for Bagamoyo West who visited Saadani towards the end of 1998 when

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<sup>3</sup> Fishers is a recently adopted term after the term fisherman raised questions about its gender bias, and especially after acknowledging the fact that there are also a number of women who participate in fishing. I thus use fisher throughout my study to refer to all persons involved in the fishing activity, except when I want to specify a particular sex.

<sup>4</sup> Reports of the Wildlife Division, Ivory Room, and Dar es Salaam.

<sup>5</sup> In 1998, the camp, also advertised as 'A Tent with a View Safari Camp' was charging \$65 per night for full board, with a reduction only during the December-January holiday season. These rates were way beyond the means of an average local Tanzanian income. The SGR park fees were however affordable for local Tanzanians but still not many people came to visit the SGR probably because of the transport difficulties discussed in Chapter Four. Tourists were often flown to the camp landing at the local landing strip.

plans to establish the Saadani Ecosystem Conservation Programme were being made (see below for a discussion of the said programme).

In the absence of a proper docking place, our boat chugged to a stop about 50 metres offshore of the tourist camp and we had to wade to the beach through waist deep waters. About 100 metres north of the tourist camp, I had noticed two prominent buildings owned by the SGR. One was the SGR manager's abode (a conspicuously modern structure in comparison to other dwellings in the village).<sup>6</sup> The other was the SGR guest lodge comprising 5 rooms and built in 1970, which frequently accommodated visiting government officials. Scattered around the area were several other buildings providing living quarters for SGR staff, and a dilapidated building referred to as '*Ikulu*' (lit: headman's or chief's palace), that had once been used to house holidaying senior government and party officials. The local people call this whole area '*bichi*' (from the word 'beach').

On reaching the shore, we were escorted to the settlement of Saadani, about 500m south of the SGR manager's house across the semi-seasonal River Mvave. During the rainy season, and at high tide (*bamvua*), the banks of River Mvave served as a docking place for fishing boats. Otherwise, boats were normally docked on the beach on the north side - just as the river enters the sea - at a place local people called *bandarini* (lit: at the harbour). When I first arrived at Saadani Bay, there were a few outrigger canoes (*mashua*) moored in the water just south of the tourist camp. Small groups of people were also clustered around three small shelters, thatched with palm leaves, near the place called *bandarini*. They were busy, I soon found out, with selling, weighing and purchasing prawns. The purchasers had small weighing instruments and an exercise book in which they recorded what they owed each seller.

These initial experiences made me appreciate, from the very start, the variety of ways in which local natural resources were used and managed within the area for subsistence, commercial and conservation purposes. Only later was I able to understand that some of these activities were relatively recent phenomena while

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<sup>6</sup> Most of the dwellings at Saadani settlement are built with mud and poles, and have thatched roofs made of palm fronds. A few houses have sand-cement plastering and roofs of corrugated iron-sheets. The latter show signs of Arabic architecture and long gone affluence.

others like fishing, were long-standing local traditions for subsistence. Also, I came to acknowledge the co-existence of different categories of resource users (foreign and local) in one resource environment.

### **2.2.1 Locating the village on a map and in terms of administrative principles**

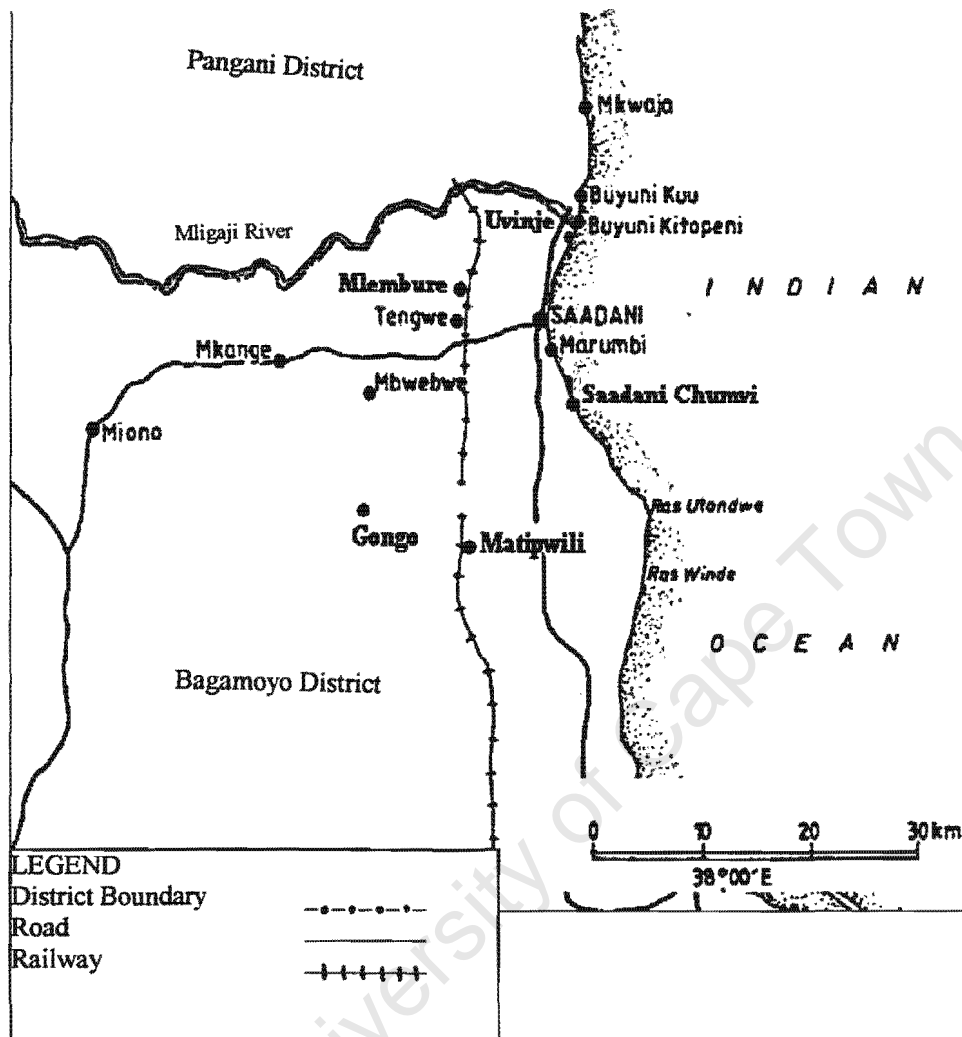
Saadani village is located on the north-eastern coast of Tanzania mainland, about 90 kilometres north of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's main port and commercial centre. It is 40 nautical miles north of Bagamoyo town, which is also Bagamoyo district's administrative headquarters.<sup>7</sup> Saadani village is one of Bagamoyo district's 171 villages.

Within the local government administration structure, Saadani village falls within Mkange ward, which is part of Miono division in Bagamoyo district, Pwani region. The village comprises four hamlets or sub-villages separated spatially by the Saadani Game Reserve (SGR). The largest is Saadani sub-village (hereafter, Saadani central) which includes a small settlement called Marumbi. Other hamlets are Mbwebwe (inland) and Saadani Chumvi and Uvinje both on the coast. Saadani central and Uvinje are among the oldest settlements along the Bagamoyo district coast. As you traverse from one hamlet to the other the village gives the initial impression of a village with a large area, until one realizes the extent to which the SGR occupies much of the local area, apportioning the village into these four separately located hamlets. The village's southern boundary is the River Wami. The River Mligaji separates the village from Pangani district in the north (see Map 2.2). The village's administrative jurisdiction then extends across the reserve westwards to Mbwebwe hamlet located inland. The dispersed location of these hamlets has made it difficult for both village and district governments to oversee and co-ordinate natural resources management processes. Furthermore, the relative isolation of the hamlets has generated individual experiences and sometimes distinct demands as regards local people's access to and control of resources.

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<sup>7</sup> Bagamoyo district is one of the 6 districts of Pwani (Coast) administrative region.

Map 2.2: Saadani and the location of neighbouring settlements.



Mbwebwe is a long established farming settlement. It is situated inland 15 kilometres west of Saadani central and on the border of the Zaraninge Proposed Forest Reserve (PFR).<sup>8</sup> The hamlet has all the characteristics of a cultivators' settlement, with fairly fertile red soils ideal for production of a variety of crops on the margins of the forest reserve. This is supplemented, during major fishing seasons by the men engaging in seasonal fishing at Saadani Bay.

<sup>8</sup> In the rest of the thesis, the Zaraninge proposed forest reserve is otherwise written as the Zaraninge PFR.

Saadani Chumvi hamlet (often referred to locally as 'Kosto' from the word 'coastal') is located about nine kilometres south of Saadani central. It was formed with the 1978 establishment of the Coastal Salt Works Company, commissioned and owned by the State Mining Corporation (STAMICO). In the late 1980s the settlement was annexed to the Saadani village administration. Its population includes fishing households and staff of the Coastal Salt Works Company. Four fishing camps were already well established in the area when STAMICO acquired the land in 1978. These fishing camps were established at two locations along the beach, Kajanjo and Porokanya. Their owners were more or less permanent residents who also hosted seasonal fishers who spent several days there on periodic fishing trips. According to the Saadani Chumvi hamlet chairperson, STAMICO had allowed the permanent residents of the fishing camps to remain, as long as they did not interfere with the company's production activities. An informal system of co-existence thus developed, with the fishers remaining as non-paying tenants of the company. I believe this form of co-existence continued even after 1998, when the Coastal Salt Works Company was liquidated and sold to a private entrepreneur operating as the Sea Salt Company. Saadani Chumvi's residents continued to be administered by the Saadani Village Government. By 1998, the number of permanent shelters at Kajanjo and Porokanya locations had grown to 40 (pers. discussion with Coastal Salt Works official, 1998).

Uvinje hamlet is located eight kilometres north of Saadani central. Its people engage in both fishing and cultivation. Historical documents indicate that Uvinje was an old settlement dominated by Arab-Shirazi traders until the late 1800s. The remains of a building said to be from these times were still evident in 1998. Local oral sources claim that the settlement's population declined after the collapse of Saadani's commercial prime in the early 1900s, to a few cultivator-cum-fishing households. By 1997 Uvinje had 15 households including one household comprising of people who worked on solar evaporated salt pans owned by a non-residential businessman (Mr. Teti). These people left after the El Nino rains of 1998 which destroyed the salt pans. In this study, I discuss Uvinje as part of Saadani central because of their common history and experiences as regards natural resource management.

The name Saadani currently refers to the entire village and its central hamlet or sub-village. The settlement of Saadani central itself is located on a ridge-like promontory

on the southern banks of the River Mvave. People of Saadani central hamlet rely predominantly on the fisheries, and only a few practice small-scale cultivation. Saadani central's population also includes government employees working with the SGR, the village dispensary and primary school teachers. The Saadani tourist camp also employs a few people who reside at the settlement. Administratively, this hamlet includes Marumbi settlement which is a cultivators' settlement of six households located two kilometres south of Saadani central, and home to people who have settled around their cultivation plots but who also engage in fishing.

The following table presents the population composition of Saadani in 1998. 39 households of the total 133 households in Saadani central and Uvinje were headed by women.

**Table 2.1 Saadani Village: Population composition - 1998**

Hamlet	Population Characteristics				Number of Households
	Women	Men	Children	Total Population	
Uvinje	14	10	33	57	14
Mbwebwe	na	na	na	62	15
Saadani Chumvi (Kosto)	106	126	155	387	109
Saadani Central	194	190	316	700	119

Key: na = not available

Source: Saadani village and hamlet leaders information, September 1998.

As this descriptive background shows, Saadani village has a unique geographical layout. However, the historical evolution of the village sheds light on how this settlement pattern has come about. The implications of the series of administrative systems and kinds of governance on the village has been to foster the establishment of particular relationships with regard to resource use. In the following section, I demonstrate how an understanding of the politics within these different kinds of governance allows us to comprehend their influences on local people's realities and the way they utilized natural resources.

### 2.3 The History and Evolution of Saadani Village

Local sources indicate that Saadani was originally inhabited by a few Wazigua people who established a temporary fishing camp site (*dago*).<sup>9</sup> *Dago*, (pl: *madago* sometimes mentioned as *rago*), refers to a temporary shelter established by fishers who travel long distances and settle in an area along the coast for a particular fishing season. A *dago* normally survives only as long as fishing is successful or until the residents realise their targets. Yet several *madago* are known to have developed into permanent settlements after repeated annual camps were set up there, and through the establishment of permanent relationships and resident households in that area. I discuss the processes leading to the establishment of settlements in more detail in Chapter Five.

Archeological studies have established the existence of early farming/fishing settlements prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD along the coast of Bagamoyo District (Chami, 1994),<sup>10</sup> and it is likely that Saadani was one of them. The settlement later developed as part of the 'Swahili coast' whose historical commercial and trade connections between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD led to the economic development of East African coastal civilizations and the rise of townships including Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo, Pangani, Kilwa and Saadani itself (Glassman, 1995; Koponen, 1988; Mazrui & Shariff, 1994; Middleton, 1992; Mpangala, 1992).

Trade itself was stimulated by European and Asian demand for gold, ivory, slaves, mangrove poles and other items such as gum and vegetable oils (Illife, 1979; Koponen, 1988). This demand induced Arab traders, and later Indian merchants, to establish trading contacts on the East African Coast in the Indian Ocean trade facilitated by the monsoon winds.<sup>11</sup> Saadani served as an entry port for these traders and developed into a central trading post between the coast and the interior, similar to other coastal towns (Koponen, 1988). Indigenous traders and porters brought slaves

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<sup>9</sup> WaZigua people are the local population group inhabiting a major part of Bagamoyo, Handeni and Pangani districts in North east Tanzania

<sup>10</sup> Chami (1994) documents archaeological evidence indicating the existence of settlements along the East African coast prior to the coming of foreigners. In his study, he shows areas where first millennium Early Iron-working and Triangular Incised ware sites have been identified along the coast, although Saadani has not been mentioned as one of them.

and ivory from the interior to the coast and exchanged them for cloth and other commodities. Local oral sources explained that some of the people in Saadani today are descendants of the Wanyamwezi and Wayao people who were engaged in this long distance trade (c.f. Glassman, 1995; Iliffe, 1979: 41). Saadani also served as a customs post for the Sultan of Zanzibar, and later, for German colonialists. A tourist route in the village today takes visitors through what was once, local elders recall, *barabara ya forodha* (lit: passage to the customs house) on which Arab, and later German administrators used to ride on horseback along this once stone-paved route. But a dense outgrowth of mangrove has since precluded the use of this once natural docking harbour.<sup>12</sup>

The settlement of Arab and Shirazi traders, answerable to the Sultan of Zanzibar who came to dominate the Saadani settlement in the early 1880s, had a major influence on the construction of Saadani's local power dynamics. Historical records document how in the late 1800s the Sultan entered an agreement with the Shirazi leader of Saadani, one Mwenekambi Bora, to offer cloth, gunpowder, guns and protection in exchange for food crops and ivory. Saadani thus consolidated itself as a local coastal power similar to the neighbouring settlements of Winde and Uvinje, and became prominent in the slave and ivory trade. The Sultan also placed a garrison of Baluchi soldiers at Saadani, as he did in other coastal towns under his influence, to protect his control of the trade route (BN&R, 1935). The village's trade connections also strengthened with the settlement of Hindu and Banyan traders from Asia in the mid 1800s. A group among these people constructed a Muslim worship place (*Jamatkhana*), some of whose walls still stood in Saadani in 1997, although the El Nino rains of 1997 to 1998 destroyed most of what was left.

The 1884 Berlin Conference and the associated scramble for Africa by European powers, led to the establishment of German colonial administration in the then Tanganyika from 1886. Initially Saadani continued to be treated as part of the 10 mile

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<sup>11</sup> The role of the monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean trade involving the East African coast has been documented by historians such as Koponen (1988) and Mpangala (1992).

<sup>12</sup> People recall this outgrowth of mangroves as similar to what happened in another historic settlement called Kaole, just south of Bagamoyo town, where early Arab visitors to East Africa also landed and settled. Kaole is now a national archival site and it is said to be one of the earliest points of entry where Arab traders docked along the Tanzania mainland coast. The remains of an Arab settlement are preserved there.

coastal strip controlled by the Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Barghash (Moffet, 1958) and his representatives (Akidas) continued to collect taxes in Saadani (Hailey, 1950).<sup>13</sup> This arrangement was an outcome of the November 1886 Anglo-German Agreement, which demarcated the Sultan's 'sphere of influence' from that of the European colonial powers. Four years later however, the Heligoland Treaty (1890) revoked the Seyyid's control of the mainland coast and put the area under German administration (Mpangala, 1992). Saadani became a local colonial administrative headquarters and a fort (*boma*) was constructed there. The German fort also briefly served as the administrative quarters of the British colonial government which took over the control of Tanganyika after World War I in 1919, when the country became a mandated territory of the League of Nations (Moffet, 1958). Local people recalled that, for a brief period after Independence in 1961, part of the fort was used as a primary school. Today, the ruins of the fort are one of the village's tourist attractions.

When the Germans occupied Saadani it was still in its trading and market prime. However, in the early years of German rule many Arab-Shirazi and Indian traders left Saadani. This was partly because the slave trade, on which their economic successes had depended, was abolished. The Germans later introduced cash crop production in the area, aiming to strengthen the supply of raw materials for export. Sisal, rubber, and cotton plantations, run by European settlers and companies, were established (Illife, 1979; Taasisi, 1984). By 1907, about 125,000 acres of land were under cotton in the Saadani area (Taasisi, 1984: 28). The Germans however, failed to get enough plantation labour from among local people since they were reluctant to such work. Local oral sources suggest that local people resisted being subjected to what they regarded as slavery. Plantation labour was thus imported from areas in the interior of the country. The introduction of a poll tax of 3 rupees subsequently compelled local people to cultivate, to avoid being fined for failure to pay the tax. Smallholder production of cotton was thus encouraged, and provided the cash income for paying the tax. Many elderly local people recalled that their parents had had cotton farms and sold the produce at a colonial state-owned ginnery in the village. But institution of the

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<sup>13</sup> This 10 mile strip, given to the Sultan of Zanzibar is, in other literature recorded as 16 miles (Mpangala 1992). Moffet (1958) elaborates that, in reality, the width of this ten mile wide strip varied from 10 miles at Kilwa Kivinje, to 3 miles around Dar es Salaam and 5 miles around Saadani and Pangani. Hailey (1950) also claims that the Sultan's representatives (Akidas) continued to collect taxes in settlements within this area.

poll tax also stimulated considerable local resistance, such as that led by Bwana Heri and Abushiri bin Sultan whom I mentioned above.<sup>14</sup>

After World War I, the League of Nations' mandate for the administration of Tanganyika was given to the British who started governing from 1920 (Coulson, 1982; Hailey, 1950). Sometime during their rule, they transferred the administrative headquarters from Saadani to Miono. Local sources claimed that this move came after the British had experienced problems with Saadani's inaccessibility particularly during the rainy seasons. Miono has also been the divisional headquarters since 1971 under the current national government

In 1926, the British colonial administration introduced a system of 'indirect rule' whereby the people of Tanganyika were governed through their 'native rulers' (Coulson, 1982; Hailey, 1950). Saadani settlement was constituted as a Native Authority area (BN&R, 1930). A Native Authority area was a local administrative unit administered by local Chiefs, Councillors and Headmen who had their own native courts and kept part of the tax revenues collected (Coulson, 1982). Under such administration, settlements had relative autonomy in decision making over certain issues regarding their area of jurisdiction. However, this autonomy was never fully realised since the Native Authority system was merely an administrative technique to expedite local administration and win the loyalty of local people, while simultaneously sustaining British colonial objectives (Chidzero, 1961). Indeed, as I will explain later, the practice of devolving administrative powers to local people continued to be a strategy to facilitate local control even by the independent government.

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<sup>14</sup> Historical sources document the 1888-89 cases of Abushiri bin Sultan and Bwana Heri, both famous business people within the Pangani and Saadani area, who mobilised local people to take up arms against German colonialists in the Saadani area (Ilfiffe, 1979; Taasisi, 1984). These two people led resistance to what they termed foreign dominance and the destabilisation of the people's ways of lives which German colonial rule was incurring by disrupting local patterns of trade. It was during this time too that the slave trade was being abolished and the process affected many local traders in slaves and ivory, among them Abushiri and Bwana Heri. The two also resisted being compelled to pay taxes to the German colonial authorities. Historical sources suggest that Abushiri and Bwana Heri both caused significant damage to the German armies, but they were both later defeated (Ilfiffe, 1979; Taasisi, 1984).

In 1940, the British restructured the Native Authorities to reduce the number of headmen. The Saadani administration was now designated as the tribal government of the Saadani-Shirazi 'tribe' by British colonial Government notice No. 34 of 1940 (BDB, 1957).<sup>15</sup> This restructuring left Saadani as an independent entity which, for 'tribal' reasons, was seen as best left separate from the neighbouring Uzigua area. Similar systems of administration were also established in what were regarded as relatively heterogeneous 'tribal' divisions along the coast such as in Kaole and Mlingotini, south of Bagamoyo town. This was since, despite their history of intermarriages with interior people, coastal people including Saadani villagers were regarded and understood themselves to be different from other communities in terms of political history, religion and ways of life.<sup>16</sup> Hence, other forms of administration were established in neighbouring hinterland areas which the British Colonial government claimed were more related to homogenous 'native tribal groupings'. There, tribal administrative divisions were formed, such as those of the 'Wazigua' (under which Mbwebwe hamlet was placed), Wadoe, Wazaramo and Wakwere areas, all of which were also in Bagamoyo district. In May 1941 Saadani was placed under the jurisdiction of the Councillor (*Liwali*) of Bagamoyo, and has since been part of the Bagamoyo local administrative structure. However, the sense of Saadani being politically separate from the other surrounding areas was a portent of things to come, and has been reflected repeatedly in the processes of natural resources management as my discussions in Chapters Four and Five illustrate.

Using Native Authorities, the British continued the poll tax of 3 rupees per adult until 1922 when it was converted into a hut and poll tax of 6 shillings per adult (Hailey, 1950: 215). The British also encouraged small-holder and plantation cotton

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<sup>15</sup> The term 'tribe', which was generally used to connote a people whose members claim to share a common identity, has been dismissed by contemporary historians and anthropologists as a European colonial and missionary ideological construct to refer to people they regarded as of a lesser social status. The British colonial government used the description of a tribe as a people with common identity to identify areas of native control. The tribal categorisation for Saadani may have developed because of the predominance of Shirazi people in the settlement during that time. Critiques by scholars on the concept of the tribe and the growth of African nationalism are now challenging the bases on which the concept 'tribe' was described. Thorold (1994) however argues that, in the course of history, these groups also participate to invent themselves and to establish boundaries and membership criteria, which are relevant to the people themselves. Even then, these criteria are always fluid and it is increasingly difficult to find a single social group sharing these common ways of life.

<sup>16</sup> Historical documents also illustrate that these coastal communities had a different social-cultural environment from their hinterland neighbours owing to their historical relationships with the Indian

production which flourished in the Saadani area from 1925 to 1927. However, in 1932, there was a marked decline in cotton productivity in the area and the government transferred the cotton ginnery, formerly owned by the German colonial government, to Mandera Mission, about 64 kilometres to the west of Saadani village (BN&R, 1930). Mandera Mission, founded in 1880 under German rule by the Holy Ghost Fathers, later developed as a central cotton purchasing point for settlements around a wide radius. Relationships between Mandera Mission and Saadani became very important with the construction of a road to Saadani which, to-date (apart from its ordeals during the rainy season), is still one of the most important routes to or out of Saadani.

The 1930s decline in cotton production also marked a general decline in Saadani's economy so that according to British colonial ethnographers, between 1934 and 1937 Saadani "was reduced to a de-tribalised fishing hamlet with only a few shops" (BN&R, 1950). Indeed, the decline of the population of Saadani (central) settlement has continued to this day and the number of people had decreased from 1297 people in 1931 (BDB, 1935) to 817 in 1997.

In 1961 Tanganyika gained independence from Britain which had continued to administer its territory as a U.N. Mandate after WWII. The new state soon introduced strategies for nation building that included programmes for consolidating the economy and to promote local social and economic development. A major development strategy was launched in 1967. This strategy was the Arusha Declaration for political and social transformation (Nyerere, 1967). The Arusha Declaration facilitated a process of villagisation organised under the principles of Ujamaa, the country's description for co-operation based on African traditional familihood (Nyerere, 1967; Kikula, 1997). The major aspects of the Ujamaa programme included, the relocation of what were scattered populations into concentrated localities, with the aim of expediting social service delivery and, simultaneously, to inculcate a socialist ideology as the main approach to social and economic development.

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Ocean trade, their political organisation under the Sultanate of Zanzibar and the entrenchment of the Islamic religion. (Taasisi, 1984).

During the unfolding of these politico-administrative developments, and before Saadani was formally established as an Ujamaa village, processes to establish the Saadani Game Reserve (SGR) were initiated in 1968. This process followed a request made to the government in 1968 by a group of local elders to protect wildlife in the area from poaching.<sup>17</sup> The establishment of the SGR led to the establishment of a boundary which demarcated reserve land from the settlement for the purposes of instituting wildlife protection-oriented management strategies. The main hamlet, Saadani central, was left with less than 1 sq. km for residential purposes (with no arable land), and Uvinje hamlet remained with an area of about 300 metres by 3 km (including arable land).<sup>18</sup> Local sources claimed that an area of coastal savanna with the width of about one kilometre from the Saadani settlement was initially left as a buffer zone and could be used by the villagers for uses such as fuel wood collection. I discuss more fully the issues arising from this situation in Chapter Four.

In 1973, Saadani village became an Ujamaa village. It was during that period that an assessment of Tanzanian's marine fisheries had established that there were abundant marine resources (Chachage, 1988). Under the Second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974), several coastal villages, including Saadani, thus came to be designated as Ujamaa fishing villages under a programme designed to promote the exploitation of these abundant marine fisheries.

The villagisation programme was officially instituted by the Villages and Ujamaa Villages (Registration, Designation and Administration) Act of 1975 which instituted compulsory villagisation and resettlement schemes across the country.<sup>19</sup> The Act also established that all major development matters in a village should be decided and agreed upon by a village assembly comprising all villagers. A village government was also formed to represent local people's affairs.

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<sup>17</sup> A report written in 1994 by Mr. A Mpotte, a Saadani resident, mentions the names of some of these elders, all of whom were deceased by the time I commenced my study in Saadani in October 1997. They were all male.

<sup>18</sup> A study conducted by IRA-UDsm (1996) states that the Saadani central settlement currently (1997) occupies only 0.25 sq. km.

<sup>19</sup> Note that a number of villages, Saadani included, were formed as Ujamaa villages even before the formal enactment of the Villages and Ujamaa Villages Registration Act of 1975.

Settlements organised under the Ujamaa programme also came to be eligible for registration as co-operative societies under the 1975 Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act.<sup>20</sup> Operating under cooperative principles meant that major economic production activities were organized communally under village leadership. In the case of Saadani, all able-bodied persons above 18 years of age were mobilized into fishing activities and the proceeds were shared among all households in the village.

The experience of villagisation in Saadani did not only involve restructuring the village's administrative and production set-up. It also involved the relocation of people from one geographic area, Mbwebwe, to Saadani central. In 1975, the people of Mbwebwe hamlet, which was located on the borders of Zaraninge Proposed Forest Reserve (PFR), and whose people were predominantly cultivators, were relocated to Saadani central by the 'Operation Pwani' programme.<sup>21</sup> This programme was the Pwani region's version of the Operation Vijijini (lit: Operation Villages) programme (which included a 1973 Presidential and ruling Party – TANU directive), and was drawn to enforce compulsory villagisation and resettlement for all settlements not organised under Ujamaa principles by 1973. Scattered or small populations had to be relocated to established Ujamaa villages (Kikula, 1997). Mbwebwe residents by then numbered 270, and did not meet the minimum population of 300 to 320 required to qualify as a village. Mbwebwe residents were settled in the western part of Saadani central in an area that was named Mbwebwe street (*mtaa wa Mbwebwe*). The people were also mobilized into fishing and were initially allowed to cultivate in an area called Kumvi.

Two processes with regard to natural resource management in Saadani followed the establishment of the SGR and the formation of Saadani into an Ujamaa village. One was expansion of the local fishing industry, boosted by increasing demand for prawns in the world market. The other was the formal institution of nature protection

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<sup>20</sup> The Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act of 1975 repealed various provisions of The Co-operative Society's Act of 1968 which had established voluntary membership of villages into co-operative societies. Section 13 of the 1975 Act of states that "A village and its various organs shall perform their functions as if the village were a multipurpose co-operative society. Provided that the provisions of the Co-operative Societies Act, 1968, or any subsidiary legislation thereunder shall not apply to a village or to any organ thereof ". This compulsory requirement was later repealed by the 1982 Co-operative Societies Act.

<sup>21</sup> Mbwebwe elders claimed that their hamlet had been in existence on the borders of Zaraninge PFR since 1910.

regulations by the SGR which I have mentioned earlier, and which implied that people-related uses within the reserve area had to be regulated. Consequently, cultivation was prohibited and local people were compelled to rely almost entirely on marine resources.

The government, noting Saadani's local fishing potential, injected considerable amounts of capital in terms of equipment and mobilization campaigns to develop the fishing sector. These measures also became a strategy through which the SGR could be protected and maintained. Village elders recalled that, in the early 1970s, officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), including several Ministers for MNRT and Mr. Mahinda, the then Director for Wildlife who had facilitated the establishment of the SGR, visited the village to campaign for communal fishing.

These efforts, coupled with the villagers' own initial enthusiasm for communal production, enabled Saadani to blossom into a successful Ujamaa fishing village. In 1975, the village was awarded first prize for best performance in economic production in Bagamoyo district. The prize included a boat with an out-board engine and several fishing nets.<sup>22</sup> Continuous successes later enabled the village to purchase another boat, two more out-board engines and a 3-ton truck, all before 1980. These successes led the villagers to coin the phrase, "Saadani, *wacha waseme*" (lit: Saadani, let them talk) in praise of their village, implying that Saadani was now so successful, that it was acceptable for other people to acknowledge its success.

Yet, as was the case with many Ujamaa villages in Tanzania, after about five years, Saadani's economic success began to decline for a number of reasons. These factors included the reluctance of local people to fully embrace the kind of communal principles imposed on them by Ujamaa, ignorance of the primary household divisions of labour, and embezzlement by village government leaders.

The nature protection regulations imposed by the SGR exacerbated local people's sense that their lives were being seriously compromised. For example, the SGR's

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<sup>22</sup> Local people claimed that even the then President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, had acknowledged their exceptional performance in the small-scale fishing industry

prohibition of cultivation came to be unacceptable, particularly to villagers relocated from Mbwebwe, and also to villagers who had practiced cultivation before the SGR had been established and who subsequently were forced to participate in and depend on fishing for their livelihoods, which was contrary to the ways in which they had previously used resources. Around 1977 and 1978 local people were firmly prohibited from cultivating at Kumvi. This situation often led to misunderstandings between the SGR and several people. The national government, facing similar pressure from several places nationwide, decided that people such as previous Mbwebwe residents could move back to their original localities, but without compensation. In 1978, a programme called 'Operation *Tujisahihishe*' (lit: let us correct) allowed people to return to the areas locally called *mahame* in which they lived before the compulsory villagisation programme. Therefore, from 1981, the people living along Mbwebwe street in Saadani settlement began returning to the original location of Mbwebwe on the borders of the Zaraninge PFR, and have remained there since. The hamlet, however, is still under the administration of Saadani village government, despite being located quite a distance from Saadani central.

Another implication of Ujamaa communal activities was an increased workload on women. Women claimed that their participation in fishing increased their work responsibilities since they still had to perform domestic obligations and responsibilities.

However, it was embezzlement and corruption by village government leaders that ultimately led to Saadani's economic downfall and, with it, the collapse of the co-operative spirit among local people. In 1980, the village government leadership that had led Saadani into economic success was swept out of power and a new leadership elected. Local sources claimed that petty jealousies and accusations of mismanagement had brought the incumbents into disfavour. However, the new government that took over from 1980, allegedly, sold the village's boat engines and truck to business people in Dar es Salaam, embezzled money from the village co-operative shop, confiscated fishing nets, and left the village without any property of

value.<sup>23</sup> Ujamaa in Saadani finally disintegrated and, by 1985, Saadani had reverted to a setting where the household formed the basic unit of production and subsistence.

Several studies have criticised the social and political environment which Tanzania's Ujamaa programme introduced. Some claim that the programme lacked a clear social analysis which ignored the contradiction between individuality and common perspectives on development. Green (2000) for example, contends that such programmes entailed a limited recognition of the potential of individual agency in bringing about social transformation, and they divorced the people from expressing and gaining from individual experiences. Related to this contention, Saadani people claimed that they were poorly rewarded through communal production, particularly after dishonesty on the part of village government leaders who took over from 1980 became apparent. They understood that they would be better off working individually and with individual control of the benefits accruing from those arrangements.

Other studies have contended that Ujamaa was launched on a weak institutional foundation, not able to foster the development of strong local administrations and socio-economic advancement. Some village leaders were mere populist ideologists who enforced Ujamaa principles blindly, some to the extent of leading to significant environmental damage (Kikula, 1997). As we have seen, the experience of Saadani confirms some of these observations. This is despite the fact that local people acknowledged that Ujamaa had enabled them to achieve significant production successes. Ujamaa also reinforced for them the sense of a common outlook towards control of natural resources, albeit only for the period its principles were followed. Through their village assembly, local people used to discuss and question the manner in which their communal activities were organised. Yet later, greed and individual ambition affected the communal spirit and Ujamaa failed to facilitate the path to democratic local governance that it had been designed for, and thus its principles were gradually eroded.

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<sup>23</sup> Local people mentioned to me one of the prominent persons in the village [name withheld] as responsible for the downfall of Saadani during this period. However, no one was prosecuted since according to some people, the whole village government may have been responsible for embezzlement in one way or the other, since the illegal transactions were obvious to many of them.

In 1982 the national government revived the idea of local governance in the country, with the aim of creating institutions to involve people decision-making on matters affecting them in their localities. Yet, as Ngware & Haule (1992) contend, these institutions were invariably regarded and increasingly used as tools for carrying out programmes decided upon by central government without any local involvement. At the village level, the village government remained the primary body in the district local government structure, and its functions as the manager and representative of village level development activities remained until 1995 when the multi-party system changed the nature of powers. In addition, the Village Executive Officer (VEO), a post established in 1984 as the District government's representative at village level, came to take over most of the functions of administration previously performed by village governments. One of the reasons for having a VEO in the village was to expedite collection of revenue for the District government. The VEO's powers were limited to petty businesses which, in Saadani, included the village shops, the local salt makers and daily taxes charged on people who sold foodstuffs at the village market place. According to local government regulations, such taxes were to be distributed in percentages to the village as village revenue, the Ward government, and the District. Twenty percent of Saadani's revenue was supposed to be paid as a salary to the VEO.

In 1997, the Saadani VEO managed the day-to-day administration of the village, enforcing decisions instituted by the District government and collecting revenue from local businesses. He also assisted District Natural Resources officials on anti-poaching campaigns and when they inspected fishing licences in the village. I noticed however, that the VEO worked closely with a team of village elders who had usurped the powers of running the village. These elders were able to assert considerable authority and influence on village level decisions. Local people claimed that the village chairperson and the VEO always consulted these elders on whatever matters that concerned the village.<sup>24</sup>

The follow-up of taxes by the VEO was arbitrary and I could not access any records of the same, but I noticed that the VEO concentrated on petty traders while the team

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<sup>24</sup> This team of elders consisted of Sheikh Maftah, the leader of the Islamic religion, Mzee Mfaume, the wealthiest man in the village, and a local leader, Mzee Mlekwa. The fourth prominent elder passed away in late 1997. All of them had been members of the Village government for consecutive periods since 1974.

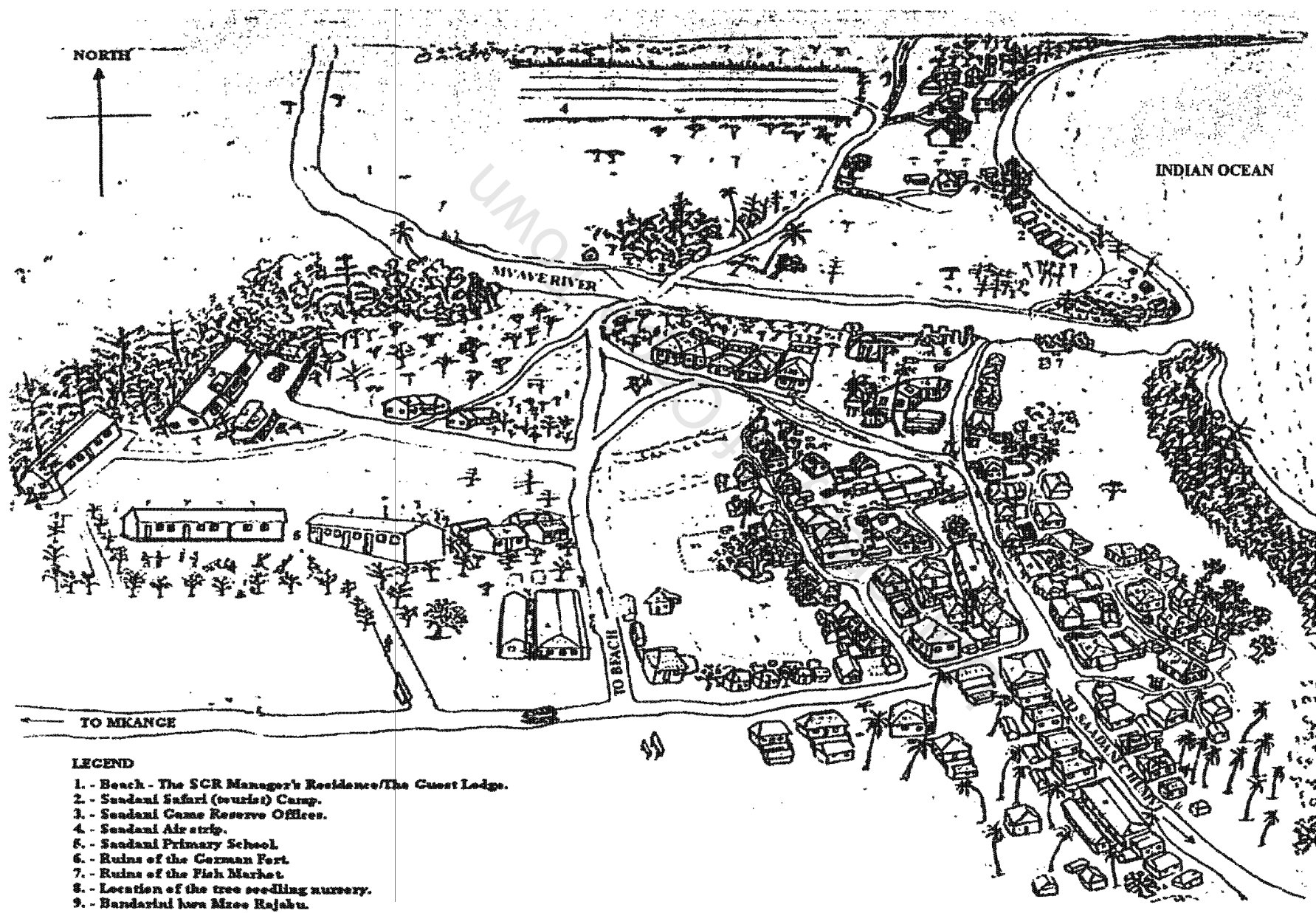
of elders handled individual dealers in marine products who came from outside Saadani. Local people did not openly criticise the lack of financial accountability of village elders or the VEO. Most felt that, as long as their own ways of life were secure, and as long as they managed to avoid subscribing to projects which they felt were not of benefit to them, they had no need to demand such information. In addition, they felt that the inability of the VEO to demand payments from the operations of other users of natural resources within the Saadani environment, such as from the SGR, from the tourist camp or from the industrial prawn trawlers was because even the VEO could not compete with the powers of such institutions. And, according to some local people, this was the reason the VEO and elders could not independently promote village-based development needs, such as purchasing modern fishing equipment. The tax revenue from operations conducted by these institutions was collected directly by the SGR and central government officials respectively and all accrued to the central government. Local people thus developed relative independence in their livelihood practices and uses of natural resources.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented an historical overview of the political and administrative context within which resource use and management practices in Saadani village came to be situated. In most cases, these processes developed into strategies for accumulation and exploitation of natural resources rather than to establish a foundation on which local people's resource management activities could be firmly built. As illustrated, even within Ujamaa, the benefits of natural resource management depended on the government in power. A consequence of these cumulative experiences, over the years, has been a steady decline in local people's abilities to control and manage resources, and that has had significant implications on their livelihoods.

In the following chapter, I discuss the social environment of local Saadani people and their understandings of their physical environment. I then examine how local people's understandings of their diverse realities have also influenced the ways in which they relate to natural resources.

Fig 2.2 Saadani (Central) Settlement : a local artist's impression, November 1998



*Muungwana hawezi kulima?*<sup>1</sup>**3.1 Introduction**

Contemporary critiques of ecological relationships, such as that propounded by Kottak (1999), suggest that we should question the description of an ecological population as “an aggregate of organisms having in common a set of distinctive means by which they maintain a common set of material relations within the ecosystem in which they participate” ([Rappaport, 1971: 238] 1999: 23). This suggestion is based on three premises. Firstly, given contemporary flows of people, information and technology across cultural and social boundaries, it is unlikely for any group to employ distinctive cultural adaptive means in its relationship with its environment (Kottak, 1999: 24). Secondly, as populations are diversified, it is unlikely to find a common set of material relations within ecosystems (Guijt & Shah, 1997). And, thirdly, most people today do not participate in only one ecosystem (Kottak, 1999: 24). This third observation, also noted by Rappaport (1971: 25), suggests that local populations usually participate in regional exchange systems composed of several local populations occupying a wider geographical area. Given these observations, Kottak (1999) concludes, it is inappropriate to try to define and demarcate precise local ecosystems, and thus local ecologies (ethnoecologies) are continuously being challenged, transformed and replaced by political and economic interconnectedness.

Kottak’s (1999) observations and conclusions are particularly relevant to my analysis of Saadani people’s relationships with natural resources. But they are also limiting about the ways in which local populations relate to their ecosystems since they deny a holistic appreciation of how local people understand and define their relationships with

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<sup>1</sup> Local oral sources claimed that *muungwana hawezi kulima* (lit: A noble cannot cultivate) was a saying that was coined during the times of Arab/Shirazi settlement in the coastal area by people who regarded fishing as the only dignified activity in comparison to cultivation and other activities. During my fieldwork, the saying was used satirically by certain people mocking these earlier attitudes particularly with the decline of the fisheries which made local people turn to cultivation. In this chapter, I use it to highlight Saadani people’s understandings of the realities of their contemporary life situations as regards production activities.

natural resources. For example, local people have particular ways in which they are able to delineate their existence in an ecosystem as against that of other resource users, such as state-backed institutions. Particular claims to territory are one example (Hrenchuk, 1993). Moreover, people in a particular community often acknowledge that, although they may be socially heterogeneous, their social boundaries are not necessarily binding as they are constructed in a fluid way that allows people to cross between categories when the needed criteria are met (Askew, 1999). Similarly, in the case of Saadani, local people exhibited various ways in which they claimed diverse forms of power in relation to resource use, yet they also had certain common outlooks that demonstrated their common relation to the Saadani ecosystem within the challenges and transformation that they have continuously experienced.

In this chapter I reflect on the processes that influence local Saadani people's understanding and construction of their uses and management of natural resources. I first follow Kottak's (1999) observations to explore the diverse ways in which Saadani people understand and relate to resources. Yet, I also take note that multiple political and administrative experiences had shaped local Saadani people as a whole to strive to maintain a common degree of political and economic outlook, against that of the state. This was despite the history of immigration to Saadani that had created a population with multiple cultural heritages and hence, to some extent, diverse understandings of natural resource management. These diverse understandings were also reflected in people's social situations according to economic, gender and age aspects. These social aspects in turn manifested themselves in people's production activities, whether as fishers, cultivators, business people or salt makers.

I also discuss the infrastructural setting, which has had significant implications for local people's potential to exploit natural resources. Indeed, as the data illustrates, the poor infrastructural situation had reduced the possibilities of people exploiting the resources in their environment effectively. Poor communication facilities had made local people depend on others from outside the village to organize crucial aspects of their major production processes, a situation that challenged local people's claims to autonomy.

### 3.2 The People of Saadani

The long history of immigration has resulted in a cosmopolitan population in Saadani today. People's tribal affiliations or origins are varied, and there has been considerable intermarriage between local people and people from other areas. This finding corroborates the observations of other studies of people along East Africa's Swahili coast. These studies have observed that, although people are relatively similar in terms of language orientation and their reliance on the fisheries (Middleton, 1992; Askew, 1999), several distinct differences do exist. As Middleton (1992) notes, they do not possess "any atemporal or fixed definitions" (1992: 2) that might suggest a community whose composition is fixed. Rather, they can be understood as a people who maintain a [common] physical space.

Despite the cosmopolitan nature of Saadani, its inhabitants exhibit certain common cultural orientations. Many of them claim descent from intermarriages and former liaisons between indigenous and foreign people who in other texts are referred to as Swahili people (Mazrui & Shariff, 1994; Middleton, 1992). Many people also come from various parts of Tanzania, particularly from the settlements of Mkange and Mbwebwe in the surrounding Uzigua area. The Wazigua claim that their forefathers were the original settlers of Saadani even before the arrival of Arab and Shirazi settlers. Other people include the Wadoe, Wakwere, Wazaramo, Wanyamwezi, Wayao and Wangoni people, whose places of origin are in different locations in Tanzania. Some ancestors of the last three settled on the coast during the slave and ivory trade period, when they traded with Arab and Shirazi traders, bringing goods from the interior of Tanzania to Saadani. Other migrants into the area included ex-plantation workers who settled in Saadani after the decline of the nearby colonial sisal and cotton plantations and who have since been absorbed into the general Saadani population. An elderly local fisher, who originally came from Ruvuma region and settled in Saadani in the 1980s, said, "I came with the labourers during the British period and worked in the nearby sisal plantations in Pangani district of Tanga region. I later settled in Saadani after the sisal plantation economy in Tanga region declined in the 1970s after Independence." In addition to these people, there were some people who traced their

ancestry to a fisher from Madagascar, a place also known locally as *Bukini*.<sup>2</sup> According to local oral histories, this fisher landed with his brother at Buyuni Kitopeni, north of Saadani in the late 1800s during the reign of the last Sultan of Zanzibar. This person, they claim, established a home after marrying one of the local Zigua girls. A few elders who claimed this ancestry said they were his fifth generation descendants.

In view of this diversity of claims to descent and ancestral origins, local Saadani people said that they preferred to be called “*watu wa mwambao*” (lit: people of the coast), implying that they should be regarded as people who live and depend on the coast, rather than people associated with any particular tribal or ethnic label. I found this reference to people of the coast more acceptable to local people than the reference to Waswahili (lit: Swahili people), a term which, as mentioned above, was generally used to refer to people residing along the East African coast.<sup>3</sup> Local Saadani people also preferred to be identified in relation to a common linguistic characteristic and be identified as Swahili-speaking people rather than ‘Waswahili’. I later came to understand that the efforts local Saadani people made to define their identity simultaneously reflected their engagement with a particular discourse on autonomy and to demonstrate that they led a particular kind of life situation that had to be recognized.

Their dependence on fishing gave them a particular common identity, thus laying the basis for their claims that they belonged to Saadani. People who migrated to Saadani from predominantly cultivating societies, and who came to acquire fishing skills at Saadani, claimed that the sea not only gave them an identity as fishers, it also gave them a basis for their integration into Saadani society. Astuti (1995) has made a similar observation about the Vezo people of Madagascar who, by saying that “they were

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<sup>2</sup> Prins (1981) records that Swahili people in Mombasa also referred to Madagascar as Bukini.

<sup>3</sup> Most people from the inland of Tanzania use this type of reference too. Moffet (1958) notes that in the 1950s the term Mswahili came to be used to refer to persons (even in the interior of Tanganyika) who had adopted the Mohamedan religion. I however felt that Saadani people did not want the term because by 1997 and in the day to day usage of the term by Tanzanians, the term Waswahili (sing: Mswahili) was used colloquially to refer to people whose trustworthiness was shaky, particularly in reference to people who cannot fulfil promises or keep appointments. It was not used to refer to people who could not be trusted on money issues.

people who struggle with the sea and live on the coast” (1995: 3), were self-identifying in terms of their mode of livelihood and their environment.

### **3.2.1 Population Issues**

Immigration and periodic population fluctuations were related to dependence on fishing. Generally, government estimates of migration trends in the Tanzanian coastal region indicate relatively low figures for in-migration in comparison to out-migration. For example, in 1995 the estimates of lifetime in-migration for Pwani region were 103,804 while out-migration was 207,716 (Maghimbi, 1997: 7). However, Maghimbi (1997) cautions us not to take these estimates at face value, arguing that there had been an influx of people to the marine fisheries in the 1990s, judging from the pressure on the marine fisheries. Yet, contrary to Maghimbi’s claim, data from the Fisheries Division indicate a decrease in the marine fishing population between 1994 and 1996 (ref: appendix iii). Saadani village government leaders explained that fishing activities have significantly contributed to contemporary increases in immigration in Saadani, a pattern which has continued to rise in the last decade. This is particularly the case for Kajanjo and Porokanya locations at Saadani Chumvi hamlet, where the number of fishing shelters had risen from 4 in 1980 to about 40 by 1998. Saadani central also had a number of newcomers due to fishing. Fishing had attracted people from several parts of the country to Saadani, although most came from the neighbouring Bagamoyo and Pangani districts. By 1998 most had settled permanently in the village (see Chapter Five).

A major reason for immigration to Saadani was that fishing was generally regarded as an accessible form of subsistence for people who had failed to make ends meet through other activities, such as cultivation, paid employment, mining or small-scale businesses. This view was also generally accepted even though people also claimed that fishers seldom get rich. From the late 1980s, fishing came to be regarded as particularly attractive when a general decline in the national economy led to a significant fall in most major traditional employment sectors. This decline affected people’s livelihoods and reduced income-generating opportunities throughout Tanzania. The resulting insecurity compelled many people to seek other means of subsistence. Through

relatives and friends a number of people entered fishing. Fishing in an area such as Saadani also had several other attractive qualities, including the ability to master the technique of fishing using gill nets after only a short time, and the lure of quick money from prawn fishing. As one person said “you can learn how to fish, and be a good fisher, and in the process also become a local Saadani person.”

By 1998, many Saadani’s new immigrants of the early 1990s had already married in the village, although most still preferred to identify themselves according to their places of origin. However, they also realised that their claims to their places of origin were increasingly shifting, especially in relation to their children who might grow to adulthood without leaving Saadani.

Temporary population increases also occurred periodically in Saadani, especially during the major fishing seasons when numbers of visiting fishermen especially from Bagamoyo and Pangani districts, either settled in fishing camps (*madago*) along the beach of Saadani Bay, or resided with local people.<sup>4</sup> A number of people from other neighbouring localities also visited Saadani daily, either to seek medical services at the government dispensary or to visit the market place. This dispensary, which had been built in 1945, was a further focal point and served people from a wide radius, which did not have such services, so that five other settlements depended on this dispensary for immediate health care. People were also attracted to Saadani’s dispensary because fees charged for services were lower than those charged at Saadani Chumvi, the next nearest dispensary, which primarily served the employees of the Coastal Salt Works Company. Saadani also served as a centre for marketing and shopping for people from many small communities along the littoral, such as Buyuni Kuu, Buyuni Kitopeni, and Uvinje which were 12 and ten and eight kilometres north of Saadani respectively, and a few inland places such as Tengwe, 10 kilometres away. Primary school children, some of whom came from as far as Buyuni Kitopeni settlement, also stayed temporarily with relatives in Saadani central village during term time - about nine months every year.

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<sup>4</sup> The Saadani Chumvi hamlet chairperson claimed that it was not always possible to get accurate figures of these periodic population increases since some of these fishers slept on the sand along the beach without constructing a shelter. When prawns were in plenty he said, the number of visiting fishers was so high and some even used to rest in pits they dug on the sand and just covered

### 3.2.2 Literacy and the use of natural resources

Conventional literacy, was not regarded as necessary for people to be able to subsist through fishing. The literacy level in the village in 1998 was estimated at 50 percent among elderly people, and most people of 40 years and younger knew how to read and write Kiswahili (Saadani-1, 1998).<sup>5</sup> Most had received their primary education in the village. Classes at Saadani Primary School ran from standard one to seven.<sup>6</sup> The headteacher reported that almost all children of school-going age were enrolled annually and the percentage of dropouts was very low. The student enrollment for 1998 was about 50 percent of the total number of children in the village. However, there was not much enthusiasm for schooling after primary level particularly because of what fishing had to offer. Between 1995 and 1998, 3 boys had had the opportunity to join secondary education elsewhere in the Pwani region, but none completed the four years of secondary education, and returned to the village to involve themselves in fishing. Young boys began to fish when they were about 14 years old and still at school, and there was often a high rate of truancy from school during major fishing seasons. Girls on the other hand, did not involve themselves in fishing at an early stage. Most become involved in the fried fish trade later in adulthood, which was usually some years after leaving primary school.

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themselves with a polythene bag to keep off mosquitoes. He said "*malazi yao kama kaburi*" (lit: their place to sleep like a grave).

<sup>5</sup> According to a 1974 definition provided by the Tanzanian Ministry for National Education, "a person is literate when he/she has acquired the essential knowledge which enables him/her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her community and whose attainment in reading, writing and arithmetic makes it possible for him/her to continue to use those skills towards the community" (URT-h, 1995: 84). In this regard, efforts to raise the literacy levels of the population were one of the earliest development agendas of the Tanzanian government after independence. The evaluation of literacy in the latest National census, however, only focussed on the ability of a person to read and write in Kiswahili (URT-h, 1988), to which I also referred when I made an assessment of the literacy levels of Saadani people.

<sup>6</sup> Primary school education in Tanzania ends at standard seven whereby pupils sit for secondary school qualifying examinations or, in other places, seek occupational training.

**Table 3.1 Saadani Primary School: Enrolment Trends 1995 – 1998**

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998
Girls	65	68	79	76
Boys	77	69	84	83
Total	142	137	153	159

Source: Saadani Primary School records: 1998

Local people did not regard such conventional formal schooling as important to their lives since, according to them, it was not necessary for their livelihood endeavours. I felt that they were even reluctant to support the primary school materially. Between 1997 and 1998, the primary school, built in 1969, received SGR support in the form of 60 desks and the rehabilitation of its buildings, as part of the SGR's assistance to the local community. According to one SGR official, the villagers were supposed to supply ten desks as the people's contribution towards the school development programme. But, by the time I left Saadani in March 1999, the people had not yet subscribed money for the ten desks, and village government leaders were reluctant to compel them to do so. Local people regarded primary school education simply as part of the village children's growing-up experience, and, from their own long experience, they saw conventional education as ultimately being of little benefit. Saadani parents and children alike placed little value on continuing education, since they understood that the future was bleak even for secondary school leavers, especially under the current national system where "only a minority of primary school leavers manage to obtain a place in secondary schools, and in the aftermath of mass public sector retrenchment" even fewer are able to get employment (Green, 2000: 82).

The very small number of Saadani people employed in village-based institutions (the SGR, primary school and the tourist camp) testified to this and to the reality that most Saadani residents did not meet the minimum education qualifications required for such

employment.<sup>7</sup> In such a situation, and after the initial employment opportunities promised local people at the commencement of the SGR in the 1970s declined (most of the original employees having now retired) opportunities for permanent local employment were not available.

Moreover, local people did not always regard people with wage employment as well off. The only advantage they felt that SGR employees, for example, had over them was a reliable monthly income which, although meagre and paid on irregular days of the month, was at least guaranteed. This guarantee was regarded as an advantage because it was unlike the dependence on income from fishing where fishers could go a whole month without catches worth even TShs 10,000/= a month. In addition, the monthly salaries of the SGR's employees', although paid quite irregularly, could at least be taken as a guarantee by local shopkeepers who gave SGR employees their monthly household requirements on credit, as the shopkeepers understood that the SGR management itself acted as a guarantor for its employees. Still, the payments were meagre and, as local people reasoned, employed people in any event had to engage in alternative income-generating projects to top-up their incomes. According to local people, that the primary school headteacher owned a shop and a sea craft, and that the Medical Assistant also had a shop and the largest number of goats in the village, were testimony to their inability to subsist entirely on their government paid wages. In addition, local people felt that the daily times of work one had to accept if one was in permanent employment were too rigid and did not give an individual the freedom to exploit natural resources one might have wished. For example, most SGR employees could not engage in fishing during the major fishing seasons because of their employed work commitments. They therefore had to depend on other household members to do so. Yet, despite these feelings towards government employment, there was a gradually growing enthusiasm for occupational training or employment, particularly among the youth, as they came to recognise that the recent decline in the fisheries made it very difficult for households to subsist entirely on fishing.

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<sup>7</sup> None of the people in Saadani during my fieldwork possessed the minimum entry qualifications for employment in the government hierarchy which had risen to a requirement of a Form Four Secondary School certificate (Ordinary Level certificate) after the market for qualified people of lower qualifications was saturated.

Local youths wished to be employed in jobs such as drivers, which they regarded highly from seeing visitors or relatives who came briefly to the village from other areas and who served as examples of success.

### 3.3 Social organization and differentiation

Subtle forms of social differentiation were noted amongst local people. They generated differing perspectives with regard to people's relationships with natural resources. The differentiation occurred on the basis of several broad social criteria including religion and ancestral affiliation, material wealth and the nature of traditional employment. Even different accents used in Kiswahili language signified differentiation.

People who regarded themselves as '*wenyeji*' (lit: natives), or original inhabitants of Saadani, were particular in distinguishing their ancestral affiliation as separate from those whom they referred to as '*wakuja*' (lit: those who came) or newcomers. Most *wakuja* had recently settled in Saadani because of fishing activities, having come predominantly from settlements where agriculture was the local economic mainstay. The *wenyeji* preferred to be referred to as *watu wa mwambao* (lit: coastal people), despite the fact that they also acknowledged that part of their ancestry too could be traced to inland areas (*bara*) and that therefore their forefathers had also previously been *wakuja*.

The *wenyeji* versus *wakuja* categorisations bore some relation to different perceptions of fishing and cultivation. To *wenyeji*, fishing was the only type of activity they wanted to engage in, while *wakuja* were more flexible and regarded cultivation as having equal worth to fishing. These attitudes were in some way related to the notions of '*uungwana*' (lit: nobility) and the '*mwinyi*' cultures which had developed during people's interactions with Arab-Shirazi traders and the related slave trade. *Muungwana*, which refers to a free person or patrician (as distinguished from a slave) (Middleton, 1992), was a term used to describe people of so-called 'noble descent' (i.e. who did not descend from slaves). Some local people however used ancestry with ethnic connotations. For example, one local informant explained that "only one person,

Mohamed Mwarabu, could in 1997 be referred to as *muungwana* since his father was a Shirazi. All the rest of us are newcomers.”<sup>8</sup> This man implied that, all the present people of Saadani were ‘newcomers’ in relation to the Arabs and Shirazi people who had previously been regarded as ‘the owners’ (*wenye mji*) just because they had been rulers of Saadani. It was common to hear such views which related the heritage of the area to political relationships, an association that was also used when claims to land or cultivation plots near the shoreline were made. For example, elderly local people claimed that they did not have coconut plantations along the coast because those areas belonged to *waungwana* who were *wenye mji* of Saadani but who were in fact of Arab or Shirazi descent.<sup>9</sup> I explain this aspect in more detail in Chapter Five.

The *mwinyi* (pl: *Mamwinyi*) on the other hand comprised a local high-class social category that developed during the same period as the *uungwana*. *Mamwinyi* were people who had acquired wealth by acting as middlemen during the slave and ivory trade. They also acquired the ability to employ labour or keep slaves themselves (Mpangala, 1992).<sup>10</sup> Some were elevated as local leaders after the demise of Arab-Shirazi political domination. The *mwinyi* culture has since lost some of its associated socio-political and economic significance, one reason being the post-independence adoption of socialist ideals, which discouraged individual accumulation of wealth. However, various individuals in Saadani continued to be so recognized, some through wealth accumulation, others through their specialist knowledge of the Islamic religion that was understood to associate them to Arab-Shirazi settlers.

The terms *uungwana* and *umwinyi* were also used to distinguish people from those who engaged in categories of work generally regarded as manual labour, or to types of work that had previously been performed by slaves or daily paid workers (*vibarua*) for wealthy households. During the slave trade period manual and laborious activities in

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<sup>8</sup> Mzee Makatta, one of my principal informants, was one of those people who related *uungwana* only to those of Arab/Shirazi descent because they had never been taken as slaves. Yet, many other non-Arab peoples claimed that their fathers too had not been taken as slaves although they were not referred to as *waungwana*.

<sup>9</sup> This claim was made irrespective of the fact that many local people claimed that the original settlers of Saadani were indigenous Wazigua.

<sup>10</sup> Oral sources and some literature on the coastal peoples of Tanzania also explain the existence of a system of slavery among local Wazigua communities. In this practice, sometimes brothers in debt would take their sisters’ children and exchange them in lieu of their debts (Swantz, 1970).

wealthy households included fishing, cultivation and domestic work. While *waungwana* and *mamwinyi* were involved in fishing, it was only as owners and sometimes as skippers of fishing vessels. After abolition of the slave trade and Saadani's trading prominence was in decline, several people, especially the *mwinyi*, continued with this kind of work organisation, in fishing activities using daily paid workers who were given a share of the fish catches. It was particularly the colonial introduction of cash crop production and a poll tax, which forced people who were previously not fully engaged in cultivation to cultivate despite their reluctance to work as labourers. There is evidence however that some cultivation was practised even earlier. For example, Burton (1872) observed that cotton production was practised in the Saadani area during his explorations in the mid 1800s, which could have been performed by slaves and indigenous peoples of the area.<sup>11</sup>

Pressure to cultivate also resulted from famines that affected the country in the 1930s to 1940s when, local people recalled, successive famines obliged the then District Commissioner of Bagamoyo to force villagers to plant cassava and lentils and other drought resistant crops.<sup>12</sup> These pressures to cultivate challenged in many ways the concepts of *uungwana* and *umwinyi* as categories of people who did not cultivate.

Some people however cultivated of their own accord. Reminiscing about the past, one elderly woman explained that "several households including those of the descendants of the *mwinyi*, cultivated for household food security." This woman, the widow of one of Saadani's former local leaders, Jumbe Mzee Maftah Hamisi, explained "my late husband, who was born into a high social class, was also a very good farmer. He personally farmed with his two wives and children and his house was always self-sufficient in food staples".

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<sup>11</sup> Kjekshus (1997) also notes that in the late 1880s when Saadani was a flourishing commercial and trading town, it depended on most foodstuffs from the neighbouring villages of the Wazigua and Wadoe people who were cultivators. His observation indicates that not many Saadani people were engaged in cultivation in these times.

<sup>12</sup> This information corroborates Bryceson's (1981: 101-3) findings that forced cassava cultivation was the British colonial government's response to famine from the late 1920s until 1953. Older people remembered a particular DC, a Mr Pike as a strict administrator who ensured that every household in Saadani had a cassava farm. This measure allowed local people to attain food security and, they claim that they thus became satisfied, even if they were forced to cultivate.

Yet, a nominal distinction between those who fished and those who depended on cultivation persisted. The saying, “*muungwana hawezi kulima*” (lit: a noble cannot cultivate), was still used by certain people in the village during the late 1990s, especially by those who regarded themselves as the original local people (*wenyeji*) and who claimed that the only activity they could engage in was fishing. *Wenyeji* regarded cultivation and salt making as drudgerous and below their statuses, even though the most commonly used fishing technique was equally laborious. Still, many local people regarded fishing as having a higher social status than other types of work. The specifics of fishing activities served as another basis for differentiation. Some people explained that fishing was a ‘clean’ activity that did not soil its participants in the same way that cultivation or salt making did. They also claimed that fishing required only a short and fixed period of labour (sometimes only three or four hours a day) and, depending on the tides and seasons, the active working period could be even shorter. It thus allowed ample time to rest. “A fisher only works for three or four hours a day and reaps daily from his activity, unlike cultivation which requires one to toil for a long period without a cash income,” one local man said.

However, as Mesaki (1997b) notes, most fishing people in contemporary Tanzania cannot subsist without combining fishing with another activity, usually cultivation. In Saadani, the establishment of the SGR and the related demarcation of land for the game reserve had created a land-dispossessed category of people who despite having valorised fishing or cultivation, had farmed within the Saadani area. Local people estimated that before the establishment of the SGR most households had some two hectares of land under cultivation, usually in several plots separated according to terrain and the land's suitability for a particular crop. Yet in the late 1990s just a few households retained only small pockets of land all close to the coast in Marumbi and Uvinje, the SGR having turned many households, previously dependent on combining fishing with cultivation, into predominantly fishing households.

Religious beliefs also featured to some extent in people's general understanding of life. Although most were followers of the Islamic religion, Islam's influence was not

demonstrated in their daily life.<sup>13</sup> Muslims accounted for about 99 percent of the people, but most of their beliefs and practices had developed from a combination of traditional belief systems and Islamic principles. Most people would not kill or eat suiline species (wild pig and warthog) which were abundant in the area, although these animals destroyed most of the crops that the villagers tried to grow. Many people also did not regularly attend the Friday worship at the Mosque. Their adherence to Islamic rites was mostly during ceremonies accompanying funerals, weddings and ritual offerings (*tambiko*) although these also incorporated some traditional practices associated with people's ancestral origins. There was thus a generally hybrid outlook on life among the people rather than a rigid embrace of Islam and its principles.

The few people of Christian faith in Saadani central were a few SGR employees and some local salt producers.<sup>14</sup> Many were recent newcomers and had no plans to settle permanently in the village. These people ate wild pig and warthog when it became available to them, and they prayed in the village primary school. In 1997, a team of visitors from Germany, brought by one of the Evangelical churches in Bagamoyo district, requested permission from the village government to renovate the old German Fort and proposed that it then be used for Christian worship purposes. The village elders, all Muslims, rejected the request on the grounds that programmes for renovation were being made by the District government. Yet, as I came to learn later, by rejecting the proposal, the Saadani elders were in fact rejecting what they saw as a possibility of foreign control. Moreover, they wanted neither a Christian influence in their village nor Germans control of the fort once again. Despite these underlying tensions, in day-to-day interactions religion did not feature as a significant criterion in influencing social relationships, neither did it influence people's relationships with the sea.

Other criteria for differentiation were based on material property, which included, ownership of fishing equipment (fishing nets and sea craft), ownership of businesses

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<sup>13</sup> Several authors on the Islamic religion explain that the spread of Islam in many parts of the world incorporated local cultures to produce a hybrid culture which became a way of life that incorporated several practices from each cultural system (Altorki, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> There were only 8 people of the Christian faith living in Saadani. They included three employees of the SGR, three local salt producers and the village Medical Assistant and his daughter.

(shops and 'hotels' [see Chapter Six]) and ownership of significant movable property (such as motor vehicles). Only one person in the village, Mzee Mfaume, owned two motor vehicles.<sup>15</sup> The owner of these two vehicles was regarded as the wealthiest person in Saadani and his cumulative wealth gave him the prestige of being called *mwinyi* by other local people. He however claimed he had also once been a fisher who toiled as other fishers do, contradicting the belief that people cannot get rich through fishing. This man also owned a planked dhow (*dau*), constructed for him in 1998. Yet, even though his current wealth gave him high status, he still needed to establish himself in fishing to ensure that he was among those engaged with the sea. He never himself went to sea with the craft. His involvement was through having engaged a local youth to fish using the *dau*, the proceeds of which the two of them shared.

Local people generally had a high regard for sea craft because of their importance in fishing. Sea craft enabled fishers to fish in deep waters, either by using line and hook or by setting drift nets. Fish caught thus were larger and more marketable at Bagamoyo or Zanzibar, and even to prawn dealers who visited the village, than were the finfish caught by shore-based gill net trawling. The transportation hitches related to the marketing of prawns also made sea craft very valuable, as one man commented idiomatically that, "*mwenye chombo, ana chombo*"<sup>16</sup> which implied that one who has a sea craft, has valuable property. He further explained: "a person who has a sea craft can benefit through it in many ways. He is ensured of fishing, of transportation or can hire it when he wants to. If he is in a bad financial situation, he can pawn it".

Yet only a five local households owned sea craft in March 1999 that were mostly used for fishing. Most people, when asked why they did not own sea craft they all so valued, answered that they could not afford to purchase one, or even to cover local manufacturing costs. In November 1997, one villager, a local shopkeeper who sometimes fished using gill nets during the peak fishing seasons, crafted a *dau*. When

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<sup>15</sup> Only one of the cars was in good condition. Although the poor state of the roads did not allow the car to be driven far from the village, it was always a delight to young boys when one of the people this man engaged as a driver drove the car around the village carrying them. I felt that this act was both an exhibition of prosperity and of sharing with local people.

<sup>16</sup> *Chombo* (pl: *vyombo*) literally means implement, tool, utensil or instrument (1) to work with (2) for containing something. *Chombo* is also used to refer to a sea craft of any type. *Chombo* in this phrase was used in the latter meaning.

prawn catches started to decline, he turned to finfish fishing so that he could prepare dried fish (*ng'onnda*) for sale. He thus bought a kapok tree from a nearby area and had a *dau* crafted from it. The total costs of having the craft built were TShs 40,000/=. Other owners of sea craft were the prominent person I mentioned above, the village chairperson, the primary school head teacher and the sons of a prominent local woman, all of whom were regarded as having significant alternative sources of income which had enabled them to acquire a sea craft. Two of these craft were occasionally also used to transport marine produce to Bagamoyo or Zanzibar, but mostly they were used to ferry fishers to different fishing locations thus earning their owners an income.

Despite the high value placed on sea craft, in 1997 there was no sea craft construction industry in Saadani. The closest settlement with a formal sea craft industry was Mlingotini, south of Saadani. Some boat building also occurred in Bagamoyo. I initially saw this as contradicting the observations made by previous studies on the Swahili coast which established that boat building was common in most Swahili settlements (Prins, 1965; Middleton, 1992). I later learned that the use of locally made sea craft was common in the 1960s and 1970s, but declined in the 1980s.<sup>17</sup> Various reasons were offered for why there was no longer a boat building industry in such a fishing-dependent area. Older people claimed that the industry died because of the influx of people from inland cultivator economies, who, lacking any sea craft culture, had eroded Saadani's earlier sea craft construction tradition. Younger men argued that it was the introduction of gill nets for prawn fishing in the late 1970s which had led to the devaluation of sea craft. Prawns could be caught within 100 to 150 metres from Saadani Bay's shoreline, and gill nets proved to be the most efficient method for doing so. Gill net fishing also allowed greater direct participation in productive activity. Every able-bodied male was able to join the fisheries once able to handle gill nets and accepted by the fishing community, and did not have to depend on boat-owning lords as occurred elsewhere in the coast of mainland Tanzania (Gibbon, 1997; Mésaki, 1997).

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<sup>17</sup> Local people recall that in the 1980s, only one local person owned an out-rigger canoe (*mashua*) which he then gave to his nephew to fish with. By 1997, the craft had long depreciated in use.

Local men in their thirties claimed they had used gill nets throughout their fishing lives. Moreover, they claimed that older men, having realised they could not cope with gill net fishing in their old age, experienced a sense of loss. And so, they claimed, older people looked for scapegoats to blame for the decline in sea craftsmanship. However, the recent declining catches using gill nets and the need to fish in deeper, more productive waters, had prompted local people to revalue sea craft.

Owning a shop was also regarded as productive, despite a shop's lack of direct relationship to resource extraction. Having a shop in Saadani meant that the owner was not compelled to participate physically in fishing - the major local source of income, but the shop enabled the person to enter into multiple local social relationships, all of which intensified during major fishing seasons. In 1998, there were six shops in Saadani. Two shop owners were recent settlers and recognised as newcomers. One of these was the primary school headteacher, the other the village medical assistant. Both claimed to have had accumulated their starting capital through petty trade in the village, whereas the remaining four shop owners claimed to have done so from fishing. Only one of these six shop owners periodically engaged in fishing using the sea craft he also owned.

Because few people engaged in cultivation, local people and workers all depended on these shops for foodstuffs. Even those who cultivated could not achieve food security from the very small-scale cultivation practised in 1997. People's dependence on the village shops increased during the rainy seasons, particularly because the poor means of transport made it difficult for other small traders to import goods or food stuffs to the village from neighbouring cultivating areas. For example, during the El Nino rains in 1997, the main food staple, maize meal (*unga wa sembe*), was sometimes unavailable for up to three days, and shop owners resorted to purchasing a low grade maize meal (*dona*) from the nearest village and transported it into Saadani by foot or bicycle. Fresh supplies from Bagamoyo or Zanzibar had to be brought in by sea. Such periodic shortages impacted severely on local people's lives, especially because they bought food on a daily basis and in small quantities because their small-scale fishing generated small amounts of cash daily, and limited their purchasing power. The phrase "*leo kupata, kesho kukosa*" (lit: today to get, tomorrow to lose) was often used by

fishers to illustrate the reality of small-scale fishing, and summarised people's own attitudes towards fishing. However, local shop owners understood that their own successes depended on the fishers' successes, and that their own incomes would fluctuate significantly with the seasons.

Another criterion for differentiation based on material property was ownership of modes of transport. A bicycle was regarded as an important asset, since it allowed people to travel between fishing locations other areas. All bicycles in the village were owned by men, which enabled them to transport their products such as dried fish, to market centres inland. It was more complicated for women, who had either to hire a bicycle to transport them to the markets, or to rely on their partners or husbands. I discuss this issue in Chapter Six.

Local people thus categorised themselves socially according to different criteria, identifiable only by themselves. However, the boundaries of these differences were a fairly fluid to allow other people entry when appropriate criteria were met. I follow Askew's (1999) observation when she explains that it was common for individuals along the coast "to exploit the variety of options available to them, defining and redefining their relationships in relation to the necessities of the moment, but within some overarching principle that may or may not always be recognized" (1999: 75). People were thus able to relate to other people within certain common understandings and practices, and selectively chose to differentiate themselves according to either ideological or material circumstances.

### **3.4 The Situation of Women**

The history of Saadani illustrates local women's diverse experiences, and how they have established a rich foundation on which varying degrees of consciousness, as women and as individuals of different socio-cultural situations have been borne. Women's statuses were influenced by the social and economic situation of their households, the Islamic religion, and certain cultural practices related to taboos and people's places of origins. Local gender ideologies were also important in shaping

women's obligations and rights in relation to men. Together, these processes determined a woman's ability to exercise individual decisions about the use of natural resources and the extent to which a woman could negotiate leverage in the social environment.

The Islamic religion, as practised in Saadani, had incorporated many aspects of the local cultures and ancestral origins to produce a hybrid culture. By the late 1990s, changing local social and economic situations produced several further re-interpretations and practices of gender relations according to Islamic and Arabic ideals, and, as a result, some previous cultural practices declined completely. The practice of women's seclusion, for example, common earlier in some households, was not observed, and both single and married women had the freedom to engage in activities outside their homes.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, many past aspects of a sexual division of labour were not strictly adhered to. The ways in which roles and tasks were organised in a particular household came to be dependent on the structure and ideals upheld by that individual household. The claim that 'a woman should be kept at home, while the man assures household sustenance' was taken only as a slogan, reminiscent of past ways of life. However, certain practices were still respected. These included certain matrilineal principles and loose co-residential household groups in which individuals could gain access to descent-group property. These practices gave women some freedom of control over resources, and the freedom to dispose of, as gifts, certain property of value which they owned, such as plots of land or houses (Caplan, 1984). These practices partially diluted a prevailing patriarchal influence over household affairs and resource management practices. I explain this principle in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

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<sup>18</sup> The Sheikh or religious leader in the village supported the practice of women's seclusion which he claimed was in accordance with the provisions of clauses 30-31 of Surat-An-Nur No. 30-31 in the Koran. The Sheikh said that, according to the Islamic religion, "*kumtawisha mke ni sunna*" (lit: placing a woman in seclusion is preferable). *Sunna* according to Saadani people, implies an act which is good or meritorious and preferable for a Muslim household, but which is not absolutely binding or an obligation which one has to abide by, such as what they call *faradhi* (lit: obligation or prescribed duty). People understood that, if a person was able to practice what was regarded as *sunna*, then that person would receive *thawabu* (lit: a reward from God). However, local people realised that one's ability to practice *sunna* depended on the reality of the household of which the individual was part.

The class position of a woman's household influenced, to a significant degree, the social situation of each woman, as Bi Bk, a woman in her 70s explained:

When I was young, a woman was often reminded that she had to adhere to the provisions of Islam that concern women's conduct in public and in domestic spaces. However, practices such as seclusion depended on the social and economic status of the woman's household. Women in better-off households spent their days within the surroundings of their houses, and would only come out early in the morning to sweep the area immediately in front of their houses, or late in the evening to visit friends, relatives or the sick. When they came out of their homes, they would always be clothed in a *baibui*.<sup>19</sup> In those households that observed seclusion, husbands would even supply their wives with firewood, water and food if they did not have servants. The man's long standing obligation to provide his household with relish (*kitweleo*) coincided with this seclusion. The wife's obligation was to attend to household duties and to the husband. Women in these better-off households engaged in petty income generation activities only within the compounds of their houses. If necessary, a child would be sent to the market place to sell the items prepared for sale, such as snacks or mats. Women in poorer households and single women were less privileged, and, in addition to their daily duties for household maintenance, they also cultivated, as well as catching small shrimp (*ushimba*) on the edges of the sea.

Another practice that had disappeared almost completely was keeping young pubescent girls in seclusion. Local sources claimed that the onset of puberty for both girls and boys was in the late 1990s treated in a much-relaxed way than had been the case in the past. In April 1998, a girl who was in standard five at Saadani primary school started menstruating, and she just stayed home for a day during which her elder sister instructed her how to attend to her body hygiene appropriately, now that she was 'grown-up'. She went to school the following day. Only those households that still maintained ties with the practices of their original homes, such as at neighbouring Mkange or Mbwebwe, took their children to their kin in those areas for the performance of puberty rituals and ceremonies. At these places, girls were normally kept in seclusion for several days after which a ceremony was performed. Thereafter she had to remain within the surroundings of her parents' house until a suitor appeared.

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<sup>19</sup> *Baibui* is a dress-like black robe worn by women that comes from an Arab tradition. The *baibui* is put on top of normal wear and has a hood over the head.

I realised during my fieldwork that there were few households in which women's work was defined as strictly within the 'domestic sphere'. These few households included those of some of the shop owners, some of the fish net owners or prawn dealers and that of the village Sheikh. This was because the men's incomes in these households were sufficient to meet general household needs, and the female members of their households did not have to engage in income-generating activities in order to top up the household's cash requirements. These few households were also able to engage labour to perform duties such as collecting fuel wood and water. Wives and women members in other households performed a wide range of duties related to immediate household maintenance, such as nurturing children, cooking, cleaning, fetching firewood and water, in addition to cultivation or venturing out to do small-scale and long distance trading. Many people complained that increasing economic hardships had compelled women to work outside the home and to contribute to their household's subsistence requirements, and it was evident that many local women were engaged in activities outside their homes, such as long-distance fish trading (see Chapter Six).

However, despite a generally liberal interpretation of roles and obligations in Saadani and the relative freedom women had in pursuing individual activities, women were hardly represented in the public political sphere. Men made most village-based decisions. Yet women spoke freely when discussing village-level decisions at gatherings around their homes. But they also knew their limits in soliciting public opinion. They operated only in those arenas permitted by Saadani society. For example, apart from religious ceremonies and ritual practices, women organised cultural ceremonies such as the marriages of children and household-based economic activities. Women's social status also came from their engagement in public duties. The few prominent local women included two women who had once been employed by the SGR and two others who were traditional birth attendants. The age of a woman was a significant attribute to command public hearing and respect. For example, it was common for village elders to consult or discuss issues of public rituals and ceremonies with elderly women who were considered as having some influence on the younger generation.

Amidst the various ways women's status was understood, their sexuality and fertility were regarded as central aspects in the reproductive arena and represented a range of qualities and symbols. Women's sexual expressions and practices demanded control, but their fertility was taken as a symbol of honour. People believed that women's sexuality, if not regulated, could have negative influences on productive activities. (I explain this in more detail in Chapter Six). At the same time, women's ability to reproduce life (children) was respected as a symbol of abundance reflecting a household's prosperity, and thus the whole community's. Since it was common for both women and men to practice serial monogamy, most women regarded their relationship to a man as meaningful particularly if it enabled them to have a child. It was common to have children from different liaisons. Polygyny was un-common despite the fact that Islam permits men to have up to four wives simultaneously. Only one man in Saadani central had three wives, and one at Uvinje had two. Women themselves were reluctant to stay in a polygynous relationship and preferred serial monogamy.

Despite prevailing attitudes towards women's sexuality and fertility, convergences of gender and socio-economic class often overrode women's situations and the limitations or opportunities which Saadani society defined for a woman. To illustrate, I narrate a cherished Saadani folk tale about the sacrificial offering of a slave girl so that water would be available for residents of Saadani. This legend of 'the virgin and water' recalls how a *mwanamwari* (lit: a pubescent girl) was sacrificed. It reflects the articulation of gender and class in broader processes of resource management in ways similar to the way Bi Bk had explained and to the ways in which women in Saadani today relate to natural resources. It also reflects how women have always been understood to be necessary providers and life-givers.

**Title: Legend of 'the virgin' and 'water'**

During the period of Arab-Shirazi settlement in the village, there was a serious shortage of clean water for domestic consumption, especially during the dry season. The Mvave River used to dry up completely, and people had to fetch water at the Wami River, about four hours walk from the village. The inhabitants decided to conduct a ritual offering (*kufanya sadaka*) to appease

the ancestors and God so that they could get a reliable water supply. A young pubescent virgin girl (*mwanamwari*) was selected for the purpose (it is said she was a slave) because virginity was understood as a symbol of purity and abundance, and a virgin was regarded as a morally clean person with great potential to attract blessings, abundance and plenty. It is claimed that the girl was buried alive alongside the river. Prayers were conducted for abundance of water to satisfy the villagers' needs the whole year through. Since that time, it was said, the River Mvave has never dried up completely and, during the dry season, people dig shallow wells on the river bed and get fresh water for their daily usage, a phenomenon they attribute to the sacrifice of the virgin.<sup>20</sup>

What we see here is a local symbolism of woman as life-giver being transferred to general livelihood situations of people. A pubescent virgin was also understood to have acquired the potential for biological reproduction and therefore the qualities for abundance without having being tainted yet by sexual activity. Yet, simultaneously, the prevailing social hierarchy that placed people with slave ancestry into a lower social category than the *waungwana* or *ma-mwinyi* the slave masters meant that even in legend, it had to be a slave girl who was offered as sacrifice.

The folk tale reflects ideas about how power should be played out, depending on the socio-political circumstances of women, and how this power is used to influence decisions and obligations of women in different social circumstances. As my findings in the following chapters illustrate, many women's relationships to natural resources were not only influenced by their being part of the local Saadani community, or by their gender and roles in productive activities, but also by their class positions. Together, these aspects produced within each individual a sexually differentiated social being in relation to natural resource management processes.

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<sup>20</sup> One villager used the words *msafi na mwenye kuleta neema* which implied morally pure and endowed with abundance when explaining why a pubescent girl was chosen for the sacrifice. Some people claim that the ritual sacrifice involved twin virgin sisters. Although no one was able to locate the sacrificial place during my stay in Saadani, the tale is still often narrated to new comers in the village when the dry season comes and people start to dig for water on the river bed.

### **3.4.1 Ownership of property according to gender descriptions**

The processes leading to ownership of certain types of property can also be analysed for its gender connotations. Individuals could obtain property through inheritance, purchase, as gifts or through divorce. Many households adhered to the inheritance provisions of the Islamic religion that gave a woman a share only half that of a male heir, a finding that corroborates earlier studies on the Swahili coast (Caplan, 1984; Landberg, 1986). As regards purchases and gifts, women and men often purchased or received gifts that were in accordance with locally prescribed gendered positions. When offered as gifts, potentially productive and income generating goods and resources, such as bicycles, fishing nets and sea craft were normally given to men, since property such as these were seen as related to local definitions of men's activities. Women often inherited consumer items such as clothing and household furniture.

Some women were able to own property such as goats, given to them as gifts by their husbands. However, and as one woman said, "it is not always that women receive property from a husband, nor do women always rely on the provisions of the Islamic religion to demand or expect a share of property". This is because women perceived men as 'unreliable' and, therefore, married women believed that they should plan independently for their future, just in case their marriages did not last. Some married women also received property from their maternal or paternal homes, a practice made possible by the principle of descent-group property. Women were thus able to gain access to and control property not pooled under the authority of a male head, a characteristic common in other Tanzanian coastal communities (Caplan, 1984). Consequently, if land or a house was available in the descent-group's estate, women too would have access rights to that land or house.

Yet, the distribution of gifts in Saadani was still genderised, even when gifts came from a mother's estate (being distributed as assets to her children), as the following case illustrates.

### **Case Study 3.1: Inheritance on genderised terms<sup>21</sup>**

Bi Z was a single mother in her fifties with three sons and two daughters. She had accumulated money through various sources. She had worked as a SGR Game Attendant from the late 1970s to 1996, a job that allowed her to accumulate some money in a National provident fund. She had also operated a small village shop but stopped in 1997 for health reasons. In late 1997, she gave some savings to her sons, enabling them to purchase a dug-out canoe (*ngalawa*). She claimed to have topped-up the difference between the money her sons had acquired after selling a house inherited from their maternal uncle. Bi Z said "I have given the boys their '*urithi*' (lit: inheritance).<sup>22</sup> I wanted them to have a sea craft because they are fishers. So I advised them to purchase one". She also said that she believed her daughters understood they had no claim to the canoe because they were not fishers. The girls, she said, could expect other things from her, including a share of her house and household furniture.

Bi Z's actions exemplify how many women internalised a gender categorisation of roles and property ownership. At the time she gave her sons money, Bi Z was single, able to retain her independence from the clutches of marriage and beyond men's control in disposing resources. Yet, even for a woman such as she, when she had the chance to distribute her assets she gave those with the highest productive value to her sons and not her daughters. While a house could be given to women and men, fishing equipment was to be given only to men.

Yet, in a few cases, parents or a husband did give a woman fishing nets. Two local women owned fishing nets. One had been given it by her father. She was his eldest daughter, divorced and living with her parents. Wanting her to earn her own living, he gave her a fishing net, ignoring the general attitudes towards giving women property of this nature. He also gave nets to her two brothers, who had their own homes. The second woman had acquired her net from her part of her deceased husband's estate.

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<sup>21</sup> I had to request a close friend of Bi Z to obtain this information for me since I was not able to interview Bi Z herself, who during my fieldwork, was often away from the village.

She had no children of her own and cared for her husband's two daughters by another wife, and their children. The household had no adult male member and the woman knew that the net would have depreciated in use value by the time a four year-old grandson grew up and would be able to use it.

Despite owning nets, neither woman used it herself. In the first case, the woman claimed she was ready to allow only her brothers to use the net, and often received finfish as relish (*kitweleo*) from them. But since the brothers had their own nets, hers was left to lie idle. The net of the other woman was also left idle, and neither woman lent her net to others. In this case, both nets stopped being of any use as productive value. I came to learn that these women feared the complications that would have arisen in the distribution of catches had they lent the nets to fishers to whom they were unrelated unless they monitored the fishing activities, which was difficult, as women, to do.

Women could also own purchased property. However, a woman's marital status often influenced the type of assets she purchased. For example, married women understood that purchasing their own house could be taken as a challenge to a husband's authority. Consequently most waited to inherit to gain usufruct rights to a house, or in cases where there was only one house in an estate, rooms or sections of the house. Only fifteen out of the thirty nine women households heads controlled the houses they lived in. Some simply remained in the houses their parents had occupied because their brothers had built their own houses. Four women who had personally met the costs of constructing their houses were owners of these houses. Another had built a house on a plot given her by her mother before she had died. Assisted by her eldest daughter, a fried fish trader, she purchased poles for construction, coconut palms for thatching and a mason's labour. With her children, she collected the various building materials, such as water, stones and sticks, and plastering clay. Younger women preferred to avoid gender conflicts and purchased consumer items, such as clothing and furniture, with income over which they had discretion.

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<sup>22</sup> *Urithi* (noun) comes from the verb, *rithi*, which literally means inherit. In the language of daily usage, *urithi* is also used to refer to something one leaves to another even before death, a practice whose objective in many cases is to ensure the recipients' future livelihood security.

Clearly gender was a significant criterion for social differentiation although some individuals found ways to overcome gender constraints. Yet, these differences notwithstanding, local people were linked together by the ways they interpreted the value of natural resources within the environmental circumstances of the Saadani area.

I now examine the implications that environmental factors, such as climatic seasons and the daily and monthly tidal variations due to the lunar cycle, have had on Saadani women and men's daily and annual organization of work. What emerges illustrates the importance of recognizing the experiences and understandings about natural production systems as influenced by environmental processes and the limitations or possibilities they avail to people.

### **3.5 Production Activities and Seasonality of Natural Resource Uses**

The Saadani ecosystem is a well-endowed natural resource environment which can support a various of activities for local livelihoods and for national economic purposes (IRA-UDsm, 1996; Haase *et al*, 1996).<sup>23</sup> Its natural resource base comprises the fishery, wildlife, coastal forests and mangroves, and a beautiful stretch of sandy beach. The main local production activities include fishing, salt making and trade in marine products (see table 3.4). The practice of keeping cattle, sheep and donkeys, common in the 1920s –1940s, had declined altogether by 1997 (BN&R, 1930), and goats and chickens were the only livestock kept in Saadani between 1997 and 1999. Cultivation, was performed, but on a small scale.

Five local institutions provided salaried employment, but only for a few people, most not local Saadani residents. These people did not intend to settle permanently in Saadani, but expected to leave the village on retirement or on transfer. Of the five

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<sup>23</sup> An Environmental Evaluation for Tourism Development in the SGR however suggested that although there is some potential for tourism in the SGR area, the potential for tourism-related infrastructural development has however been over-valued. This is because among other things, the Saadani ecosystem is biophysically fragile and in future may compete with pressure from the activities of the surrounding population (IRA-UDsm, 1996).

institutions, the SGR had 17 employees, but only three of them local. By 1998, the tourist camp included four village youth among its ten employees, the primary school had five male teachers, all from outside the village, as were the dispensary's three staff members.

The SGR also offered opportunities for daily paid labour, especially during patrols in the game reserve for which only men were employed. Other local people who found work as daily paid labourers, for cleaning the SGR office or residential premises, or maintaining the airstrip, were all paid a government regulated daily wage. The Coastal Salt Works Company also offered daily paid employment for packing salt in 50 kilogramme bags during the dry season. But only a few local men and women took up such employment. Women preferred to engage in the sale of fried fish and managing small eating-places called *hoteli* (Appendix iv provides a summary of local activities and average incomes). The Wildlife Fund for Nature also recruited one local man to oversee the village tree seedling nursery. Local people thus engaged predominantly in activities involving direct exploitation of coastal and marine resources. Wildlife and tourism could have provided another economic opportunity for local people but, as I discuss in Chapter Four, it did not do so.

As the following table (Table 3.2) illustrates, fishing dominated the local economy, although the economy was essentially mixed and local people relied on multiple activities for their livelihoods. Fishing was the major (if not only) source of livelihood for many households and, as I illustrate further in Chapters Five and Six, it was also central to social relationships and the construction of identities. Fishing employed almost all able-bodied men, and a few women. In 1998, a population census for fishers conducted by the Bagamoyo Natural Resources office counted 97 percent of local fishers as men. There were only five women who engaged in fishing, four of them seasonally, fishing only during the major fishing seasons when expectations of good catches were expected.

**Table 3.2: Distribution of types of employment or participation in major livelihood activities in Saadani/Uvinje**

(Nov 1997-March 1999)

Type of Activity	No	Women	Men
Health Centre – (I)	3	1	2
Primary School – (I)	5	-	5
The Camp – (I)	4		4
Salt making	7		7
Trade in fuel wood	11	6	5
Fish net owners/ prawns dealers ( <i>tajiri wa nyavu/mmumuzi</i> )	8	-	8
Cultivation	37	23	14
Fishing	167	5*	164
Trade in fried finfish	Na	Most able-bodied women**	-
Trade in dry finfish ( <i>ng'onnda</i> )	8	-	8
Saadani Game Reserve – (I)	17	-	17
Tree seedling nursery	1	-	1

**Legend**

\* = only one woman was categorised as a fisher. Others were occasional participants.

\*\* = most able-bodied women in Saadani-central, one woman in Uvinje

I = institutions or work places with formal employment regulations.

Source: Socio-economic base line survey of Saadani central/Uvinje. March 1999.

Fishing in Saadani was a daily activity. However, the intensity of fishing activities was influenced by two factors. Firstly, the monthly tidal variations influenced by the lunar cycle, and secondly the annual seasonal changes. Within each monthly period the intensity of fishing was highest during spring high tides (*bamvua*), a seven to eight-day period of high tides ideal for fishing. It was reduced during the neap tides (*maji mafu*), a monthly seven-day low tide period which was not very productive.

Seasonal climatic changes also influence the intensity of daily fishing activities. These seasonal changes also influence other local production activities. Climatic changes were mostly influenced by the two great air streams, the Northeast monsoons and the Southeast trades, which had a significant effect on the climate and availability of fish. Firstly, these winds (along with the topography) contribute to significant annual variations in the weather. Secondly they bring about changes in currents and seawater temperatures which have great impact on the migration of fish. The Northeast monsoons (*kaskazi*) prevail from November or December until February or March, accompanied by the hot season (*kiangazi*). At the start of this period, between November and mid-January, short rains (*vuli*) fall. The Southeast trade winds (*kusi*), also known as the Southeast monsoons, blow from April until October. They bring the cold season (*kipupwe*) between June-July and August, and the long rains (*masika*) which normally fall between March and May. This season is also accompanied by a steady swell of the sea which influences fish migration (Mesaki, 1997).

The first and longer major fishing season for Saadani starts in March to mid-June. The second major fishing season starts during mid-November and ends towards mid January. Prawn fishing whose intensity depends on the annual seasonal changes is the major resource sought by local people during these fishing seasons.<sup>24</sup>

During both major fishing seasons, almost all social relationships and economic activities turned towards the local fisheries and fishing related activities. The period between mid June to November, which is the off-fishing season, is a period of 'slow motion' in the village. Only the salt producers and those who practised cultivation were seen to be active. Usually during off-fishing periods, about 40 percent of the youth migrated to Bagamoyo or Dar es Salaam to stay with relatives or to seek daily paid employment in various places. The men who chose to remain in the village during these months utilised the time to mend and prepare their fishing nets and traps ready

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<sup>24</sup> The major types of prawns caught were giant tiger prawns (*kaji* – *penaeus monodon*) and white indian shrimp (*kamba* – *penaeus indicus*). The common types of finfish caught included lizard fishes (*pooza* – *saurida sp*), catfish (*hongwe* – *arius sp*), mackerel (*vibua* – *rasterilliger kanagurta*), sharks (*papa*), rays (*tasi*), snappers (*changu* – *lutjanus fulviflamma*), sardines and a variety of fish types which included *magege*, *ndadi*, *panga shebe* and *susu*. Flat-head mullet (*mkizi*) were also caught, but only seasonally.

for the next major fishing season. They also fished around water inlets (*mito*) by using basket traps fixed on weirs.

The seasonal characteristics of prawn fishing influenced local people's lives in many ways. Fishing, which was an almost year-round activity, came to be related to what local people called '*msimu*'.<sup>25</sup> Echoing many others, one person said "our lives have come to be directed by *msimu*, and we think that fishing basically means catching prawns. But it is true, everything now depends on catching prawns". One fisher recalled how the onset of the major fishing season used to be signalled during the times before the depletion of green turtles stocks by local people noticing their eggs in bushes near the shore. Once eggs had been located, local people spread the message "*kasa kapanda, msimu tayari*" (lit: the turtle is up, the season has started) welcome information in the village because it implied the end of a period of few activities and low incomes. Other activities, such as shop-keeping and women's *hoteli* enterprises, also flourished during *msimu*. *Msimu* was thus seen to influence a whole range of livelihood activities and enhance people's life situations. *Sio msimu* (lit: not the season) was when people did other types of less productively satisfying work.

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<sup>25</sup> *Msimu* (lit: season) is a term which in Kiswahili of daily usage is normally used to refer to any season such as cultivating season (*msimu wa kilimo*), dry season (*msimu wa kiangazi*) or fishing season (*msimu wa uvuvi*). In Saadani however, *msimu* came to be used specifically to refer to the major fishing seasons.

**Table 3.3: Seasons, Symbols and Natural Resource Uses**

Month	Climate & season	Activity
January	-NE monsoons ( <i>kaskazi</i> ) -hot & humid climate	-second major fishing season ends mid-January -salt making, -fishing around inlets ( <i>mito</i> ) -mending fish nets and preparation of traditional fishing equipment (eg. <i>uzio</i> , <i>wando</i> , <i>migono</i> ).
February	-“-	-salt making
March	-start of long rains ( <i>masika</i> ) -porpoise ( <i>pomboo</i> ) and flat-head mullet ( <i>mkizi</i> ) travel south	-first major fishing season begins in mid-March -rice cultivation
April	-long rains continue -Southeast monsoons ( <i>kusi</i> ) start-	-fishing
May	-“-	-fishing
June	-cold season ( <i>kipupwe</i> ) -strong cold winds ( <i>parataza</i> )	--end of first major fishing season late May/early June
July	-cold season	-local salt making and salt packing at Coastal Salt works
August	-start of dry season ( <i>kiangazi</i> )	-low fishing period
September	-dry season	-low fishing period
October	-southeast monsoons die down	-fishing begins to pick up
November	-short rains ( <i>vuli</i> ) -porpoise & flathead mullet travel north	2 <sup>nd</sup> major fishing season starts (mid-Nov) -cultivation of pulses
December	-NE monsoons start in mid-December ( <i>kaskazi</i> )	-fishing

**Source:** Saadani local people. Collected between November 1997-March 1999.

The dry season was also the salt-making period and the period for the preparation of plots for cultivation. The local salt-making industry, located at Jangwani area in Marumbi, was an alternative income source for only a few people. Salt was produced by boiling concentrated brine from sea water in a large aluminium pan (ref: picture 3.1). The process used a lot of fuel wood. There were just four salt production units in November 1998. Two were owned by independent producers who included two men who came to Saadani from Kigoma region in 1996 and 1997.<sup>26</sup> The other two belonged to a local Saadani person who used hired labour on a half-to-half share basis, the salt produce being distributed into two equal shares to the owner of the unit and

<sup>26</sup> These two people claimed that they specifically came to Saadani to work as salt producers after having been informed by one of their colleagues who had arrived in Saadani earlier. The two had already learnt how to fish using gill nets.

respectively the workers. In 1998, all salt producers and labourers were men. As I explain in more detail in Chapter Four, a series of government regulations, including health standards relating to salt production, and SGR restrictions on fuel wood collection, had together discouraged many previous salt producers, including the few women who had produced salt in the late 1980s. These women claimed that the requirements and restrictions meant that the incomes were no longer worth the labour required.

Cultivation was seen by some women as an easier activity than salt making. However, in 1997, only small-scale cultivation could be practised, and only to supplement the need for food staples and some green vegetables. It involved mostly middle-aged and elderly women, and a few elderly men. Only people in Uvinje and Marumbi hamlets had cultivation plots, on average  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 hectares each. Some tended a few fruit trees such as pawpaws and lemons. Women in Saadani central also raised green vegetables on small plots within the compounds of their houses, and residents of Uvinje maintained coconut groves, some within the SGR's controversial boundary demarcation. In addition, two industrious Saadani youth had purchased tracts of land in Buyuni Kuu, north of Saadani, where they raised coconuts and cultivated maize. One person, MT, who lived in Marumbi, near the Marumbi salt works held a 10 hectares plot of land which he had acquired from a Dar es Salaam based person who had once used it for a coconut grove. MT had planted four hectares of it with coconut palms, cassava and green vegetables, and he had plans to acquire a title deed to protect it from being taken over by other people. However, the presence of wild pigs, warthog and monkeys required that he keep guard over the fields for extended periods.

The limitations (and possibilities) that the changing seasons posed for people's livelihood patterns were, in many ways, aggravated by Saadani's poor transportation situation. Poor communications and a general lack of efficient transportation impacted negatively on the extent to which natural resource utilisation could generate incomes and affected people's livelihoods negatively. Since the current market-oriented production system depended on the marketing of natural resources, especially prawns,

it demanded a high degree of local initiative and independence to maintain optimum utilisation patterns and incomes. Having myself experienced the poor roads, using the unreliable railway transport and travelling by sea craft, I appreciated the extent to which poor communication facilities, which had steadily deteriorated since the 1980s, have led to the 'peripheralisation' of Saadani. Indeed, I would argue one could (between 1997 and March 1999) appropriately describe Saadani as an island on the mainland. In the following section I describe the communication situation and how it has influenced local production activities.

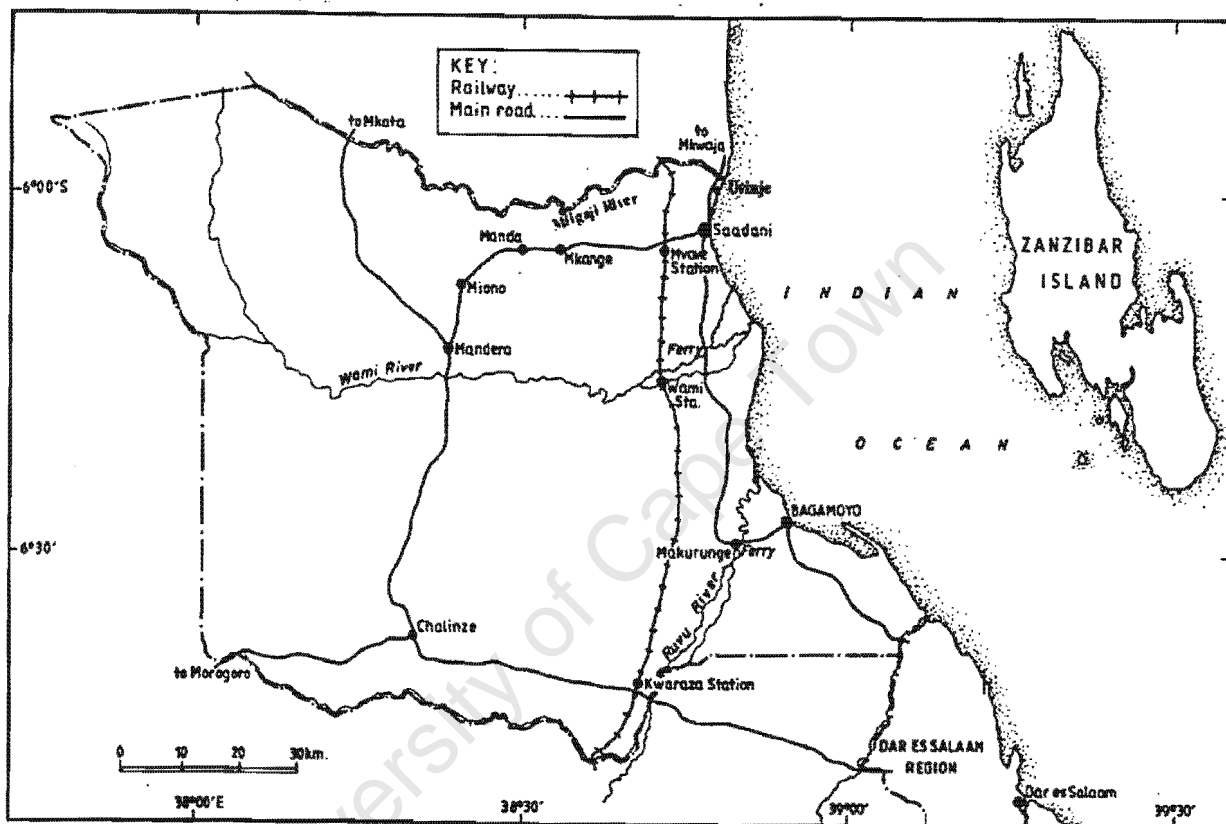
### **3.7 The Making of a Periphery: The Transport Infrastructure**

A feature of the Tanzanian coast is the concentration of infrastructural development in the few urbanised areas such as Dar es Salaam, Mtwara and Tanga. Other settlements have remained relatively undeveloped, with poor infrastructure. Poor transportation infrastructure has resulted in production potentials being left unharnessed, and there is quite low productivity in otherwise high potential areas like Saadani. The consequence has been a deleterious impact on the livelihood status of local populations (Giblin, 1992; Seppala & Koda, 1998), and has limited possibilities for expanding current natural resources utilisation practices. Most prawn dealers who transported consignments from Saadani village to major markets, such as at Dar es Salaam, had at least one story to tell in relation to the difficulties they had encountered and how they had suddenly been bankrupted when a consignment of prawns 'went bad' for lack of reliable transportation. Lack of refrigeration facilities in Saadani village exacerbated this situation.

Women too had their stories. They were often compelled to walk long distances to reach wherever they needed to go. It was common to find women walking 16 kilometres a day between Uvinje and Saadani to purchase household provisions, attending a funeral, etc, their household responsibilities compelling them to return home the same day. Traders in fried fish and other travellers also had to alternate between walking and cycling on the roads to Mvave railway station, or to Mkange and Miono, as they made their ways to catch the next available transport to the markets.

This was because one could not ride a bicycle the whole way due to the poor road conditions.

**Map 3.1 Communications Network leading to Saadani. November 1998**



Like most of the 903 kilometres of constructed major roads in Bagamoyo district those into Saadani were all dirt roads (URT-j, 1998). Their very poor condition was a result of lack of funds for regular maintenance. The local clay soils had made the roads particularly difficult to maintain. According to the Pwani region's roads development officer, the two major roads that go to or pass through Saadani village both constructed in the early 1900s, had long been in a poor state. These roads are the Makurunga-Saadani-Mkwaja road (68km), last worked on in the 1980s, and the Mandera-Saadani road (64km), last repaired in 1991 (see Figure 3.4). The Makurunga-Saadani-Mkwaja road links the village to Bagamoyo town by a ferry over the River Wami. But the ferry had long been out of use. Hence most people now travelling

overland to Saadani, used the Mandera-Saadani road which was relatively passable during the dry seasons. But its poor condition had long discouraged public transporters to take passenger vehicles into Saadani. Local people claimed that about 13 years have passed since they last saw a public transport vehicle in their village. They said this by referring to the age of local 13 year olds. The SGR's four-wheel drive vehicles were the only means of road transportation into the village, and local people had to rely upon them when made available. A tourist couple who drove along the Mkwaja-Saadani-Mandera road during the Easter holidays of March 1999, commented on the extremely poor state of the road between Mkwaja and Saadani saying that, if there had been a possibility for them to fly out of the area immediately, they would have taken it, without considering the tourist attractions the area had to offer.<sup>27</sup>

Shortage of funds had forced the Regional government to prioritise which roads to repair (URT-j, 1998). According to the Pwani Regional authorities, such priorities were established on the basis of criteria such as the average daily traffic and the economic rating ratio, which implied looking at regional economic turnover.<sup>28</sup> The road from Miono to Saadani registered very low in terms of these criteria. Prospects for renovation were, however, promising. The Pwani region's road engineer also said that some TShs .34.2 million had been allocated for routine maintenance of the Makurunge-Saadani road and, TShs 40.9 million for spot improvement of the Mandera-Saadani road. And, in January 1999, repair of the Mandera-Saadani road began, using donor funds obtained through a national government programme. The Makurunga-Saadani-Mkwaja road, on the other hand, was incorporated into a major road rehabilitation programme which included the Dar es Salaam to Bagamoyo road project (DPIO-Bagamoyo, 1999).

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<sup>27</sup> These tourists whom I had to direct to the road to Mandera on their way out of the village had got stuck several times on the road from Mkwaja. I later learnt that after being stuck in the mud somewhere near Mkange, they were assisted by an incoming SGR vehicle and made their way back to Dar es Salaam.

<sup>28</sup> The Pwani Regional Roads engineer, Mr. Shemangale, explained that the criteria looked into population numbers the roads would serve and the economic potential of the area they passed through which meant that they would have to be a high volume of haulage goods to be transported by the road (pers. comm. March 1999).

On 14 and 15 December 1998, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Bagamoyo West Constituency, Mr. J M Kikwete, together with Bagamoyo district officials and a prospective donor for the renovation of the Mandera–Saadani road, traveled to the village by road. The MP was living up to an earlier commitment he had made to follow up on the road renovation issue.

Travelling by rail provided a slightly better option for local people, even if the train timetable was erratic, security risky, and access to the railway line requiring a long walk or bicycle ride. Most local people had used the Ruvu-Mnyuzi railway line. Built in 1963, it ran along the western border of the SGR.<sup>29</sup> The closest station to Saadani was at Mvave, about one hour's walking or 45 minutes cycling distance from Saadani central. People then waited at the station to chance upon a goods (freight) train, called 'gusi',<sup>30</sup> going towards Wami station and Kwaraza, at the Ruvu junction further south, on the way to Dar es Salaam. From 1995, the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) suspended the passenger service on this line because the company claimed that very few people used it. From then on, just one passenger coach was attached to the freight train. According to local oral sources, between 1995 and before the 1997 El Nino rains, this passenger coach had provided a reliable means of transport for people living in the settlements through which the railway line passed were served.

The passenger charges on these freight trains were arbitrary ranging between TShs 2000 and 3000/= per person, plus a further sum for luggage. To reach Dar es Salaam cost at least TShs 4000/= including the bus fare between Ruvu and Dar es Salaam. These fares were similar to what one had to pay to get to Dar es Salaam by road. Travelling by road from Miono (the closest buses came along the Mandera–Saadani road to Saadani) to Dar es Salaam cost TShs 2000/= to 3000/=. Many local people preferred the train services because they were reliable when available. This was until 1997, when El Nino rains disrupted rail services causing extensive damage to the lines and especially on bridges. For some part of 1998, only locomotives with construction

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<sup>29</sup> Information on the Ruvu-Mnyuzi Railway line was given to be by Mr Maez, a PRO with the Tanzanian Railways Corporation, Dsm, April 1999. Data on fares and utilising freight trains were obtained from local people and my own experiences on travelling between Mvave and Kwaraza.

<sup>30</sup> 'Gusi' was the local pronunciation of the 'goods' train which in the past included one or two passenger coaches to serve people living along this railway line (see map 2.5).

machinery shuttled along the line. People still used these services, requesting the drivers to ferry them, prawn consignments included, to Wami or Kwaraza stations, where they connected with other means of transportation to points around the country.

TRC officials explained to me that these people were using the services at their own risk. From late 1998, the TRC resumed railway transportation of bulks goods only and not for passengers (pers. comm. TRC, 1999). Yet, the trains still provided transportation for local people albeit illicitly. It is thus clear that local people always sought ways to pursue their activities creating opportunities as they did so.

During the period of my study, travelling by sea between Saadani and Bagamoyo was the most comfortable means and was possible on small-engined or sail-propelled craft that travelled mostly during the major fishing seasons when the winds were calm and sea transport was regarded as safe. During these periods, prawn dealers travelled to Saadani from Bagamoyo or Zanzibar, or sent fishing groups and crew to fish for and to purchase prawns in the village. The sea craft's main purpose was to transport prawns for Saadani to the market centres and, on their return to the village to carry ice for cold storage of the prawns, and food stuffs for camping fishers as well as money to pay them. The craft also provided transportation for traders without their own means, as well as for passengers, at a cost of TShs 500/= to 1000/= one way. The fare was arbitrary and depended on how the passenger was introduced to the skipper. Otherwise, travel by sea was very rare and unreliable. Only two of Saadani's five sea craft had been used to provide such services: of the other three, two were too small for long-distance travel on the high seas.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This descriptive discussion has illustrated how local people's relationships with natural resources has been influenced by historical experiences and how these experiences have evolved to create a range of understandings and practices regarding the use of resource utilisation. Environmental factors and the physical infrastructure have also had implications on the nature of resource use practices. Altogether these experiences

and influences have created a range of opportunities or constraints to local people in various ways, often influenced by their social situations. In addition, the data presented above makes it possible to understand how local people continuously negotiate their lives between different kinds of social and physical potentials to achieve their needed relationship with natural resources.

In the following chapter I discuss how externally induced factors in the context of NRM policies, have contributed to the gradual changing livelihood capabilities of local people and are reflected in the changing nature of giving meaning to natural resources utilisation.

University of Cape Town

1  
The Saadani Game  
Reserve Manager's  
House



2  
The ruins of the Fish  
market, Saadani

3  
SGR staff, villagers and  
the tourist camp's  
employees and vehicle,  
preparing for patrol exercises





4



5

Houses in Saadani and Uvinje



6

Bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu



7

Fishers at Saadani Bay



8

Mama J and daughter



9

The last haul

10



A local canoe (*ngalawa*) and a Bagamoyo boat (*mashua*)

11



A prawn trawler

12



A jahazi and people apprehended near the mouth of the Wami River for illegally cutting mangroves (1999).



13

Illegal cutting of mangroves along the banks of River Wami



14

Mending nets (*kurakai*)



15

Prawn dealer (*tajiri mnunuzi*)  
with some prawns and a container



16

Fish traps (*madema*)



17

Local salt production unit  
at Marumbi, Saadani



18



19

Resting on a shelter next to their cultivation plot, Uvinje.



20

ZM the fisherwoman



21

MM attending Mzee N's  
fishing fence

22



Coming back from collecting fuelwood at the SGR

23

T, on her way to Mkange to  
sell fried fish



## **CHAPTER FOUR: Power and Autonomy in Natural Resource Management: Implications of NRM Approaches for Local People's Ways of Using Natural Resources**

*"Serikali ina wenyewe"*<sup>1</sup>

### **4.1 Introduction**

Skalnik (1991) contends that [colonised] people often "design resourceful strategies for achieving [their] political aims ... despite overwhelming power of the state" (1991: 19). This contention suggests that people in constraining circumstances develop various strategies to outwit the state through transcending it by a different kind of power, "providing identity for the community" (1991: 8). In this chapter, I attempt to articulate this understanding of people's power within the context of the dynamic social field of natural resources management within which multi-dimensional sets of relationships occur. This social field contains possibilities for domination by state power, as well as its contestation through local autonomy over natural resources management.

State power is expressed through specific state agencies having, using or threatening to use violence. It has conventionally been understood as having the "capacity for carrying out decisions and activities ostensibly on behalf of a whole society" (Skalnik, 1991: 8). In the case of NRM processes, state power has often been used to make decisions for a community, sometimes through the use of force.

However, it has not always been the case that state decisions have had negative implications. In some cases, use of state power has achieved positive impacts. McCay (1993), for example, explains how the state of New Jersey (USA) in the 1800s used formal legal mechanisms (The American Public Trust Doctrine) to safeguard shell

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<sup>1</sup> *Serikali ina wenyewe* (lit: the government has its own) is a saying which one of Saadani's residents used when explaining that the actions or strategies the government adopts as regards NRM are targeted for a few people and organisations and not the general populace. He said, "as a demonstration of its capacity, the government is everywhere - in fishing, in salt making, in tourism, and in wildlife protection, but it is not for the people. This is why when we complain about the trawlers, the government does not do anything because, the trawlers are government people, they pay tax" (Saadani, 1998).

fisheries and fisheries resources for the poorer fishing classes by establishing that marine areas be "subject to people's rights of use, and managed for the public interest" (1993:85).

Yet, several examples illustrate how state power has indeed diluted and limited the legal means through which local communities are able to defend their access to natural resources, and thus their livelihoods (Derman & Ferguson, 1995). Neumann (1998) gives an example of conservation laws in colonial Africa which, he claims, were not only symbols of white national identity for local people, but also "one component of broader processes of colonial appropriation of land and natural resources" (1998:34). In other cases, conflicts have arisen out of the different meanings given to natural resource management, as in cases where local people have been coerced by the state to change or abandon local activities that have been regarded as bad for nature conservation (Shivji and Kapinga, 1998).

The negative implications that frequently arise from such uses of state power have often compelled people to challenge state power in a variety of ways. One (way) is in the form of direct or overt resistance to state imposed strategies, such as the Chipko tree hugging movement in India (see above).

But, since direct resistance may soon prove unaffordable, and passive accommodation of state power impossible, Skalnik contends that people tend to resort to the most acceptable method, which is a form of collaboration that allows things to continue almost as before, with the idea that "we were here before them and we will be here after them" (1991:13). However, seeking a certain degree of collaboration from the state also demands a certain form of consent by the state, so that it accepts and may yield to local people's ways of life. Moreover, the demand for some form of collaboration also needs persistent strategies on the part of local people to pursue their demands for maintaining their preferred kind of life, which many communities have not been able to sustain. Local people may also avoid or manipulate state interests to satisfy their own needs. Alternatively, people may exercise the powers of locally based structures of authority, also a political order but one which does not require the

domination of some over others and is gained freely by public support and thus does not need state power or aggression (Skalnik, 1999).

In this chapter I follow Skalnik's (1991) contention that local people understand that they are "obviously 'powerless' vis-à-vis state power, unable to confront it directly, [yet] they nonetheless manage to outwit the state by applying strikingly different models of power" (1991:3). These models also challenge the conventional understanding of power as domination or command.

In the case of Saadani local people feared that their autonomy in their day to day ways of using resources was being reduced, and they did not want to become wholly dependent on the state for their livelihoods. Hence they sometimes sought collaboration with the state, but only as long as this allowed them to maintain their ways of life. Yet in many cases they also boycotted state-imposed mechanisms of control, or undermined state power, by acting as passive participants in NRM schemes. Indirect resistance came to be a common strategy of reacting to state power.

I begin by examining programmes to protect and conserve forest areas in Saadani, both within the coastal lowland forest area and the mangrove forests, which had several implications as regards the power relationships between the state and local people. Thereafter I describe the creation and implementation of regulations in the fishing industry, some of them intended to ensure local people's access to resources, but which, local people felt, demonstrates that the state was steadily constraining them. I then discuss wildlife protection measures and the responses of local people who felt caught in a restrictive situation which they claimed did not take into consideration their local ways of utilising resources. The period that I deal with in this chapter is from the pre-Independence mid 1900s to the late 1990s.

Throughout the processes of implementation of the various NRM regulations and practices in Saadani, several scenarios have been evident. Firstly NRM programmes reflected certain state-derived hegemonic influences that local people sometimes tended to accept. This was particularly the case when power evolved from the use of force to implement strategies that needed to develop harmonious and balanced ways of

managing resources (Nader, 1997). For example, local people tended to embrace strategies that not only allowed them to participate in resource management activities but also benefited them directly, such as was the experience of Ujamaa and certain regulations in the fisheries. However, I then query these processes following the later reactions by local people, particularly as they questioned ambiguities with regard to control over resources.

Secondly, some state-directed NRM approaches in Saadani have come to limit the range of choices that local people have had, and have defined the political perspectives and options that people may live with. In this regard, NRM processes have also reflected attempts to modernise, some of which attempts were rejected in various ways by local people.

I now illustrate how social analysts can recognise that the apparently powerless (in terms of formal institutionalised notions of power such as that of the state) do manage to use and exercise power in a range of less visible locuses of social action.

#### **4.2 The Power of Local Resistance: Forest Management Programmes in Saadani.**

The experience of forest management within the Saadani area illustrates how institutionalised power - first during the colonial period and later under the current government - attempted to establish dominating forms of resource management through demands and legislation. Yet, various forms of local resistance undermined these dominating tendencies, sometimes with successful results and sometimes with negative ecological outcomes.

Forest conservation programmes in colonial Tanganyika had formerly been instituted in written law, first by German colonialists, through the enactment of the Forest Conservation Ordinance in 1904, and then by the British colonial government with the passing of The Forest Ordinance (1921) (Neumann, 1997: 49-50). German rule maintained strict regulations relating to areas designated as forest reserves. The British

followed suit, but they in addition granted and delineated certain rights of access that local people had to those forests not considered fully fledged forest reserves. In most such cases, however, access to forest reserves depended on the discretion of the colonial governor. Moreover, certain forms of extraction of forest products formerly used to sustain local economies were prohibited.<sup>2</sup>

It was in the context of forest reserve expansion in the early 1950s that demands by the colonial government to intervene in forest management in Saadani were experienced. Local oral sources claimed that, in the mid 1950s, the British planned to designate the local coastal lowland forest as a protected area. This area, initially known to local people as '*msitu wa Dadi*' (lit: Dadi's forest - which some local people claim forms part of the present Zaraninge proposed forest reserve), lies west of Saadani main settlement. It is a rich mosaic forest, abundant in botanical biodiversity and has rare birds, wildlife and insects. According to local elders, the then British District Commissioner (DC) in Bagamoyo indicated that such a rich nature reserve, which was within one of the Queen's colonies, should rightfully be designated as the Queen's forest, or '*msitu wa bibi*' (lit: the lady's forest, referring to an understanding that the forest was to be the property of the Queen of England, or crown land).<sup>3</sup>

Local people claim, however, that they rejected the DC's intentions, arguing that the area had, for a long time, provided for their subsistence and commercial needs and also meeting their ritual purposes. Their needs included fuel wood, raffia palm, burial places and timber. People also practised cultivation within and on the fringes of the forest. Therefore, they claimed, they could not be alienated from the forest. Local people recall that a similar colonial government plan had already been consented to by the Miono and Bagamoyo native authorities, and Saadani people's resistance came to be the only hindrance to realising the full plan. Led by two of their elders,<sup>4</sup> the residents rejected the DC's plan. The DC then directed the local district leader (*Liwali*), to

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<sup>2</sup> Under British colonial rule measures to expand the territory of forest reserves began in 1921. By 1952, the area of forest reserves covered 3.2 percent of the country (Neumann 1997:51)

<sup>3</sup> A Principal Forest Officer in the MNRT informed me that many designated forest reserves in the country during British colonial rule were similarly referred to as '*msitu wa bibi*' (pers. comm. with Mr. Mbonde August, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> The two leaders of this resistance, Mzee Maftah Hamisi and Mzee Bomu were both deceased by 1997.

imprison the two elders for three months, or to fine them TShs 90/= each,<sup>5</sup> on charges of insubordination to the colonial government's authority. On the day of the two elders' arrest, the villagers mobilized and surrounded the vehicle sent to remove them to Bagamoyo town, and attempted to prevent it from leaving the village. Another village elder, realizing the futility of the action, advised the villagers to calm down and suggested instead that people should make a cash contribution that would bail out their two elders. Local people recall that, after a few days, the villagers had collected TShs 600/=, from a contribution of 10/= from each adult man, and a person was sent to Bagamoyo township to pay the fine. In this case, people's resistance ultimately paid off and the British government decided to abandon their plan of designating a forest reserve in the area.

Such a forceful reaction to colonial authority, may have been a product of earlier attitudes of local people towards European colonisation in general. However, local people did not always reject domination in resource management so openly. Other forms of discontent were expressed more subtly, as illustrated by the experiences in mangrove management to which I now turn.<sup>6</sup>

The mangrove forests lining much of the Tanzanian coast have long had multiple uses for local people and for successive governments. Local people use mangroves for poles for construction purposes, for building sea craft, for firewood and to make traditional fishing gear such as fish fences (*uzio*, *wando*) and fish traps (*madema* and *migono*). Since the 1800s, mangrove poles had been extensively exported for construction purposes, especially to Persia (BDB, 1957), and the bark of mangrove trees had been harvested for tannin production (Mainoya *et al*, 1986). In 1953, the British colonial government stopped exporting mangroves for major construction projects after the introduction of steel and concrete (BDB, 1957). But the colonial Forestry Department facilitated private business export of mangroves and charged royalties. Mainoya *et al* (1986) indicate that between 1923 and 1958 the mangrove

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<sup>5</sup> Other elders claimed that the fine was TShs 300/= each

<sup>6</sup> The government has long classified mangrove forests differently from coastal lowland forests because of their diverse botanical characteristics. Similarly, the Lowland Coastal Forests conservation project of Pwani region makes a distinction between coastal and mangrove habitats in terms of their biological and regenerative characteristics.

pole trade was in the hands of private entrepreneurs who employed local labour and overseers. After this period, and until 1976, local co-operative societies managed the trade. Thereafter, a government parastatal, Tanzania Timber Marketing Company, took over (Mainoya *et al*, 1986). Much of the trade was conducted within Pwani region's Rufiji Delta, which has the country's largest concentration of mangrove forest (Mainoya *et al*, 1986). The trade around the area along the deltas of the Ruvu and Wami Rivers in Bagamoyo District, although of a lesser magnitude, was also significant.

Under British colonial rule in 1923, all mangrove forests were gazetted as reserves and their management was made the responsibility of the Division of Forestry. Yet, there was no focussed programme for their conservation. In 1991, the independent government established a National Mangrove Management Plan (Semesi, 1991). It was implemented and officially operational by the 1994/95 financial year (Mkiba, 1999:135). The plan decentralised control of mainland Tanzania's mangrove forests into four zones. Mangroves within the Saadani area fell under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Zone Mangrove Management project, with offices in Bagamoyo town. In 1997, the office had one patrol boat and four officials responsible for conducting periodic patrols along the coast. The officers were empowered to take any person caught cutting mangrove trees without permit into custody, and to hand over to the government any products and means of transportation confiscated in the process. However, patrol trips were limited by insufficient funds and lack of adequate staff, a situation which allowed various traders in mangrove products the chance to exploit the mangrove forest without permits, although these could easily have been obtained from the Bagamoyo District Natural Resources office. Taking advantage of a lack of state policing in order to exploit certain resources freely is commonly used to challenge and undermine institutionalised powers. It is thus a way for the seemingly powerless to subvert those ostensibly in power.

The Saadani area includes part of the 5635 ha of mangrove area along the Bagamoyo district coastline and local people use the trees for various purposes.<sup>7</sup> In 1997, I found that, in Saadani, mangrove trees were mostly used for making some furniture, fish traps (*madema*) as stakes for fish fences (*uzio*) and as fishing charms. They also provided fuel wood for local salt making, even though because of the prohibitions instituted by Mangrove management officials and the SGR the producers did not openly confess to using such trees (see below).

With the 1991 Mangrove Management Programme, Saadani villagers were drawn into protection of the mangrove forest as part of its community involvement strategy. Since the heaviest concentration of mangroves lay adjacent to Saadani Chumvi hamlet (see map 2.1), the District Natural Resources office, through the village government, advised the management of the Coastal Salt Works Company and Saadani Chumvi's hamlet leaders to report to the village government any illegal exploitation practices within the mangrove area.<sup>8</sup> Such devolution of responsibilities for overseeing the protection of natural resources was made compulsory for all villages in the country and was facilitated by the formation of Village Natural Resources Conservation/Management Committees. Some members of Saadani village government were appointed (by the village leaders) to form such a committee. Yet, as I will continue to explain, their effectiveness as overseers of mangrove management was minimal, and often, conflicting interests were a problem.

By 1997, the mangrove forest around the mouth of the Wami River had experienced considerable abuse from illegal fuel wood cutters and charcoal makers. Even though the Bagamoyo district authorities did not have exact figures on the extent of depletion

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<sup>7</sup> The heaviest concentrations are found around the mouths of the Wami River (862 ha), which forms the Southern border of Saadani village, the Utondwe Creek (834 ha), the Ruvu River (2132 ha) and, south of Bagamoyo town near the Mpiji River (809 ha) (Howell & Semesi, 1998).<sup>7</sup> Lesser concentrations are found from Mligaji River to Mvave River (50 ha) and from Mvave River to the Coastal Salt works boundary (231.4 ha).

<sup>8</sup> The management of the former Coastal Salt Works Company, which was dissolved in 1998, acknowledged that they were given the responsibility to ensure that natural resources in their vicinity were not abused. The management also said that this directive coincided with their needs since extensive mangrove exploitation would interfere with their salt production objectives in the area. Yet, they complained that, for a long time, the Company lacked effective support from the Saadani village government and Bagamoyo District Natural Resources officials, and that many reported cases were not dealt with appropriately (Interview with official of Coastal Salt Works, August, 1998).

in this particular area, they had apprehended various people in the act, as Table 4.1 below illustrates. Local people also established that, at least once every week, firewood pieces and bags of charcoal from the area were being transported across Saadani Bay to Zanzibar.<sup>9</sup> I also saw several places, visible from the banks of the Wami River, where some damage had been done to the forest by such illegal cutting of mangrove trees (see picture 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Recent Cases of Illegal Cutting of Mangroves around the Wami River area**

Year	Case No. (if known)	Number of Accused	Judgement
1998	Case No 218/98	6	6 months jail
1998	Not available (na)	1	6 months jail
1998	Case No. 238/98	1	6 months jail
1999	na	1	6 months jail
1999	na	13	Judgement still pending
1999	na	4	-ditto-
1999	na	3	-ditto-

Source: Mangrove Catchment Project, Bagamoyo April, 1999.

The attitudes of local people towards the illegal practice of cutting of mangroves differed markedly from the government's, the people harbouring mixed feelings on what it meant to be given the responsibility to oversee the management of the mangroves on behalf of a national government scheme. Firstly, local people expressed various values regarding the use of the mangroves, and did not acknowledge their own role in its degradation. People who lived at Saadani central hamlet argued that the mangroves around the Wami River were located at such a distance that they could not

<sup>9</sup> The Zonal Mangrove Management offices in Bagamoyo kept records of mangrove exploitation which had been accounted for through formal channels, such as permits for fuel wood, charcoal, poles, and for bark (see appendix vi). Local Saadani consumption rates were not recorded because of the irregular patterns of uses which were especially for household needs.

be used to satisfy their own daily requirements and that they therefore did not feel an immediate responsibility to oversee the forest's management. Moreover, they claimed, local uses were minor and had not been detrimental to the forest. The people of Kajanjo and Porokanya settlements in the Saadani Chumvi hamlet claimed that their primary need was marine resources, and that their relationship to the forest was purely to use it to meet subsistence needs and not for commercial purposes. In this way local people were in fact contesting the dominant thinking regarding NRM as propounded by the state.

Secondly, local people interacted daily with individuals alleged to be mangrove and wildlife poachers in the area. For example, people who resided in the Kajanjo and Porokanya fishing settlements accommodated people from various areas of the country, some of whom had been accused of poaching. In addition, fishers from the main settlement, who frequented these areas almost daily, sometimes set up camp there during the major fishing seasons, particularly when prawns had been sighted. And they too interacted freely with visitors and newcomers, the alleged poachers included. Local people related to the newcomers and visitors as fellow *watafutaji* (lit: livelihood seekers), and shared with them recreation and other services in the area, without discrimination. Some of these visitors were well known to local people and even had local girlfriends at the main settlement or in Saadani Chumvi with whom they periodically stayed. Such normal day-to-day relationships were common and familiar, even to village government leaders, and local authorities understood that the relationships sometimes extended to exchanges of products regarded as illegal under the forest conservation programmes. But they could not address them as cases of forest poaching because they involved their fellow villagers, some of whom they were related to. Local people felt they were safe when dealing in charcoal since the neighbouring villages of Matipwili and Mkange produced charcoal legitimately, and it was easy to claim that such charcoal had been obtained from these areas. In any case they hardly ever had to explain the sources of their charcoal.

The village government's handling of mangrove poaching thus illustrated a conflict between institutional processes and values of the state and those of local people. The institutions of reciprocity (albeit informal) within the village population were definitely

in conflict with the institution of state-level authority structures, as regards mangrove poaching. Through village-based interactions with regard to mangrove products local people were effectively participating in and encouraging illegal use of mangroves, and they therefore preferred to keep silent about poaching activities taking place in the mangrove forest, unless it was socially beneficial for them to do otherwise, as I will explain later in this section.

When anti-poaching activities were conducted in the area, local people generally showed sympathy to those caught in the exercise since they claimed that the so-called 'poachers', with whom they camped, were only labourers (*vibarua*) employed by businessmen in Bagamoyo or Zanzibar. Although some of these people came from Saadani, local Saadani people preferred to claim that most were recruited from the nearby cultivator settlements, on the basis that they were used to hard labour on the land, and hence were more capable than Saadani people of surviving the harsh conditions of spending nights in the midst of the mangrove forests, and strong enough to work daily cutting mangrove trees. Moreover, the real culprits, said local people, were the absentee foreign business people who recruited the labourers, and who were never apprehended. Local people therefore insisted that neither they nor the labourers should be blamed for destruction of the mangroves. Moreover, since none had the capital to invest in the trade in mangrove products, even though many in fact needed to diversify their production activities after the decline in the local fisheries, none had become principals in the trade.

Some local people also claimed that the District government was responsible for the deterioration of the mangrove forest because of its erratic patrolling exercises. Local people and their village government leaders claimed that the villagers were relatively powerless to combat mangrove poaching around the Wami River. Leaders complained that they lacked the resources needed for law enforcement, such as the means for patrolling the area. They also complained that they received little co-operation or encouragement from Mangrove Management officials when they reported cases of poaching in the forest. One of them said,

District government authorities and state law enforcers are corrupt officials. This is because it seems these officials have allowed people to harvest the forest illegally and do not act accordingly when they are informed of such activities. Many of the times they claim to patrol is when they want us to pay for our fishing licences. And so they come with the fisheries officials and then the mangrove patrolling exercise becomes secondary.

An official of the Bagamoyo District office told me, however, that there is an overall weakness in enforcement mechanisms at all levels. For example, he said, in one meeting in early 1999, the Bagamoyo District Magistrate had complained to the District Environmental Management Team that he could not institute judgement in several cases related to abuse of mangroves because prosecution witnesses had failed to appear in court. By witnesses he meant SGR staff and zonal Mangrove Management officials involved in apprehending the accused. Although an analysis of this situation is beyond the scope of my study, the following observations vis-à-vis the NRM situation and its officials arose from my discussion with that official (8<sup>th</sup> April, 1999).

- Most of the Mangrove Forests within Bagamoyo district lie in uninhabited areas which were also far from the district headquarters. They were therefore difficult to monitor.
- Corruption occurred between Mangrove protection officials and traders in mangrove products.
- Officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) involved themselves in trade in natural resource products.
- Low efficiency was because of lack of work related equipment, such as patrol boats, and staff.
- By-laws were infrequently enforced because of the weakness of Village Executive Officers (VEOs).

I also observed a related issue concerning collaborative resource management among the available institutions responsible for NRM in Saadani. For some time the SGR, the Mangrove Management programme and other government officials had been unable to execute collaborative and concerted strategies to combat abuse of the mangrove forest. This was despite the fact that the Mangrove Management Programme and the SGR both fall under the MNRT. However, from 1998, the SGR began to co-ordinate strategies for anti-poaching exercises in the area. Some were undertaken in collaboration with the VEO and the Mkange Ward Executive Secretary, and achieved considerable success. Several large sea-going dhows (*majahazi*) used to transport

charcoal and pieces of fuel wood across the Zanzibar channel, were apprehended within the mangrove forest along the Wami River (ref.: picture 12). A few sailors and labourers were also caught there in possession of pieces of wood and bags of charcoal. Of the poaching cases tabled in the Bagamoyo District Magistrates Court for hearing or sentencing between October 1997 and March 1999, none involved a local Saadani person.<sup>10</sup> This was not because only outsiders were involved in poaching in the forest, but because, on a practical level local people had various means of avoiding arrest. One was through villagers sharing information. Some villagers were closely related to SGR staff by marriage or friendship, and almost all SGR staff lived amongst the people. Local people were also able to get information from their peers recruited to participate in anti-poaching exercises. It was common, therefore, that news about planned anti-poaching campaigns reached the villagers even before they took place. Without admitting it openly, there was a strong suspicion among villagers and SGR staff themselves that information leaks on planned campaigns by the SGR allowed many poachers to escape.

In 1999, the SGR collaborated with the Saadani Safari [tourist] camp in a combined effort to combat illegal cutting of mangroves around the Wami River. This collaboration was agreed upon because both the SGR and the camp directly benefited from a properly conserved mangrove forest: the SGR from the status it achieved through the successful execution of its duties; the camp from the income realised from tourist activities around the mouth of the Wami River with its wealth in biodiversity, including crocodiles, hippopotami, rare birds and a variety of vegetation. The management of the tourist camp thus understood that destruction of the mangrove forest would reduce the value of the area as a tourist attraction.

Because of the camp's commitment to assist in combating mangrove poaching, the camp's four-wheel drive Land Rover and boat were used to ferry SGR staff and their workers to the Wami River area during anti-poaching exercises conducted between

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<sup>10</sup> For example, on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1999, the state-owned newspaper UHURU reported that of the group of 13 mangrove poachers apprehended along the Wami River area, none was from Saadani. The places of origin of these people were, Zanzibar, Ruvuma, Tanga, Mbeya, and Mara, all which are very far from Saadani.

October 1998 and March 1999. Village government leaders also participated because the exercises were conducted within their area of jurisdiction and, according to District government directives, the village government was supposed to take primary responsibility for the management of resources within the Saadani area. These campaigns were significantly successful. But local people received news of these successes with mixed feelings because they recognised the need people had for incomes and were aggrieved that those apprehended were only the functionaries and not the traders themselves. Moreover, local social relations affected how people dealt with apprehended poachers, as the following cases illustrate.

#### **Case Study 4.1: Outwitting the State**

In February 1999, one person among a group of five 'poachers' was caught and held at the SGR offices. The rest avoided apprehension. He was not a local Saadani person and was supposed to be taken to the district police in Bagamoyo town the following day. But he had friends in the village and that same night, he had "escaped from a room whose windows had iron bars which were only about 3 inches wide in between". The door was not damaged. The SGR leaders remained baffled and they could find no clue as to who in the village or among the staff had organised this 'escape'. The management of the camp was also annoyed, but they too could do nothing.

#### **Case Study 4.2: Collaborating with the State**

The following month another person from the neighbouring Tanga region, was caught cutting fuel wood in the mangrove forest. Carrying a piece of wood as evidence, he was transported by SGR vehicle from the Wami River area to Saadani settlement, 9 kilometres away, under the escort of SGR staff and local village labourers. Many villagers witnessed his arrival in the village and went to look at him at the SGR offices. He won no sympathy from local villagers other than his. While still in custody at the village, it was only his girl friend, a local woman and her close relatives, who took him food and water. He was sent to Bagamoyo the following day and received a six-month imprisonment sentence.

I later came to learn that his unsympathetic reception by villagers was neither because he was a poacher nor because he had broken conservation law. Rather, it was because he had taken up with a former girlfriend of a Saadani villager who begrudged the man's success, which he had partly achieved through his poaching, in generating income to attract the girl whom the ex-boyfriend now wanted back. But the girl refused the advances of the ex-boyfriend who then decided to teach the girl a lesson by reporting on the activities of her new lover.

These two cases illustrate the diverse ways people use locally situated powers either to collaborate with or to resist dominant forms of power to managing natural resources. In the first case, local people expressed a common interest in outwitting state institutions. Local people merely laughed at the absurdity of a person managing to escape 'unseen' from the guarded SGR office. Yet, even amongst themselves, divisions on social issues sometimes undermined this common approach, resulting in silent consent to the government as was the case with second accused, whose girlfriend and her family members could not resist the government alone.

Another way of utilising mangroves against conservation regulations occurred within the local salt making industry. Small-scale salt production units were located near the Marumbi settlement adjacent to a small seasonal stream called Chamamba. The producers explained that, before the establishment of the SGR, they had regularly obtained trees from the surrounding coastal forest. The thick hard wood trees were ideal fuel for boiling salt water. Yet, official nature conservation principles prohibited tree felling within the SGR, and the producers were told to obtain timber from a designated area which was 8 kilometres away.

Before the early 1990s, when local salt making was still lucrative, producers had clubbed together to hire tractors from the nearby Coastal Salt Works Company to collect fuel wood from the designated area. However, from the early 1990s, the market for locally produced salt declined sharply for two reasons. One was market liberalisation which allowed finely packaged and thus more marketable imported salt onto the country's markets. The other was the Government directive that all salt for human consumption should be iodized to curb the rising prevalence of goitre in the country (URT-g, 1994). Following this directive, small local producers managed, for the first few years, to purchase iodine from the Coastal Salt Works Company. But later the costs involved in purchasing iodine as well as fuel wood undermined their sustainability. And, whenever they attempted to transport salt to major markets, they faced the likelihood of trade inspectors confiscating their products if it did not meet the required health standards.

Larger salt producers, such as the Coastal Salt Works Company, were also affected by market competition and, to escape bankruptcy, were forced to sell salt at very low retail prices, a strategy that did allow the Company to survive financially for a time, and to meet its administrative costs (pers. comm with STAMICO officials, November 1998). Yet it had a negative effect on the markets of Saadani's small producers as their customers turned for supplies to the Coastal Salt Works because they were assured that the salt was iodized and whose new prices were competitive. A prominent local salt producer recalled that they felt very bitter watching salt dealers' cars drive past them at Jangwani on their way to Saadani Chumvi and the Coastal Salt Works Company, and realised that even the little salt that local people produced could not be sold.<sup>11</sup>

Local people thus felt cornered and complained that, along with the rules of the Health Ministry, NRM measures seemed to address the requirements of powerful establishments such as the Camp and the SGR, or the Coastal Salt Works Company, but not of the people. In local people's eyes, the activities of these establishments seemed always to be facilitated by the successive regulations that ruined most of their small-scale activities. As one local producer said, "the government created a regulation that all salt for human consumption should have iodine, so that they pull us out of the business. But coastal people do not need iodine in their salt because they eat a lot of fish and that is why people around here do not have goitre." An official of the National Food Control Commission in Dar es Salaam supported this contention when he said that "coastal areas are the least affected by iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) because iodine is available in marine food sources such as fish and prawns. However, he added, coastal people do also need to have iodine supplementation, the basic intake of which is found in properly iodized salt" (pers. comm, November 1998).

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<sup>11</sup> An official of the former Coastal Salt Works told me that during the period of market competition some local Saadani salt producers had even attempted to pack their salt in packaging material owned by the Coastal Salt works which they obtained illegally in attempts to have their salt regarded as properly iodized. This fraudulent strategy was abandoned after a time.

Similar views about the government not being sensitive to local people's situations were expressed when a tree-planting programme was introduced in the village. In 1997, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF – also known as the Wildlife Fund for Nature), which supports afforestation projects in the whole of Mkange ward, established tree seedling nurseries in Saadani central village and in Mbwebwe hamlet on the fringes of the Zaraninge PFR. One objective was to supply local people with tree products to meet their requirements and, in the process, to reduce pressure on the area's natural forest cover. Other expected benefits were to promote conservation and to encourage a local tree planting culture. Several people, especially school children, were able to list the benefits that could be obtained from trees. One lady revealed the reach of awareness-raising campaigns when she cited these benefits in a sing-song manner saying, "the benefits of trees are for fencing, fuel wood, fruits, building and shade."

The Saadani seedling nursery, located near the Mvave River, was filled with exotic species, such as pine, eucalyptus and lucinae, and fruit trees such as pawpaw and citrus fruits.<sup>12</sup> The nursery attendant said that villagers initially welcomed the idea of planting trees and that some even took the initiative of planting several trees within the village, some of which had grown a bit by 1998. But, since then, the enthusiasm had died down with people having been discouraged by goats that are sometimes let loose within the village and graze the seedlings en route to the pastures. Hence the only people I saw often planting seedlings were primary school pupils greening their school premises. And in late 1998, a youth group also planted several trees on the village outskirts to signify their participation in a national tree planting campaign. These youths put sticks around the plants to protect them from goats and prevent damage from other objects.

The WWF also revived earlier SGR plans to establish a tree plot in the village designed to serve future local demands for fuel wood. Local people regarded this plot, which

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<sup>12</sup> A report by FRONTIER-Tanzania confirms that the majority of seedlings are exotic, although it mentions that the WWF also raises some indigenous species on the seedling nurseries it has established in Miono division. However, the indigenous species that the FRONTIER report mentions does not include those preferred by Saadani women (1995:88).

was supposed to be located in the buffer zone between the village boundaries and the SGR, as being too small. They were thus uncooperative when it came to establishing it, an attitude some SGR staff admitted was probably a statement by local people about their grievances regarding the SGR boundary as a whole rather than simply about the limited size of the area allocated for the plot. As SGR officials pointed out, local people had never tested the size constraints of the allocated area by planting fuel wood trees there. But local people did not even see the necessity of having a tree plot when an indigenous forest surrounded them and from which they understood they could and should, as in the past, obtain their tree product requirements.

Women, who were the daily users of forest products, claimed that their constant use of fuel wood from the forest had enabled them to develop particular preferences for and understanding of certain indigenous tree species. Yet, these preferred species were not available at the tree seedling nursery. Women's preferred tree species for fuel wood included *Acacia zanzibarica* (*mzigunga*) *Terminalia spinosa* (*muangaa*) and *Gardenia ternifolia* (*mng'ambu*). The *Mzigunga* tree was favoured because its fuel wood ignited very quickly while *mng'ambu* was seen as ideal for slow cooking because it burns slowly and leaves long lasting burning embers. Local women's demand for these particular species often led them deep into the forest, sometimes risking attacks by buffalo. During the period of my fieldwork, several women had been chased by buffalo during fuel wood-collecting trips. Despite these risks, women had yet to accept the alternative of a tree plot with exotic species. They felt that the new trees might not be as good for fuel wood as the species they were used to. As one woman commented: "We do not know those trees, not that we do not want them" (*hatuijui miti hiyo, sio kwamba hatuitaki*). Yet even if they had known the tree species, (they did for instance know pine trees), local women refused to co-operate, in much the same way as, for many years, Saadani people had been unwilling and uncooperative partners in the successive NRM processes that had been introduced in their area, and which they experienced as interference with local natural resource management practices.

A village government member supported the women's sentiments about exotic species when he asked "why doesn't the WWF preserve and raise indigenous species and give them to us to plant?" His query was imbedded in an argument that most of the

government's 'modernisation' (*maendeleo*) strategies tended to want to replace local people's knowledge and ways of using resources. One villager, who had recently moved to Saadani from Mbwebwe hamlet, recalled that the effects of planting exotic species without understanding them could lead to unwelcome developments. He said,

The WWF in Mbwebwe brought us *lusina* (*lucinae lucocephala*) for planting on our farms. But these trees destroy the farm because they grow too fast and branch out very much. And, every time, seedlings sprout up when the tree sheds its seeds. They have made weeding difficult and do not leave much space for our crops.<sup>13</sup> We used to leave *milonge* on our farm boundaries. They remained few and left space for our crops. Women also used the inner side of the bark of *milonge* for decoration or for feminine medicine. Now we have sisal plants. Then they gave us neem (*azadirachta indica* / *mmelia azadirachta* [*mwarobaini*]),<sup>14</sup> and now we have neglected our indigenous species of *mivini* and *milonge*.<sup>15</sup>

Through such comments, local people expressed a sense of resistance to their livelihoods being undermined by the introduction of exotic species. In the context of a long local history of state-driven processes that had reduced people's access to natural resources, particularly through the SGR, they resented, and wanted to prevent any further chance of, their gradual dislocation from their surrounding natural environment. It is through various such discourses of power, that rest with local people, that they were able to contest, and even sometimes successfully undermine, the institutionalised power of the state.

#### **4.3 Encountering the Power of Domination: Fisheries and the Marine Environment**

The processes of fisheries development in Saadani illustrate how power in the form of domination has been exercised as part of a national pursuit of modernity. Reconstructing the fisheries sector after independence in 1961 entailed instituting

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<sup>13</sup> Silviculturalists explain that the *lucinae* is a multi-purpose tree that regenerates prolifically especially in fertile soils with a rainy climate. Its rate of growth makes weeding other crops more complicated, particularly if used within cultivation plots.

<sup>14</sup> Neem tree (*mwarobaini*) is a species believed to have curative qualities for many diseases and ailments, including fever and malaria.

<sup>15</sup> I use the names *mivini* and *milonge* here because I have not been able to get their botanical names.

mechanisms of state control (through licensing and monitoring). According to local people, these changes, introduced within a developmental framework led to a gradual decline in their autonomy over local fisheries.

The management of the coastal fisheries of mainland Tanzania took place in a different context to that of forestry and thus demanded different strategies. Unlike the keen interest shown in forestry, relatively little investment had been made in the fisheries sector by European colonial governments since, at that time, fishing was not regarded as a source of colonial capital accumulation. The local fishing industry had thus constituted a small-scale subsistence sector, controlled and developed by local people themselves. One of the earliest colonial attempts to understand fisheries dates back to 1915 when a German fisheries expert evaluated the development potential of local fisheries. But his work was disrupted by the First World War (Sayers, 1930:466). There is also evidence that sport fishing, particularly for trout, was promoted by the British colonial government (see Government regulations CAP 326 of 1950). But the perceived usefulness of marine space during the early colonial period was primarily its strategic quality for defence and communication, rather than in the species it supported or their exploitation.

The British colonial government nonetheless conducted several surveys of fishing activities, mainly to obtain information on the status of marine resources and the fishing industry in general (Chachage, 1988), rather than to develop the fisheries industry. Surveys were conducted by the then East African Fisheries Research Organisation (now the Institute for Marine Sciences) in Zanzibar in the early 1950s. By October 1951, reports on the marine fisheries of every coastal village had been produced. They included information on fish quantities and species being taken, numbers of fishers involved, the fishing gear used and the structure of the market for fish products. Small-scale fishing was encouraged because it provided employment and a much-needed protein supplement for the general populace. Yet, it was only after independence, in 1961, that fishing was given priority as a major development sector. This was after it had been established that the marine environment had great potential, and after it had been deemed possible to increase fish catches tremendously, without depleting stocks. The government's commitment to developing the fishing sector was

hence outlined in the First Three-Year Development Plan (1961-1964) and in the First and Second Five-Year Development Plans (1964-1969 and 1969-1974; IBRD, 1961; URT-a, 1969). The government's decision to expand production, processing and marketing of fish and fish products included other players in addition to small-scale fishers. A major focus was the development of an export-oriented industry, especially of prawns and lobster, which were already being fished commercially on a small-scale in several places.

In 1961, the Mwananchi Ocean Products Company (MOP) was formed under the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the then sole political party, to undertake industrial (commercial) fishing. MOP was formed as a joint venture with the Japanese government which held the larger share (pers. comm. Fisheries officials, 1998; Gibbon, 1997). It was from this time onwards that the *stima* became a familiar phenomenon to people who fished around Saadani Bay. *Stima* was a local word that referred to the industrial prawn trawlers mentioned in Chapter Two, a word that I was told originates from one of the categories of earlier marine vessels, i.e. SS or steam ship. Elderly people in Saadani also associated the trawlers with steam ships witnessed during colonial times, presumably because of the smoke billowing from them.

In 1973, MOP the joint venture was dissolved, and a government parastatal, Tanzania Fisheries Company (TAFICO), was formed. MOP's assets, including trawlers, offices and a freezing unit at Kurasini in Dar es Salaam, were handed over to TAFICO. By 1986 TAFICO had expanded its fleet from eight to fourteen fishing trawlers operating mostly along the Rufiji and Bagamoyo coastlines. Other institutions, such as the Kunduchi Fisheries Training Institute and Mbegani Fisheries Development Centre (MFDC) also began trawling within these areas, using the same kinds of advanced technologies as TAFICO, and placed ever greater pressure on both marine resources and on local small-scale fishers (pers. comm. Fisheries officials - Jan, 1999). However, TAFICO failed to become economically viable, despite having the best equipment and facilities. And, in 1988, after the 1984 introduction of economic liberalisation policies, permission to trawl was granted to private local and foreign-owned companies. The number of trawlers increased to 18 by 1990, dropping to 12 in 1991 (Gibbon 1997:

13). In 2000 the number of trawling vessels operating in Tanzanian waters had once again risen to 20 as Table 4. 2 below shows.

**Table 4.2: Licensed Prawn Trawlers – Tanzania Mainland  
(1992-2000)**

Year	Number of Trawlers	Flag	
		Tanzanian	Foreign
1992	18	12	6
1993	13	8	5
1994	22	17	5
1995	15	10	5
1996	13	9	2
1997	17	14	3
1998	16	14	2
1999	19	19	-
2000	20	20	-

**Source:** Statistics Section, Fisheries Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, 2000.

In the first two years of industrial prawn trawling (1988 – 1990), fishing was completely unregulated causing numerous conflicts with local coastal people. A major conflict arose from the destruction of artisanal gear by the trawlers. In the early 1990s, the Division of Fisheries laid down regulations for industrial trawling. They included:

- Delineation of separate areas for industrial fishing and for small-scale operations;
- Limitations on the daily period for industrial trawling to the 12 hours of daylight; and,
- A requirement that trawler operators place a government official on their vessels to ensure that the vessel adhered to the regulations (Gibbon, 1997:13; Sobo, 1999).

During the period of my fieldwork the fishing enterprise along Saadani Bay comprised two components. The first was small-scale fishing (often referred to as artisanal fishing), involving local people and visiting fishers who temporarily settled in Saadani during major fishing seasons. The second was industrial fishing. The difference between these two sectors can be described in terms of fishing methods and scale of capital investment. Local fishers were mostly small scale and sometimes used traditional gear, such as fishing nets, fish fences, fish traps and hand-held lines and hooks. As I have mentioned earlier, the use of sea craft was minimal and, in 1998, only five households owned sea craft that they used for fishing and sometimes for transportation purposes. Industrial fishing, on the other hand, was mechanised and based on trawlers and large-scale processing plants (Sobo, 1999).

The obvious imbalances in capacities to exploit resources between local fishers and trawler-based fishing was a major concern for local people. Prawn trawlers operated within the same areas as local fishers, and only the depth of water, which limited each operation, separated them. Local people fished within the inter-tidal zone and, in the case of fishing pairs working with gill nets were restricted to a physical depth of up to their necks. Their fishing, depending on the tides, was within 100 to 150 metres from the shore. The trawlers, on the other hand, were able to, and often did come quite close to the shore when the tide was high, sometimes entering the area where shore-based fishers worked. Local fishers were angered by their sense of dispossession of fishing grounds. They complained that their catches had fallen since the traders were present. The Division of Fisheries and the Bagamoyo Local Government authorities acknowledged such conflicts. Their main response was to emphasise to trawler operators that they had to adhere to the existing regulations for the exploitation of marine resources (pers. comm with Fisheries official, Feb. 1999). I felt that this response was actually trying to accommodate the new liberal resource exploitation framework which I had mentioned in Chapter One. However, as had been the case for forestry, shortages of staff prevented the Division of Fisheries from ensuring that regulations were in fact being adhered to. For example, the Division could not place inspectors on all vessels, and local fishers often reported that trawling vessels were not abiding by the regulations. Local people thus felt that they were losing control over

their resources to outsiders, and were aggrieved by the state's lack of intervention to protect their rights.

During the period when industrial fishing was being developed (i.e. in the 1960s) separate programmes to incorporate small-scale fishers in the development of the fishing sector were also undertaken. Several fishing villages were able to achieve significant economic successes through fishing, especially when government support was high, as was the case with Saadani during the height of Ujamaa co-operative production. Another outcome was that the government's control over local production processes was extended, in this case through mechanisms such as licensing and taxation, and village structures through which the government was able to regulate the fisheries with limited accountability to the local population. I discuss these outcomes in the following section.

#### **4.3.1 Development of Local Small-scale Fisheries**

Several separate steps to address the interests and concerns of local small-scale fishers were developed in the period after 1961. A major step was taken in 1970, when the national government enacted the first Fisheries Act (No. 6 of 1970) which, to this date, is the principal piece of legislation guiding the country's fisheries industry. The government has since incorporated periodic amendments to add on fisheries regulations, and has reviewed the fishing industry in accordance with changing social and economic circumstances. Regulations pertaining to fisheries include the Principal Regulations of 1989; subsidiary amendments of 1994 and 1997; The Exclusive Economic Act of 1989 and the Marine Parks and Reserves Act of 1994 (Sobo, 1999:106). The Fisheries Regulations Act and subsequent amendments are also the basis of national policy over small-scale fisheries and have a direct bearing on the lives of Saadani people. The Act has two important provisions. Firstly, every small-scale fisher should have a fishing licence, the fee for which is regularly reviewed. Secondly, the Act stipulates the type of gear that is deemed appropriate for small-scale fisheries. In this case, fisheries regulations prohibit the use of fishing nets with less than 38mm (1.5 inch) mesh sizes, as these are regarded as harmful to marine life.

Three types of fees applied to the fishers in Saadani in 1997. These included a fee of TShs 840/= for a one-off certificate for registration of a fishing vessel, and an annual fee of TShs 1200/= for a licence to operate a fishing vessel. An annual fee of TShs 1800/= was charged for a licence to fish or to deal in fish or fish products. There was a special licence for shellfish such as prawns and lobsters, called an annual collection licence, which in 1997 cost TShs 3600/= and which prawn dealers and traders had to purchase.

When Saadani had operated as an Ujamaa fishing village, the licensing of fishing gear was covered by the village government, hence local people did not have to have individual licences. The national government then also arranged that certain companies would market prawns from small-scale fisheries. In the case of Saadani, the Dar Ocean Products Company (owned by an Asian businessman) and the Bagamoyo Fishing Company, a subsidiary of TAFICO, became the sole purchasers of prawns and entered into a purchasing agreement with the Saadani village government. This arrangement enabled the village to operate successfully as a communal prawn fishing enterprise for several years. But, in the early 1980s when villagers discovered cases of dishonesty and embezzlement of village funds by the then village government leadership, they abandoned communal fishing and local people reverted to fishing and marketing their prawns individually.

Immediately after the decline of Ujamaa in Saadani, the village government operated as the sole purchasing agent for the Bagamoyo Fisheries Company and Dar Ocean Products Company. The village government bought prawns for TShs 7/= a kilogramme from individual fishers and sold them to the companies for TShs 15/=. The village government benefited from the TShs 8/= difference. But this arrangement soon collapsed with the entry of private and individual prawn dealers who, from the late 1970s and early 1980s, began to penetrate the prawn export market and followed fishers to fishing sites, such as Saadani village. The private business people enticed individual fishers with a higher price than that paid by the village government, and local fishers soon stopped selling to the village government. By doing so, they not only obtained a better return for their labour. They also managed to avoid a structure that

they understood was not to their individual benefit and was receiving more than the price they were being paid. In response, local oral sources claimed, the village government demanded a TShs 1/= per kilogramme tax from individual fishers who sold their purchases directly to the private business people. When the fishers refused to accept this demand, the village government directed the prawn dealers to reduce the prices they paid to individual fishers and to pay the TShs 1/= difference directly to the village government. Yet this strategy, too, did not work for long, since individual fishers avoided those dealers who deducted the TShs 1/= tax from their payments, and sold their prawns only to those who did not comply with village government demands. These tactics were easily executed because of the high demand for prawns, the competition among prawn dealers and the village government's lack of effective policing capacity. Resisting the village government in this way and embracing private dealers, displayed a considerable degree of independence on the part of local people, and also indicated to the national government the extent to which local people mistrusted their local administration.

The national government earlier attempted to organise the marketing of marine products in such a way that it would be able to record on the development of local small-scale fisheries, and also to gain revenue therefrom. The government also planned to modernise the marketing and preservation of fish, and to replace the traditional way of using the beach for trade in marine products. Following this objective, in the late 1970s, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) constructed a building in Saadani to be used as a fish market in the village. This building was part of a nationwide programme begun in 1975 by the Division of Fisheries, to establish markets in all coastal villages of mainland Tanzania. Refrigeration facilities at the markets, were also planned, but they were never installed in Saadani due to a shortage of funds.<sup>16</sup> The Saadani fish market was constructed during a period when prawns were gaining increasing dominance in the local market for marine products, and the market site was

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<sup>16</sup> Personal communication with Bagamoyo district Fisheries officer in January 1999.

initially used to sort the prawn catch and to pack it for sale. As this was still during the period of Ujamaa principles in the village, the tasks were done communally.<sup>17</sup>

After Ujamaa declined, individual fishers and traders continued to use the market for some time. From 1979, Division of Fisheries extension staff were stationed in Saadani and, in collaboration with the village government, started demanding fishing licences and tax payments from local individual fishers and prawn dealers. This led to both the fishers and the dealers boycotting the fish market and to trading their catches on the beach instead. By 1984, the fish market had been abandoned completely and the building had become the residence of Fisheries Division extension staff until 1994, when the last was removed following the national government's mass redundancy programme in the civil service. In 1997/8 the floods following the El Nino rains swept away part of the construction, so that all that remained by 1998 was a ruined monument of government intervention which the people had not been ready to accept. Indeed its demise and dilapidated state is seen by local people themselves as a symbol of local resistance in their continuing struggle against outside government intervention.

Yet, under the district government's directives, the village government leaders continued in the late 1990s to be obliged to assist District Fisheries officials to collect payments for fishing licences. District Fisheries officials claimed that local fishers were very slow in paying for licences or sea craft registration fees, despite the fact that during peak fishing seasons they were able to raise the sums of money required. They therefore decided to follow fishing communities along the Bagamoyo coastline during each season and demand payment at the village conducting a house to house inspection of fishing nets, much to the annoyance of local fishers. In 1997, Saadani's Village Executive Officer (VEO) and village security guard (*mgambo*) accompanied Fisheries officials on these inspection trips. Local fishers detested this practice, which they saw as a form of official ambush. They also claimed that they were not always given receipts for payments they were 'forced' to make. District Fisheries officers on the

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<sup>17</sup> One woman recalled that Village government leaders used to sound a gong to summon villagers to the market to do the sorting. She said "the gong sounded ng'e ng'e ng'e, and all of us would go to the market and work together" (Saadani, 1998).

other hand, justified their inspections, claiming that this was the only way they could manage license inspections and collect licence fees.

Local people regarded such state-imposed regulations as unfair. They claimed that they were told by Fisheries officials that possessing a fishing licence (i) made a fisher a *bona fide* producer; (ii) allowed one to market one's fish anywhere; and (iii) identified one as a fisher and indicated the place of domicile and the type of fishing a person was engaged in. Yet local Saadani people took it for granted that they had always fished anywhere and at anytime, and they felt that they needed no licences to establish or maintain that right.

Even had they recognised the need for licences, they complained that the logistics involved in paying for licences at Bagamoyo town were too cumbersome. Not only was the transportation by sea or by road to Bagamoyo town unreliable, but the travel costs incurred were too high to justify the trip. Moreover, local people regarded their village government leaders as having split loyalties, to the national government and to themselves. They were uncomfortable with the way these leaders took the lead in demanding fishing licences, since they understood the village government to comprise fellow locals who should represent them to the Fisheries Department, as they had done in relation to the SGR as regards issues such as the boundary conflict. The issue of fishing licences thus undermined village solidarities.

When asked why they objected to paying for the licences during major fishing seasons when their incomes were relatively high, people simply explained by saying “we cannot” (*hatuwezi*), implying that they were constrained (possibly by several factors) not to be able to pay. In this case the constraint was popular opinion which they could not go against. People used this phrase instead of saying “*hatutaki*” (lit: we do not want) which reflects an outright refusal.<sup>18</sup> The use of such language has embedded

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<sup>18</sup> *Hatuwezi* (lit: we cannot) is the negative present tense form of the verb *weza* whose various meanings include to (i) be able, strong, be capable have strength; (ii) have power (means, liberty, opportunity) (iii) get mastery over, control. In the negative form, *hatuwezi* (lit: we cannot) is used in various situations where one cannot do what one might otherwise have done if one had had the required capacities, strength or other resources. *Hatutaki* (lit: we do not want), on the other hand, is the negative present tense from the verb *taka*, which means to want, desire or wish. It thus presupposes an absolute expression of want or need.

political meanings reflecting a long history of avoidance of confrontation with the state by being indirect in refusing to pay taxes or meeting other imposed demands. As Biersack (1999) suggests, the use of such discourse is clearly political because it has the effect of contesting, negotiating or positioning people within a social field and thereby expressing local forms of power. In this case, local people's discourse of inability to pay fishing licence fees hid their clearly political resistance to the state's imposition of all licence fees.

Local people also related a range of day-to-day issues concerning declining livelihood standards to their increasingly small incomes from fishing and linked them to their inability to pay license fees. They were concerned over declining abilities to control their marine environment and the fact that they did not have the same capacities to utilise marine resources as the trawlers had. Local people claimed that their income from fishing was very small, and shrinking year by year, and that it was therefore unfair for the village or national government to tax this income in licence fees, particularly since the general village populace received no benefits from such fee payments. Such benefits, they said, should have included protection of their fishing space and the improvement of local fishing gear, neither of which was apparent.

They also complained bitterly that prawn trawlers were steadily reducing marine resources. Although no figures were available for Saadani itself,<sup>19</sup> Fisheries office figures for small-scale fishers' production of prawns in the whole of Bagamoyo district between 1990 and 1996 indicate a steady decrease over the years (see Table 4.3). Saadani people thus felt that the government should address the issues of dwindling marine resources and incomes rather than concentrate on taxes and licence fee collection.

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<sup>19</sup> I could not obtain the statistics for the local Saadani fishing sector because there was no system of keeping records of local individual prawn and fish catches and sales. The officer who was responsible for keeping such records, the Village Executive Officer (VEO), did not keep any records. Otherwise, prawn dealers only wrote down records when they did not have enough money to pay fishers immediately, and it was difficult to rely on the information given to me directly from the fishers since they depended on memories and estimates only. The Bagamoyo District Fisheries office, which is only 40 kilometres away, lacked adequate staff and reliable transportation facilities to enable efficient monitoring of all fishing villages throughout the year. In this situation, estimates of district annual catches were done from monitoring only what was landed at Bagamoyo town's landing point at Forodhani.

But the major resentment local people had regarding Fisheries officials concerned the misuse of what they regarded as 'their' marine environment by fishing trawlers, a resentment they had in common with other communities on the Tanzanian mainland coast (Mkiba, 1999; Msacky, 1998; Sobo, 1999). Local people objected to the kind of trawling conducted because they felt that these practices could not ensure a sustainable use of the marine environment. For example, one local fisher explained that "the trawlers with their modern technology are finishing the fish. They comb deep down into the sea bed, what will remain"? (*stima na mitambo yao ya kisasa zinamaliza samaki, zinakwangua mpaka chini, kitabaki nini?*). In the process, he added, they catch juvenile fish, fish that could have been used in the future.

By contrast, local people claimed that fishers using hand-held gill nets from the shore could not cause this rate of destruction. As a local elder said: "we cannot compete with these trawlers because they have the capacity to catch tons and tons of finfish and prawns. So very little is left for the local fisherman." Local people, recognising their inability to confront the trawlers directly, resorted to complaining and publicising the inappropriateness of the trawlers' practice.

As a result, the media and conservation bodies took up local fishers' stories to expose how prawn trawlers undermined sustainability principles. Such measures challenged the national government to monitor the operations of prawn trawlers. For example, in September 1998 a newspaper carried complaints from fishers in a coastal community, just north of Saadani:

the trawlers are not observing the time and area limitations as they sneak in close to shore waters, sometimes at night. Trawlers, according to regulations, are supposed to fish only during the day and strictly not in shoreline waters ... the trawlers not only wrecked fishing nets and seaweed farms, but also dumped the by-catch from the sea (Msacky, 1998).

**Table 4.3: Production of Prawns from the Bagamoyo Artisanal Fishery 1990-1996**

Year	Landings (kilogramme)	Value (TShs)
1990	10,146	11,187,272
1991	5,388	2,816,630
1992	1,072	663,124
1993	845	493,130
1994	860	835,055
1995	254	322,700
1996	185	319,500

Source: Bagamoyo District Fisheries Office, Annual Reports 1999.

Local people also regarded the trails of muddy water that trawlers sometimes left behind them in the course of trawling as indication of their unnecessarily disturbing marine life. The result they claimed, was that, local people could not catch enough prawns or fish. They related this phenomenon to a periodic low blowing wind (*teku*) which disturbed the seabed and caused the waters to have a murky appearance. This phenomenon, they claimed, caused marine life to move to other places, as did the trawlers churning up the sea bed.

Trawler operators often discarded small-sized finfish regarded as a useless by-catch, into the sea. This practice irked local people, despite the fact that households which did not have the means to fish for their own needs were able to glean these fish as they drifted onto the shore to use as household food. Sometimes, however, the beached fish were no longer fit for human consumption, having already gone through a processing stage in the trawlers before being discarded into the sea. And many were thus left to rot on the beach, or to be eaten by sea gulls and other scavengers.

But local people also realised that state officials were unlikely to intervene on their behalf because of the immediate returns trawlers provided the government. As a local

person explained: "We have been complaining to the District Natural Resources officers about the trawlers, but our complaints have not been honoured, because it is said that they [*stima*] pay revenue to the government". People thus took every opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with trawling in 'their' environment, explaining it to almost every visitor, academic, researcher and government political leader they came across, always hoping that something would be done to relieve them of what they regarded as a scourge. Their elaborate explanations were also indicative of the knowledge they had of their environment, which they understood was being destroyed by the presence and activities of the trawlers.

For all these reasons, local people wanted tighter government control of the trawlers. One Fisheries officer at the MNRT I consulted explained that trawler operators had been instructed to practice only pelagic fishing, and not bottom trawling, and agreed that the MNRT often received complaints from local small-scale fishers about bottom trawling. But, she claimed, a shortage of Fisheries officials had limited policing of the trawlers. And another official commented that "local people's resentment towards trawlers could probably be their way of venting their anger and helplessness on a declining resource base and falling standards of living" (pers. comm. Dar-es-Salaam, Feb 1999). His comment, while not necessarily a generalised view of all officials in the Ministry, signified to me another dimension of local people's frustrations with the trawlers - the fact that the government does not reprimand the trawler operators in ways that the law demands. And hence local people's anger that the government responded only to those with power (in this case, the financial ability of trawler operators to curry the government's favour) was not misplaced, and that local people's negativity towards trawlers had good grounding.

Power struggles in the prawn fisheries were also reflected at other levels, and sometimes questioned further the ability and credibility of the state to protect the environment for all its subjects, let alone to safeguard their livelihoods. Accusations of trawler operators being close to 'powerful state officials' have often been expressed by the media and by experts. In September 2000, a privately-owned newspaper carried the news that "the MNRT has licensed several trawlers to harvest prawns in Tanzania's territorial waters, despite a warning by experts that the resources are limited" (The

Guardian, 2000). Gibbon (1997) too has pointed out that, despite a 1989-90 FAO sponsored study which revised the maximum sustainable prawn yield estimates downwards to 1500 tons/year, "some Fisheries officers felt that it was politically difficult to deny renewal to [then] existing licence holders, who are presumed to have good relations with important people" (Gibbon, 1997: 13).<sup>20</sup> The recommendations on marine environment sustainability notwithstanding, in 2000, the government issued permits to 20 prawn trawlers as Table 4.2 illustrated.

Despite local antagonism towards trawlers, some small-scale fish dealers could co-operate with the trawlers once they had improved equipment and motorised sea craft. Saadani's VEO explained that several prawn dealers (*matajiri wamunuzi*) from Bagamoyo town traded with trawlers working the Saadani Bay area, and purchased finfish from the trawlers. The prawn dealers usually did this when they had been unable to purchase enough prawns to make their trip to Saadani worthwhile, and thus needed finfish to offset the likely deficit. The possibility for such transactions between prawn trawlers and individual dealers was introduced by the Division of Fisheries in 1989 to control the wasteful practice of dumping finfish into the sea. Through this arrangement, the state in effect created a market for unwanted finfish caught by the trawlers and simultaneously enabled individual small-scale dealers to increase their incomes.

Yet, this arrangement, ostensibly designed to benefit local people, actually benefited outsiders since the dealers who owned motorised sea craft, and who could access the trawlers were themselves not Saadani people. Thus a government attempt to create an environment for local fishers to co-operate with trawlers, could not benefit the majority of individual fishers who once again, felt deprived by the state of access to marine resources.

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<sup>20</sup> The Guardian Newspaper (27/9/2000) also commented that "one licensed prawn trawling company was a Kenyan fishing firm, whose licence was withdrawn by the government in the early 1990s, allegedly for smuggling prawns to Kenya. An investigation [indicated] that the Kenyan company had six fishing vessels, including a floating fish processing plant stationed between Mafia Island and the estuary of the Rufiji River, which [processed] prawns, lobster and octopus bought from small holders. Stakeholders were] accusing the Ministry of turning down applications for fishing licences from indigenous Tanzanians who [had] fishing vessels that [met] laid down conditions and which are more modern". The Ministry later denied that it was neglecting local indigenous Tanzanians on the permit issue.

Having been disenfranchised, and having had their control over their sea environment reduced, local people fell back on locally designed relationships through which some power could be exerted and control re-established. One was to charge prawn dealers from outside Saadani for the right to trade there. This charge was termed *kipiga hodi* (lit: for knocking [on the door]).

'*Kipiga hodi*,' I was told, was a practice long conducted in the village. It was said to have originated during the Arab and Shirazi occupation of Saadani before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Traders from neighbouring villages, and newcomers who entered the village by sea or land, had to pay tribute by offering a token gift to the village elders, distributed amongst themselves. This tribute symbolised the newcomers' entry and right to peaceful transactions with local people. Thereafter, the trader or newcomer was accepted and shown a place to stay and to conduct his business.

In 1997 and 1998, only prawn dealers from outside the village were charged *kipiga hodi* at a flat rate of TShs 10,000/= per major fishing season. Usually, a group of village youth, in collaboration with the VEO (himself one of the local youth), approached business people who arrived on Saadani beach or in the settlement, and informed them of the requirement to pay their respects to the village elders to whom they were subsequently escorted. The village elders then discussed the *kipiga hodi* with the visitors. These village youth were given a small share of the *kipiga hodi* as a token for their participation in facilitating the transaction. In the event of a businessperson not consenting to pay *kipiga hodi*, the youths discouraged villagers from conducting business with such a person. One prawn dealer told me that he usually paid the *kipiga hodi* in instalments as he conducted his purchases. He added that he was not given a receipt but admitted that he did not demand one since his only concern was to get the consent of the village elders to conduct his business.

Charging *kipiga hodi* represented a local means of establishing territoriality and ownership of geographical space, since it implied that the people of Saadani could control access to Saadani to some extent, for individual small-scale business people. In a situation where local people could not exert control over state-backed resource

users, their only way of exercising power was at a local level. And since no accounts of *kipiga hodi* were kept, the District government could not benefit from the percentage that was supposed to be submitted to the District council. This was another indicator of outwitting the state.

To conclude this section: local people's experiences in the development of the local fisheries sector are a good illustration of the way in which institutionalised power, particularly that of government, has been steadily applied and how, despite having in several ways enabled people to gain access to some marine resources, it has also steadily reduced that access over time. I have also illustrated how the state tried to reach agreements with local people about issues concerning what it regarded as appropriate ways of utilising marine resources. For example, the state's regulations for trawling, requiring Fisheries officials to be placed as observers on trawlers, appeared to be introduced to appease local fishers. Yet, local people did not always feel that their needs were being addressed. Rather they felt their access to marine resources was being eroded as was their sense of autonomous control over the use and management of those resources for their own livelihoods. In several cases, therefore, they rejected state-designed means of utilising marine resources and attempted to exercise at least some kind of local control over marine resources.

#### **4.4 The Power of Exclusion: Wildlife Protection and Tourism**

I now turn to discuss an example of the use of power in a different way. I consider how policy intervention in wildlife protection in Saadani, although not suddenly imposed, turned out to be so restrictive that it created a new range of situations for local people, significantly re-structuring local forms of livelihood and ways of using natural resources. As my data below illustrate, the use of state power to establish rules for resource use, on a platform that was initially meant to ensure collaborative management, has ultimately limited local people's options.

The wealth of wildlife within Saadani's ecosystem has made Saadani people unique along the Tanzanian mainland coast. As I have introduced in Chapter Two, the Saadani

Game Reserve (SGR) was established in 1969 after local people expressed concern with increasing use of local wildlife for commercial and pleasure hunting, practices understood as against legitimate rights to utilize local wildlife, which was for subsistence. Local people claimed that their elders had taken the first move to demand protection of wildlife within the area. According to local oral and documented sources, in 1968, a village elders' meeting, told the then Director of the Wildlife Division in the MNRT, Mr. Mahinda, that people who were not local residents were inappropriately using local wildlife, and requested him to take measures to protect the wildlife in Saadani (Mpote, 1994). After a brief inspection, the number and quality of game impressed the Director, specifically because they were so close to the ocean. He also recognized the potential for tourism in the rich botanical biodiversity. Hence, processes to establish what became the Saadani Game Reserve (SGR) followed in 1969, and the SGR was officially declared by the Wildlife Conservation (Game Reserves) Order of 1974.

The SGR is currently the only protected area with terrestrial wildlife along the entire coast of Tanzania's mainland. Apart from the variety of wildlife, its attractions also include the coastal mosaic forests in Mkwaja, the only population of Roosevelt's Sable in Tanzania, and nesting sites of the rare green turtle (Haase *et al*, 1996). The Saadani area is also adjacent to the Zaraninge PFR, reportedly Tanzania's largest and least disturbed coastal lowland forest in Tanzania. In addition, the pristine sandy beach that curves along the bay makes Saadani potentially very attractive for coastal tourism development.<sup>21</sup>

According to local oral sources, during the processes leading up to the establishment of the SGR, Director Mahinda had told local people that the SGR would be run co-operatively by government and local people, for protection of wildlife (Mpote, 1994). He also agreed that local people would be given priority in employment with the SGR,

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<sup>21</sup> Saadani's potential for tourism has attracted a number of developers and, by 1996, there were several applications for the development of tourist facilities in and around the SGR. In 1996, an ambitious developer identified an area about 2 kilometres from Saadani central along the route north to Uvinje and made concrete blocks in anticipation of erecting a tourist structure. The same year, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study conducted by the University of Dar es Salaam however discouraged the MNRT from promoting any such ventures, due to the fragility of the natural environment (IRA-UDsm, 1996).

and that a boundary demarcating the conservation area from the settlement would be established. A number of local people were employed as game attendants. Since most local people at that time had no formal education, they could only be employed at that lower level in the MNRT's employment hierarchy. Until 1995, the SGR also employed five local women as cleaners and attendants. But all had retired by 1997.

After establishment of the physical/geographical boundaries, many villagers realized that their returns from the deal were unfair. Tourism was given priority over local people's livelihoods, and local people had to adapt to the newly imposed management strategy of the area. They claimed that they were excluded from using a space and resources they had traditionally regarded as their own, and that they had not received worthwhile compensation. In addition to formally establishing the SGR boundary, The 1974 Wildlife Conservation Act also outlined the modalities for use of or access to Game Reserves in Tanzania. Here I paraphrase clauses 9, 10, 12 and 50 which have direct relevance for people living alongside Saadani Game reserve.

- No person is allowed to use, remove or destroy any type of vegetation, whether standing tree, shrub, bush, sapling or seedling in a game reserve, without written permission from Wildlife Conservation Authorities;
- Hunting of game within the game reserve is prohibited;
- Grazing of livestock in the game reserve without permission is prohibited;
- Killing an animal in defence of life or property is allowed, provided that the behaviour of the animal necessitating such killing was not provoked; or the killing was necessary. The killing should not be by methods amounting to cruelty to animals or to endanger human life; and the killing should have appropriate previous authorisation of game authorities.

When the boundaries were finally put in place, certain kinds of access to and use of resources within the SGR were permitted, some requiring at least a verbal permit from an SGR official. The permitted uses included collecting dead wood for household fuel, and raffia palm (*ukindu*) for making mats and other decorations. To cut standing trees

for poles or timber however, one had to obtain a written permit. Cultivation within the SGR area, and hunting game for any purpose were strictly prohibited.

Local people complained that these regulations had had various negative implications on their livelihoods and rights to resources. Initially, they claimed, the impact of the boundary demarcation and loss of cultivation land was not deeply felt, because it was during a period (the early to mid 1970s) when prawn fishing was successful, providing local people with a reliable source of income. Several forms of tourist-oriented entertainment facilities, including a zoo, located in close proximity to the settlement and which local people were free to visit, made them believe they were indeed participating in local wildlife management.<sup>22</sup> People also provided entertainment such as songs and local dances for outside visitors. Co-operation between local people and the SGR administration was close. People reminisce with nostalgic satisfaction that the SGR administration for a long time provided transportation and security for the village. For example, during the dry season, the SGR offered expecting mothers transport from the village to the nearest hospital in Kibaha. And on the day that one of the SGR vehicles was going on a trip, local people were able to obtain a ride. This kind of co-operation was still in existence by the late 1990s.

This co-operation notwithstanding, demarcation of the SGR boundary squeezed the main settlement of Saadani village into a narrow area as I have mentioned in Chapter Two. Saadani central settlement currently occupies only 0.25 sq. km. stretching for just a kilometre or so southwards from the Mvave River (IRA-UDsm, 1996). Uvinje hamlet has an area of 300 metres by 3 kilometres.

The major impact of the SGR was the prohibition on cultivating any area within the reserve. Before the establishment of the SGR, many households had fished and cultivated, growing rice in the areas adjacent to the shoreline, and millet, maize, cassava and lentils on higher ground. People who had cultivated on areas now in the SGR area (such as the area adjacent to where the primary school is now located, where Saadani Safari camp and the SGR's managers house are located, and at Kumvi,

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<sup>22</sup> The zoo was abolished in 1977 and the animals were set free in the reserve.

Cherehani, Tengwe and Gogo Diula), all had to abandon their fields and could no longer cultivate extensively. Only Marumbi and Uvinje settlements were left with small pieces of land for cultivation. Furthermore, and in accordance with the provisions creating the SGR, the residents of two settlements, Gogo Diula and Maguko, were compelled to move to Saadani and were paid a small amount of monetary compensation if they had property on their plots and fields.<sup>23</sup>

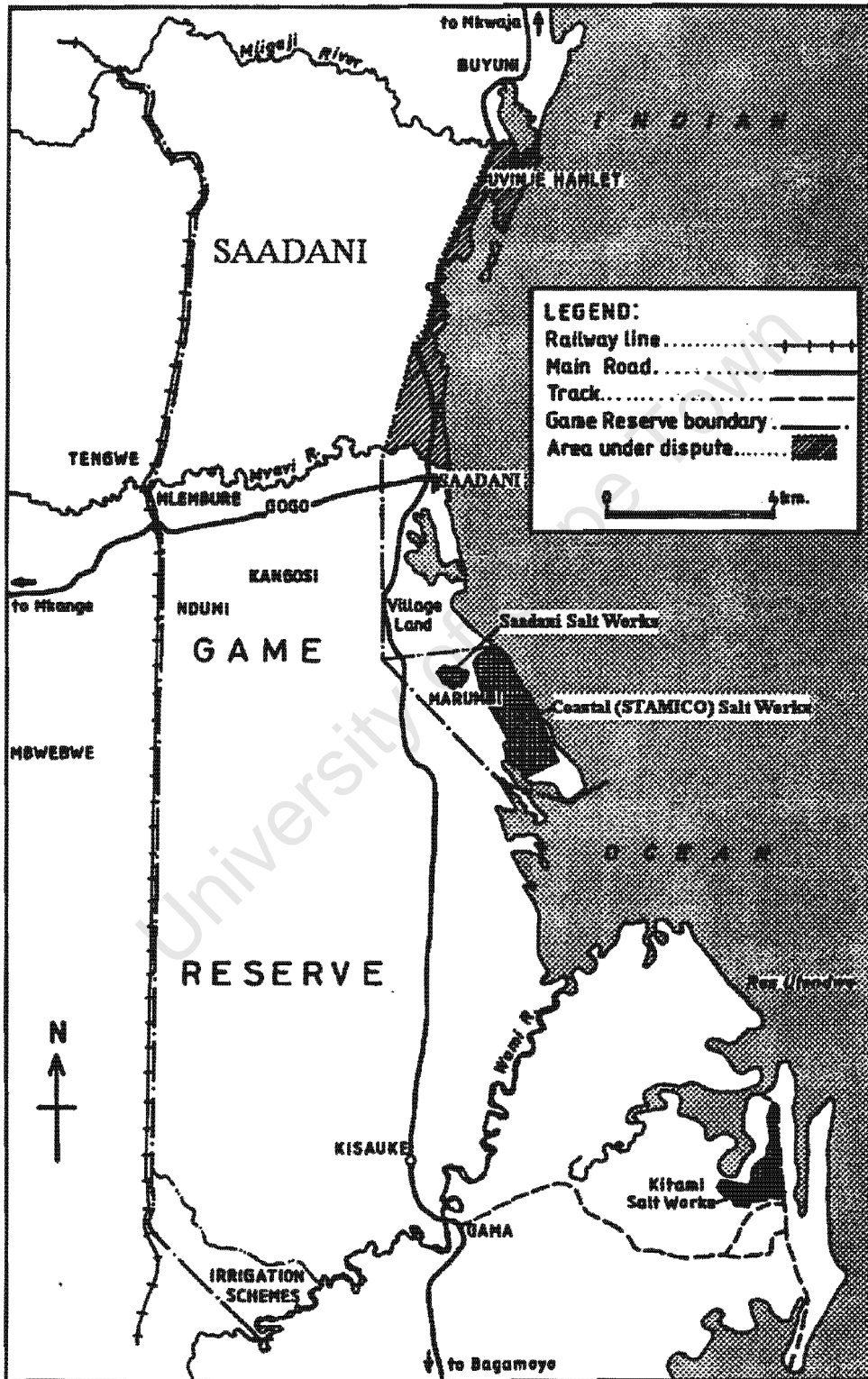
Other smaller settlements along the coast gradually declined because the earlier tendency for people to choose areas in which to settle was now constrained by the SGR and many people moved into Saadani central settlement.<sup>24</sup> Local sources claimed that residents of Uvinje settlement were initially allowed to remain resident there to be custodians of the wildlife in that area (Mpote, 1994). Uvinje residents also claimed that they had even agreed to the location of a guard post within the Uvinje area along the Saadani-Mkwaja road. Officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) claimed, however, that no written records confirm any such agreement and explained that Uvinje residents were only given verbal permission to reside temporarily within the demarcated area. But the people, many of whom still live there, are adamant that they will not leave their location and are demanding more land, to cater for future generations. A 1996 appraisal mission for the Saadani ecosystem established that Uvinje hamlet was granted permission by the then Chief Game Warden (1969) to reside in the SGR boundaries since the villager's activities (fishing) were compatible with the conservation objectives of the SGR (Haase *et al*, 1996: 8). The mission also noted that Uvinje residents had applied for an area of approximately 3 sq. km to be degazetted because its population had increased.

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<sup>23</sup> In the 1970s, the compensation paid by the government for landed property such as permanent crops and trees was very little. Local sources explained that since many of Saadani's residents cultivated more seasonal than perennial crops the compensation paid to them was minimal. Land was not compensated for because land, in Tanzania, was under the control of the President of the country and not individually owned.

<sup>24</sup> Local people recalled that some people had farms near a stream called Kijito Kombe, which lies between Saadani central and Uvinje, but they too had to move to Saadani.

Map 4.1 Map of Saadani and The Saadani Game Reserve showing area under border dispute - 1998



Uvinje residents also say they had readily accepted the SGR because they needed assistance in controlling vermin. Dada M, who is in her late 50s said, “elephants used to destroy many of our coconut palms. Wild pig also caused destruction to our cassava and vegetable plots. We thus needed assistance for protecting our crops.” But, she said, the SGR knew that Uvinje residents were cultivators by the time it was established. “Now we are faced with vermin and yet have very small areas to cultivate.”

Various issues arise from these resource-use contestations between local people and the government. Firstly, the institution of the 1974 Wildlife Act established the dominant role of the government over local people to determine the modalities of access to and use of natural resources. The designation of Saadani as an Ujamaa communal fishing village in 1974 augmented the government-driven process of alienating local people from terrestrial wildlife, as its aim was to redirect people’s livelihood activities towards total dependence on fishing. Secondly, the tendency to homogenize what constituted local people’s life situations and needs led to a situation where only the wishes of those understood to be representatives of the people were considered. According to local sources, most of the village elders present during the establishment of the SGR regarded themselves primarily as fishers and felt that cultivation was the occupation of their inland neighbours, only brought to Saadani by ‘*wakuja*’ (newcomers) whose representation among the village elders was minimal by virtue of the newcomer status. In addition, all village elders were men. And, since cultivation was a major pre-occupation of women rather than men, the village elders failed to recognize immediately the implications of the SGR to their livelihoods.

Although the consequent outcome was that both men and women were affected by the SGR prohibitions on the production of food staples in SGR territory, initially, women felt the negative impacts more than the men, because prohibitions on cultivation reduced women’s ability to provide staple food security. This was considered women’s duty while men engaged in fishing. The result was that women came to rely on men’s activities not only for the provision of relish, but also for purchasing the household food staple requirements. By 1997, a time when prawn catches had fallen significantly,

this dependence on men's cash incomes became quite threatening. The drop in men's fish catches also threatened some women's trade in fried fish, which had become women's major income-generating activity. Had it not been for women's industriousness in multiple income-generating activities, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six, some households' survival might have been severely threatened. By 1997, only a few women still worked on small cultivation plots. Five of six cultivator households of Marumbi were headed by women. They secured their livelihoods by combining cultivation with other income-generating activities. Uvinje residents continued to cultivate on the area disputed with the SGR, and people kept hoping that the government would solve the dispute in their favour.

The prohibitions on game hunting affected local people in several ways. Although most local men did not physically participate in hunting, people willingly accepted game meat for occasional household consumption and using during festivals. Most coastal people (*wenyeji*) were not themselves game hunters. But many had relatives in neighbouring villages who had depended on subsistence hunting, and some had moved into Saadani. Local people thus often wished for game meat and were bitter when they occasionally saw the SGR staff distributing game meat among themselves without sharing it with other local people. The SGR employees too were also not allowed to hunt, but they were allowed to consume game meat from animals snared by poachers.<sup>25</sup> On these occasions, the SGR employees shared the small amount of meat amongst themselves and sometimes only with the households of close relatives. Local people felt bitterness about being excluded from enjoying the fruits of a system of nature protection that they had initiated. One elder expressed his dissatisfaction as follows,

During the colonial period we rejected a strategy by the colonialists to take our forest. When we got independence we rejected people who killed the animals without any regulation. Then we told the government to take our land and protect the wildlife since we knew that we were independent and the government would make sure that we benefited from the measure. But what has happened is that even the independent government has excluded us from benefiting from our natural resources, similar to what the colonial government had intended to do. One government official at that time asked us, why do you give this area to the government, when you are the same people who refused to

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<sup>25</sup> Only occasionally did the SGR employees hunt wildlife for consumption when it received official visitors to the reserve.

give the coastal forest to the previous colonial government? We replied, "That was the colonialist, now we are free". Also, the government said we would cooperate. But now it does not even want cultivation, or consumption of game meat.

From the late 1980s local people increasingly openly expressed grievances over the SGR boundary issue. Much of their concern derived from changes in the local economy caused by declining fisheries and lack of suitable alternative occupations and incomes. Increasingly, and especially from the mid 1990s when prawn catches fell significantly, men started to look to cultivation as a source of livelihood, even though it was at that time pursued primarily by women and older men lacking the strength to fish. For the residents of Uvinje, the demand for land took a new turn. This was because the population of Uvinje had increased from the four households in 1969 to 14 households by 1997. The additional households demanded separate cultivation fields. The plots of the previous four households were not big enough to allow for a satisfactory redistribution among the 14 households. But the residents' hopes for a better livelihood were defeated when, in early 1998, a report by Bagamoyo District officials on the SGR land situation became available and suggested that, for the benefit of a sustainable wildlife management area, the settlement at Uvinje should be dissolved, and the people relocated to Saadani main settlement (Saadani-1, 1998). Although the recommendations of this report were not immediately implemented, the fact that government officials had even considered it appropriate to relocate the people of Uvinje annoyed residents intensely.

Local residents were equally distressed by the damage to their crop done by wild pigs and warthogs. Residents of Marumbi and Uvinje complained that they had to keep guard over their crops because of vermin. Baboons from the reserve were also a constant menace to livestock, eating young goats and chickens as well as young coconuts before they were fully ripe. The villagers complained that, when such incidents occurred, they were obliged to report them to the SGR but the SGR staff, they said, rarely responded to the villagers' satisfaction. Local people thus felt that wildlife was given more respect than people, that the SGR itself lacked proper vermin control measures, and that its compensation procedures were almost non-existent, a

claim admitted by the SGR officials. Hence, the complaints against the SGR developed into two concerns, one being the demand for land and the other being the problem of wildlife damaging crops.

Because local people felt they had repeatedly been disappointed by the SGR, they tended to keep a low profile in efforts to expose poaching. Between August 1997 and early 1999, I witnessed several anti-poaching exercises carried out by SGR staff and a few village youth. Yet it was only rarely that these exercises succeeded in catching a poacher red-handed. Often the SGR employees were only able to confiscate the snares or bicycles used in the hunting activity, while the owners escaped. Moreover, when snared animals or carcasses were found in the reserve area, local people would always point to people from outside the village as the culprits. Yet, while local people frequently knew who some of the poachers were, they protected them, firstly because these people killed only a few animals for their subsistence and small-scale trading rather than for commercial purposes, and secondly, because most local people were related to the 'poachers' as friends or relatives.

Local people also expressed that the central government alone was benefiting from local tourism. The government, through the SGR, received revenue from tourist activities conducted by the SGR and the tourist camp. Apart from the wildlife attractions in and around the reserve and the River Wami area, tourists were also taken to village based tourist attractions. Local people felt that these visits did not contribute directly to the village development. The tourist camp management accepted their obligation to pay tax but only to the central government through the MNRT. However, they understood that the village was supposed to receive a percentage of Park fees generated by tourist visits. Moreover, the camp management claimed, they had directly offered material assistance to the village, for example, they once offered food stuffs to primary school children and had agreed in 1997, to finance most of the costs of laying water distribution pipes and purchasing a water-pump to provide villagers with access to clean water throughout the year. Each household was required to subscribe TShs 1000/=. But, up to March 1999, the village government had been unable to mobilize the village's contribution and the camp management was holding back its contribution,

and complaining that collaborative resource use programmes with the villagers were not working.

#### **4.5 Creating Harmonious Power Relationships**

By the late 1990s, SGR authorities had revised the reserve's management to include greater the co-operation of local people. New approaches to managing wildlife aimed at establishing a multi-purpose natural resource management programme to administer the whole Saadani ecosystem. These strategies are examples of controlling processes introduced simply to attain harmonious relationships between the government and local people over natural resource use. My observation follows from Nader (1997) who has suggested that power works as a controlling process, working vertically through ideas and institutions to establish or transform social relations and people's patterns of consumption and desires. These are processes of subtly imposing the dominant institution's norms, so that people continue to be controlled, even in contexts where participatory involvement is stressed. The following discussion illustrates.

In response to changing NRM trends world wide, in 1996 the MNRT's Division of Wildlife initiated processes to establish a Saadani Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP) with a community-based approach to manage the biodiversity of the Saadani eco-system. The SCDP was designed to articulate fishing, forestry, wildlife protection and tourism activities within an overall environmental management framework, instituted in collaboration with and supported by the German Technical Assistance Development Programme (GTZ).<sup>26</sup> Local people's socio-economic situation was explicitly regarded as an important component for the success of the SCDP.

In the initial assessment surveys, people were sceptical of the new management approach, demanding to know how they would benefit. Their cautious attitude was based on past experiences and they insisted that the SCDP deal with the long-standing

boundary conflict and their concerns over access to land. A 1996 appraisal mission assessed the viability of the Saadani ecosystem for a community-based management programme and, once again, reflected previous outsiders' assumptions about local people's ways. The mission's conclusion states that:

The demand for land [by Saadani villagers] is just a way of expressing their resentment of the Game Reserve. It is true that the community does not receive tangible benefits from wildlife, although they gave almost all their land to be gazetted as a Game Reserve. On the other hand, giving back land to the residents of Saadani will not necessarily improve their standards of living. The practical solution is to assist villagers in solving the problems which impede prawn fishing, such as the provision of fishing gear, and to ensure that any future self-help project or other benefits are not mis-appropriated, otherwise the rest of the community will grow to resent conservation (Haase *et al*, 1996: 23).

While local people recognised the declining productivity of the fisheries that even improved gear could not redress, the outsiders still recommended fishing as an alternative to land-based production, and ignored local people's primary demand to the SCDP for land. Therefore in the processes that followed to put the SCDP in place, local people's primary demand was for land.

The processes taken to establish the SCDP sought the involvement of local people, through village elders and leaders who regarded it favourably as they expected that it would benefit local people. Towards the end of 1998, the SGR facilitated the establishment of local NRM committees in each of the ten villages due to border the SCDP. Each ten-member committee was to be responsible for all natural resource utilisation issues in its segment of the Saadani ecosystem area. In February 1999 a joint meeting was held between the various resource users and beneficiaries (referred to in development discourse as the stakeholders) of the Saadani eco-system. The objective of this meeting I found was "to see whether the emphasis [in power relations] can be shifted from a win-lose situation to a balance-of-interest approach" (Nader, 1997: 714) in the management of the Saadani eco-system. Participants included Members of Parliament for the three constituencies in which the SCDP area lies, the District

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<sup>26</sup> Project Appraisal. Community Wildlife Management / Saadani Conservation Programme Main report.

Commissioners of Bagamoyo, Pangani and Handeni districts, Wildlife conservation staff, SGR staff and ten people from each of the ten affected villages. Among several requests local people made at the meeting, were demands for explanations about the rights of access to resources in the SGR, and for a re-thinking of the SGR borders issue.

Benefits promised to villagers included a share of any income accrued from tourism, support for the local fishing industry, and improvements to the social service infrastructure. The SCDP also agreed to finance major renovations of existing SGR infrastructure and equipment. Within a year, the SGR guest lodge had been completely renovated by technicians from Dar es Salaam. New housing for SCDP staff was planned and SGR vehicles and other equipment were upgraded. This display of infrastructural investment, ostensibly as part of a new natural resource management strategy, was acknowledged by local people. Yet it also reminded them of the 1960s establishment of the SGR, as it demonstrated the government's capacity to organise and implement a desired high cost NRM strategy. A modern motor boat for patrolling the marine and mangrove area was acquired and four new Wildlife protection assistants were posted to Saadani. Yet none was a local person, despite earlier promises of employment opportunities made to local youth. The SCDP planned however that each of the ten villages would have its own wildlife protection staff, remunerated from proceeds gained from the sustainable utilisation and conservation of the ecosystem, a strategy the villagers were eagerly waiting for it to be realised.

Local people's uneasiness about the SCDP process brings into question a major objective of approaches such as CBNRM. It is often assumed that such approaches have the potential to establish harmonious power sharing between different resource users, to foster local people's participation, and to promote management legitimacy and accountability. Yet, the range of on-the-ground challenges that emerged bring CBNRM ideas into question, particularly when their implementation fails to deal with issues of resource use conflict. NRM policy makers may revise their approaches to include (rhetorical) reference to local people and community participation. Yet they fail to properly understand their own hegemonic interests and perspectives and also therefore fail to understand the nature of the so-called communities they claim to work

and co-operate with. In this case, revised NRM approaches continue to exhibit state power over local people, and thus to generate local resistance when promised benefits do not materialise.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted problematised local people's perceptions of power and autonomy as regards natural resource management processes. I have argued that NRM practices have both institutional and various socio-political implications regarding issues of ownership of, and access to, resources. Power relations sometimes reflected the economic orientation of the country, such as during the 1970s development of industrial prawn trawling that tended to overwhelm local small-scale fishers' demands. The idea of people's participation in NRM through local village structures, could successfully have devolved power over natural resource management to local people. Yet, by avoiding the major conflicts over access to and rights of ownership of natural resources, it lost that opportunity.

Moreover, NRM processes which perpetuated exclusion and resource use conflict, disempowered local people who saw 'their' wealth in natural resources always being used to benefit others while they benefited little and yet were expected to act as resource managers. Local people were angered to see the environment they had protected for so long from abusive practices was being abused by outsiders who left little for them. While most of the examples discussed in this chapter show local people's increasing disempowerment, they also illustrate local people's expressions of power through their denial of, or resistance to aspects of NRM-imposed activities. In seeking to negotiate with the state over emerging NRM measures within their area, people in Saadani used both subtle and open resistance. Writing about the problems and consequences of imposed development projects in another part of Bagamoyo district, Swantz (1970) states:

If the forces of development ignored the people's ways of identifying themselves and made no attempt to relate to their conceptualisation of social

reality, people would react by a felt urge to counteract the threat of social disintegration by emphasising their core value and redressing them against external pressures (1970:20-21).

Many Saadani people's responses to NRM strategies over the years illustrate precisely that point. The Saadani example also illustrates that local people do accept and may even be willing to participate in some NRM strategies as long as their ways of identifying themselves are safeguarded.

In the following chapters I continue to consider the challenges raised by my study as to how to conceive of power in people who see themselves as very different from conventional understandings of power and who practice separate kinds of power from conventional practices such as that of state-driven NRM.

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## CHAPTER FIVE: The Power of Meaning and Local People's Understanding of Natural Resources

*"It is in the small details of everyday life that meaning resides"<sup>1</sup>*

### 5.1 Introduction

The relationships between people and things have meanings that constantly change. In the case of natural resources, a change in people's life circumstances and in their ideas about value produces new meanings of those resources. These changes in meaning occur since people are continuously negotiating questions of power and control of definitions of reality in the processes of relating to natural resources (Dirks *et al*, 1994). As people try to define themselves in relation to natural resources, they encounter new experiences and incorporate new understandings about their life situations and their world. People who have these experiences and understandings cannot avoid contemplating issues of power. Since people's worlds are continuously embraced in systems of inequality, contestations and struggles for livelihoods, their experiences and understandings of life embody power relations.

Several analyses suggest that the meanings people attach to natural resources draw on their social and economic experiences over time. Ingold (1992), for example, has suggested that people and their environments are mutually constituted through continuous interaction. The interaction involves a mental activity of perception in which people gain knowledge of their environment and what it can afford to them, "positively or negatively, for the consummation of behaviour" (1992: 42). The active engagement of the person with natural resources, which involves thought and productive practice, illustrates, according to Ingold, a continuity in people's ideas about their environment. According to Ruddle (1994), there is a continuous development of knowledge, based on experience over time. It illustrates how people's ideas change through their continued relationship to their environment. Referring to a study on the Torres Straits Islanders (cf. Nietschmann 1989), Ruddle (1994) explains

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<sup>1</sup> Winans (1995: 44) sentence encapsulates my argument in this chapter, especially when he elaborates that "[development] planning assumes too much and knows too little, not about daily life, but about the meaning of daily life."

that these Islanders "expanded their understanding and description of sea conditions and sea life through new economic pursuits, such as diving for pearl shell, ... crayfish ... and have now accumulated 120 years of direct underwater observations" (1994: 34). He thus contends that "this knowledge, and the people's long-term and continuing occupation of the land and sea, are what the Islanders say represent their credentials of ownership" (1994: 34).

Experiences from many other places have illustrated the instrumental role of local knowledge systems for regulating people's uses and understanding of resources. However, such systems alone have been unable to legitimize and sustain local access to and control of resources, in a world which understands natural resources in different ways from those in which local people understand them.

In Chapter One, I discussed several studies about NRM that have illustrated how in some places local systems of authority and power have played important roles in regulating resource use patterns, maintaining rights to resources and arbitrating disputes between different claimants (Little & Brokensha, 1987; Edmunds, 1997; Klooster, 2000). The systems of authority have included local institutions (such as prohibitions, taboos, religion, local structures, norms, values and local views on morality) and local structures of authority (such as chiefs, temples and village councils). However, changes influenced by pressures from various sources such as "changes in the level of decision making; wealth differentiation (and the related factor of poverty); commercial market linkages and demographic pressure" (Little & Brokensha, 1987: 195), have, also, impacted on local systems of authority, leading to redefinitions of the meanings local people attach to resources and their control. Yet, analysts have often been unable to capture adequately local people's redefined understanding of resources. In those instances where the predominance of economic factors have reduced natural resources to things whose primary potential is for economic exploitation (Reed, 1996), a process that Saadani is currently experiencing, social analysts have tended to ignore other forms of value people may give to natural resources. Often it has been assumed that the value of such a thing or resource is exclusively determined by market forces and by the nature of its demand.

But, as Little & Brokensha (1987) explain, despite changes in people's daily lives, aspects of local management systems remain, which may not necessarily embrace market oriented values. Modern NRM practitioners seem to have difficulty identifying with local systems of understanding resources, precisely because they perceive local institutions as products of non-rational and therefore inappropriate systems of authority for what they regard as proper natural resource management. For example, most NRM practitioners have tended to relate to those institutions which they can understand and recognise from their own perceptions of what constitutes a political system or structure of authority, such as a village government. In addition, state-driven NRM approaches have failed to recognise the results of imposed changes on local people's understanding of their legitimacy to use resources in their environments. This is because power is conceptualised in the conventional sense that confers on the state what is understood as legitimate power. Consequently, only structures such as national policies, state-designed nature reserves or village governments are regarded as having the power to organise natural resource management.

In this chapter I continue to draw on contemporary understandings of power to demonstrate how local people in Saadani negotiate and express issues of power in natural resource management processes. Whereas in Chapter Four I discussed how local people use power to outwit the state, in this chapter I focus on how local people retain a sense of their own power by engaging in activities they regard as their own. I begin by examining the daily livelihood activities of local people and the ways they construct their resource base in accordance with meanings they attach to their means of deriving their livelihoods. I demonstrate how local people relate to sea and land resources, in an iterative process of mutual constitution. An examination of these processes make its possible to illustrate how people value resources, how and why resources are prioritised, and how these values change to accommodate broader social, political and economic changes to which people have had to respond. I also illustrate how people find expression in symbolic forms, such as in phrases and rituals, and how these symbols confer meanings on individuals' interaction with nature. It is within these encounters that one sees the value of contemporary approaches to power and how they enable understanding of "local struggles against

the many forms of power exercised at the everyday level of social relations” (Sawicki, 1991: 23).

## 5.2 Ownership of Coastal Space and Resources

According to Bohannan (1969) the relationship between people and the environment has a spatial dimension which manifests itself through the multiple ways in which people claim natural resources. People recognize specific materials in the environment as resources by culturally categorizing them. People also understand that natural resources tend to be unevenly distributed in the environment, and so associate certain spaces with particular resources. Because people value these resources, they also lay claim to areas in the environment in which resources they value are located.

People’s claims to space are also based on their culturally constituted material needs including requirements that have a spatial dimension such as “maintaining privacy or cultural exclusiveness and integrity” (Bohannan, 1969: 222). The ways people utilize natural resources through their particular livelihood activities is also a basis for claims to space and resources since it is through these activities that people relate and attach meaning to natural resources in the environment. In Saadani, people’s claims of control and rights to space and resources were established by a series of constructed rights which included local people’s history and their livelihood patterns.

In this section, I begin by illustrating how people in Saadani related to the sea environment and gave their claim a spatial dimension. I then relate this understanding to the ways they claimed ownership of the land surrounding them, a claim based on their interactions with the land.

While fishing activities were concentrated during the two main fishing seasons each year, fishers flocked to the area around Saadani Bay, with gill nets over their shoulders and baskets balanced on two poles (*kongola*), on almost every day during the period of my study. Normally, the fishers congregated in one particular spot for a day or two before moving, almost simultaneously, to another fishing area. My curiosity about these patterns of shifting locations for fishing was met one day by a

fisher who explained that “when a few fishers have been successful in an area the day before, the following day other fishers come over to the same spot to try their luck.” Wilson & Acheson (1980) discuss similar trends in New England, and how information sharing about migratory species was common in boat-based fishing communities. They add that such information exchanges were expected to be reciprocated. In Saadani, such information exchange was relatively easy because, with many fishers concentrated in a particular location one day, others could witness any successes, and, through these means, information was shared throughout the village.

Fishing in Saadani was conducted primarily through the manual dragging of gill nets. The technique, known locally as *kukwega* or *kukokota nyavu* (lit: dragging the net), required fishers to work in pairs. On arrival at a fishing spot, the two fishers began by attaching a net to two poles, one end to each pole. Then, and as if on a military march, the pair entered the sea together, a pile of net hanging from the shoulders of each. When they reached an appropriate depth, often the level of their necks, the net was cast by the two moving apart until the net was tight between them. Then, after a sign, usually a shout, the pair dragged the net as they moved backwards towards the shore. The poles were held in an almost upright, forward slanting position, one end up one shoulder, the other end under the opposite arm. Usually, the fishing pair dragged their net to the shore or to a sand bank (*fungu*). They then dropped the poles and net and immediately inspected the entire net, sorting the catch into prawns and finfish.

Each fishing day fishers went into the waters to varying distances from the beach, depending on the tidal depth. A young man, describing the processes involved in dragging a gill net, explained that the activity involves four stages relating to water movements within any one fishing day. These stages were (i) *maji kutoka* (as the sea ebbs) and when the drag is relatively easy and the catch can be sorted out in dry patches on the sea bed; (ii) *maji kusimama* (where the sea is calm and tidal movement is relatively still); (iii) *maji kujaa* (as the sea swells), and (iv) *maji kuongoza* (when the sea water comes in), and the drag is very difficult, requiring a lot of strength to drag in high waters and against strong waves. The number of times the fishers dragged the net depended on the strength of each fisher pair, and on whether there were indications of good catches. Catches normally included finfish and prawns. The proceeds, once sorted, were put in a basket hung on a stick alongside the shoreline.

Although the type and diversity of the catch depended on the fishing seasons, people fished in anticipation of catching prawns rather than other types of marine products, because prawns gave them almost immediate monetary returns. One day in April 1998, a fishing pair I observed caught one kilogramme of prawns, worth TShs 3500/=. They were relieved because, after an equal distribution of the proceeds, each fisher got TShs 1750/=: an amount that was enough to purchase maize meal (*sembe*) and cooking oil to provide at least a few days' food for their households. This day was regarded as successful compared to so many that year when the average catch among the fishers had been less than one kilogramme, and when people often went home without anything at all. But the fishers were also accustomed to regarding fishing as an activity that was not always successful. Its unpredictability made local people comment that "fishing is like playing the lottery" (*uvuvi ni kama bahati nasibu*), "unsuccessful today, successful tomorrow" (*kukosa leo, kesho kupata*). However, they would also say, "a fisher does not get annoyed (*mvuvi hana maya*) with the sea, and keeps working on it day after day" because, to them, there was always the possibility of being successful some day.

Prawn trawlers (*stima*) also operated within Saadani Bay during the two major fishing seasons of March to May and mid-November to mid-January. They normally trawled just beyond where the fishers worked, and would continue trawling until late in the day. They seemed at first to be quite harmless, their presence indicated only through their drone that sounded similar to that of a light aircraft, yet simultaneously also imposing. But, to many local people, the very mention of trawlers unleashed a frustration best demonstrated by the words of one village elder: "This is **our** sea, **our** [fishing] ground" (*hii ni bahari yetu, uwanja wetu*), Mzee M said one day, as we watched the fishing trawlers working close to the shore. By these words he implied that they [local people] were the rightful owners of that area of the sea. It was common to see the trawlers even as we sat in the backyards of some village houses overlooking the River Mvave. We would watch the trawlers go about their work, up and down, up and down, with a monotonous drone, some days from very early in the morning to about 7 o'clock at night. For the duration of my study period, between August 1997 to March 1999, I witnessed six different trawlers in the November-December 1997 season, seven different trawlers in the March-June 1998 season and

three different trawlers during the November-December 1998 season. Mzee M qualified his earlier comment when he explained that:

Our fishing grounds extend from Buyuni Kuu in the north up to Utondwe peninsula in the south. It includes the littoral of Buyuni Kitopeni, Uvinje, Saadani, Kajanjo, and Porokanya. This area has been a popular fishing zone for many years and drew people from as far as Pangani district in the north of the village, to Bagamoyo district and sometimes even from Zanzibar, across the Zanzibar channel. Many fishing camps (*madago*) were consequently established along the entire coastline bordering this area. And from these fishing-camping sites, people established their permanent homes.

The area and locations that Mzee M mentioned cover the northern coast of Bagamoyo district extending from the Mligaji River area in the north to just south of the Wami River [see map 2.2]. Most settlements along this stretch of coastline are now fishing-cum-cultivator villages, whose residents depend predominantly on the sea for their livelihood. Moreover, the residents of each settlement make explicit claims to rights to control portions of the sea, referring in particular to specific localities and their own histories of using resources there.

### 5.2.1 Reference to Locality

Mzee M's comments showed that local people claimed ownership of sea space by referring to the historical evolution of their present homes which had developed from camping sites to permanent areas of settlements along the littoral. The camping areas developed into permanent locations to which fishermen kept on returning during each major fishing season. Saadani village itself is believed to have developed from such a camp. In the period November 1997 to March 1999, many temporary fishing camps were established during the major fishing seasons in various places along the beach, except in close proximity to the SGR Guest Lodge and the tourist camp. The fishers' camps were always demolished when the fishermen left for their homes at the season's end. But in 1998, a fishing camp at a place called *bandarini* (lit: at the harbour) had developed into a permanent settlement where one Mzee Rajabu remained. Local people now refer to this place as '*bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu*' (lit: the harbour at Mzee Rajabu's').

### Case Study 5.1: From a Fishing Camp to a Settlement.

In 1990, during the March to May fishing season, a fisherman from Bagamoyo, called Mzee Rajabu, established a temporary shelter at *bandarini* (lit. the harbour). Mzee Rajabu originally came to Saadani with a group of seasonal fishermen, all from Bagamoyo. They came under the auspices of a prawn trader (*tajiri wa nyavu/mnunuzi*) who paid the token fee - *kipiga hodi* - for the right of his fishing clients to stay and work in Saadani Bay. After the season, Mzee Rajabu decided to remain in the area and continue to fish before returning to Bagamoyo. He later decided to settle permanently after he had established himself as an informal contact person and host for local people and visiting traders and fishermen.

By 1998, Mzee Rajabu had been at Saadani for eight years and had no plans to leave. He lived alone for much of the year, using his new home to host visiting seasonal fishermen and to store their fishing gear and packaging containers. Mzee Rajabu's place later developed into an exchange centre for the local prawn market and was often a meeting place for local and visiting fishers. During major fishing seasons, he allowed some women to establish a temporary eating place (*hoteli* - see Chapter Six) just outside his shelter and the women would also use his other facilities (such as storing their utensils in his house) when conducting their activities. Mzee Rajabu's hut also came to provide much-needed shelter for people who wanted to travel by sea. Since the times for sea transport were unpredictable, travelers sometimes had to wait many hours along the beach for the water to reach an appropriate level to allow the sea craft to float.<sup>2</sup>

In 1998, Mzee Rajabu erected two additional structures, enabling him to accommodate more fishers. In return for his hospitality visiting fishers and prawn dealers gave him food staples bought outside the village, and other items. This form of exchange was common in Saadani village where local people did not formally charge visitors for temporary accommodation. Neither did the hosts always discuss payment for their hospitality to visiting fishers. It was accepted as an obligation of the visitors, in appreciation of the hospitality, to provide food and minor household expenses during the time of their stay, and to share it with the host household.

The SGR authorities seemed to have tolerated Mzee Rajabu's settlement, despite the fact that their restrictions prohibited the establishment of permanent structures within the SGR, in which *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu* fell. It was fairly easy for the SGR to show this tolerance since it was understood that a fishing camp was supposed to be a

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<sup>2</sup> I have already explained in Chapter Two that Saadani village did not have a natural harbour and thus travelling by sea depended much on water levels and climate. One day in February 1999, I had to wait at Mzee Rajabu's place up to two o'clock in the morning before we were able to embark for travel to Bagamoyo town.

temporary shelter only.<sup>3</sup> But Mzee Rajabu had in fact become a permanent resident, just 200 metres away from the Saadani tourist camp. He had also found himself a lady companion to stay with him some 3 months each year. She came from Mkalamo village, about 30 kilometres northwest of Saadani village. In the eyes of local people, her presence at *bandarini* implied a degree of permanency for Mzee Rajabu. By late 1998, *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu* had three small grass and mud huts, and nearby was another small shelter owned by another recent settler in Saadani. This was Mzee Rajabu's home, despite its temporary nature in terms of the rules regarding temporary and permanent structures within SGR area.

Mzee Rajabu's settlement along Saadani Bay beach exemplifies the processes through which Saadani village and other settlements along the coast had been constructed over time by periodic influxes of people from other places. Even though Mzee Rajabu's tenure at *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu* was not formally permanent, implicitly it illustrates how similar patterns of settlement have been occurring over the years. Moreover, in the past as now, newcomers had to be given prior sanction by the village elders to be able to establish a home. After acquiring residential status, the settlers were then able to adopt the local patterns of resource tenure and claims to marine resources.

In reality, Mzee Rajabu's tenure over the area of land where he had constructed his huts did not only depend on the goodwill and tolerance of the SGR authorities. It also depended on informal consent from the village elders who provided him with the social base to enable his free interaction with local people. The manner in which Mzee Rajabu acquired his residential status was similar to the way in which newcomers in the settlement were allocated land by local leaders. Local people also believed that, had it not been for the SGR restrictions on settlement, the area surrounding Saadani settlement and the beach area between the River Mvave and the River Mligaji in the north of Saadani village would have been full of settlements such as Mzee Rajabu's place.

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<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974, SGR rules were to allow temporary fishing shelters to remain. Though Mzee Rajabu's shelter was not temporary in literal terms, the SGR

Mzee Rajabu's freedom to settle was also based on a principle of sharing resources with outsiders when in plenty, which Saadani people upheld. Local people understood that people from neighbouring areas were entitled to come to fish for a living, and could establish a camp along the beach adjacent to Saadani Bay, because they regarded the beach and the adjacent sea as common resources and understood that the utilisation of marine resources was open to all small-scale fishers. Marine resources could not therefore be individually controlled. Moreover, they believed that it was inappropriate to deny an individual fishing rights if the person's objective was simply to seek a livelihood, since to them the opportunity to seek a livelihood was a right. A fisher (*mvuvi*) was regarded as a person who toiled in the sea for a living (*mvuvi ni yule anaehangaika na bahari kutafuta maisha*). A fisher was a person who goes to sea, extracts products from the sea and looks for his (or her) livelihood from the sea. However, local people claimed that a fisher was not a trader in marine products, nor a person who hires fishing gear and equipment to other people while he himself is not involved in the activity. Local people thus categorized those who had the freedom of access to use 'Saadani sea space' for fishing apart from those who should be compelled to abide by certain other local restrictions regarding both sea and terrestrial space. Mzee Rajabu fitted the description of a fisher.

At the onset of the major fishing seasons, and until they reached peak catches, the rules governing access to Saadani Bay were based on the principle of sharing. During the major fishing seasons, therefore, many groups of fishermen from other villages within Bagamoyo and Pangani district would come to fish in the Saadani grounds. The village chairperson estimated that these seasonal fishermen sometimes numbered up to 200 people per fishing season, which meant an additional 100 fishing nets combing the waters of Saadani Bay. The fishers would shift from one fishing location to another within these 'fishing grounds' in response to fish migration and numbers of fish caught.

Fishers in Saadani also understood that, although they had the freedom to fish wherever and whenever they wanted to, and to use whatever manually-based

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staff did not demolish it by way of informal consent of a practice that did no harm to general conservation activities.

techniques they chose, their tenure practices were determined by the constructs of nature. As one man said:

God designed alternating major seasons for cultivation, fishing and salt making, allowing (human beings) to participate in each activity and, in the process, giving each resource base some time to rest. When it is fishing season, which is the rainy season, the land and salt pans are put to rest, and vice versa. Therefore people are given all the time left to exploit the sea as they should.

Local people believed that, during major fishing seasons, God allows everybody to go to the sea and fish for a living. Hence, they understood that marine resources were open for communal exploitation, particularly during major fishing seasons since, during those times, nature provides the sea with abundant resources.

The nature of communal access to and uses of coastal and marine resources in Saadani was defined basically within the parameters of satisfying livelihood needs. Yet, under changing circumstances, the sea and marine resources were regarded as resources for local people only. This was illustrated in certain idiomatic phrases used to comment on the decline in marine stock at the end of a major fishing season when local fishers would say, '*zimebaki za chungujiko*' (lit: what is left is for the cooking pot),<sup>4</sup> implying that the marine resources that remained in the sea were only enough for local people's food. Such comments subtly informed visiting fishermen that the time had come when local people could no longer share their resources with other people because what was left in the sea was too little to support sales as well as subsistence demands. Visiting fishers usually left Saadani when such phrases were openly pronounced, since, they also realised that a prolonged stay might strain the relationships they wanted to maintain with their hosts for future seasons.

While access to marine resources was open to most Tanzanian gill net fishers, forms of territoriality were expressed when patterns of use involved trade and exchange relations. Local Saadani people upheld their right to regulate the utilization of the sea and beach by any 'foreign' (i.e. non-Saadani) individual trader or middleman intending to trade in marine resources. Such persons had to obtain permission from

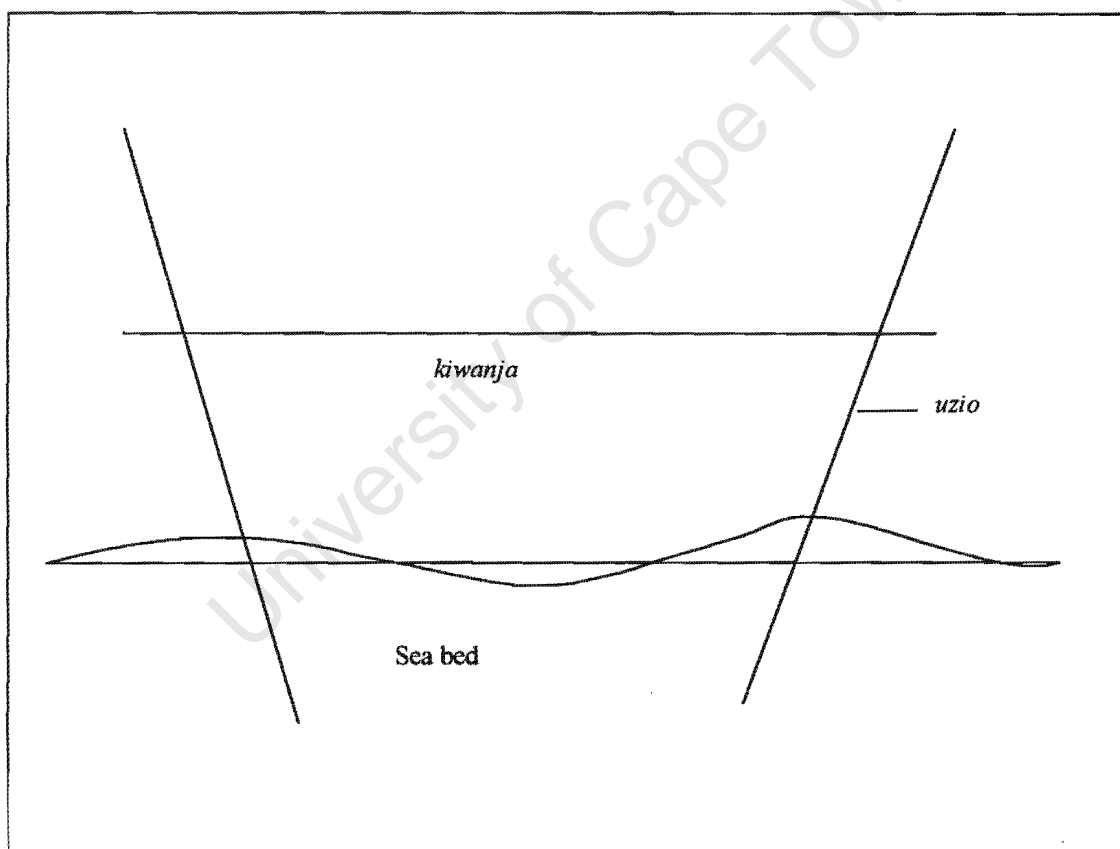
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<sup>4</sup> *chungujiko* is not a conventional word in kiswahili, but has been coined using *chungu* (lit: pot) and *jiko* (lit: stove, hearth, cooking place) to illustrate a cooking pot.

the village elders in what has earlier been described as a tribute called '*kipiga hodi*'. The fee signified one's genuine intention to trade or work together with local people.

The local sense of communal control of fishing space was augmented by claims to particular spaces within the fishing area, a practice that has, however, increasingly been eroded by the popularization of gill nets. Local sources explained that previously a system of individual control (*miliki*)<sup>5</sup> of fishing space was practised when the use of fixed-staked fishing fences (*uzio* and *wando*) was common. This kind of individual control was different from the control exercised on behalf of the whole community vis-a-vis outsiders.

**Fig.5.1 Diagram of *uzio* showing area called *kiwanja***



To use a fishing fence, an individual fisher selected an area in the sea that was higher than the surrounding sea bed (*fungu*) on which he set his fishing fence. Such an area

<sup>5</sup> *miliki* (verb) means "to possess, be owner of, rule, or exercise authority over". When used in the case of property such as land, *miliki* is used to refer to a system of control over land which is usually determined by local norms guiding such control. In some coastal communities, women can also have *miliki* over certain plots of land.

was called *kiwanja* (lit: plot)<sup>6</sup> and was retained for the sole use of the person who first set the fence. That person was known as *mwenye kiwanja*, (lit: the plot holder).<sup>7</sup> The *kiwanja* could only be 'inherited' by the fisher's sons, grandsons or kin. It could also be given to another man who made a formal request to the heir. This type of individual tenure was respected as long as the fishing fence was visible and even if the holder traveled away from the village for a long time. The area was identified by naming the location for the owner, such as, at "Mzee Rajabu's fishing fence" (*penye uzio wa Mzee Rajabu*). Anybody else who might want to set up a fish fence in or near that area had first to seek the consent of the sea plot holder. The physical or visible evidence of the fence, and its naming, gave a person tenure over that part of the sea, irrespective of whether he was utilizing the fence effectively at the time.

Fishers who used other techniques such as gill nets, lines and hooks or sea craft could conduct their activities without having to obtain personal permission to use the sea, as long as they respected those areas where fishing fences stood. Visiting fishermen too observed these restrictions to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts with local Saadani people, as conflicts usually arose if people tampered with somebody else's fishing fence.

By the time of my fieldwork, fishing fences had all but been superseded by the more popular gill nets which were more efficient for prawn fishing. There were only six such fishing fences along the entire coastline between Uvinje and *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu* on the mouth of the River Mvave [see figure 2.3]. Their owners still maintained exclusive usufruct rights over the sea area where their respective fences were visible, and claimed that other local people were free to identify an area, and to erect a fishing fence, wherever they found a suitable site, as long as they respected the rights of persons who already had fishing fences. And it was still considered respectful to ask a person with a fishing fence in an area for his consent before erecting another near it.

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<sup>6</sup> *kiwanja* (noun) is a piece of ground such as for building a house on, for playing games on (football, cricket) or for a dance. It is different to *shamba* which means a piece of arable land. *Viwanja* is the plural of *kiwanja*.

<sup>7</sup> *mwenye* (noun) means one who possesses, an owner, an independent person. *Mwenye kiwanja* refers to one who possesses a plot.

This pattern of control of sea plots related closely to the ways in which people in Saadani claimed control over plots of land, and reflected, to a large extent, land tenure systems that existed in other communities along the Tanzanian coast. British colonial ethnographies suggest that there were various forms and practices of land tenure along the Bagamoyo coast (BDB, 1957). The heterogeneity of the coastal population had led to multiple forms of tenure. Some individual households upheld practices brought from their places of origin, while others assimilated coastal Islamic ways of controlling and disposing of land. A common feature in all settlements though was the allocation of arable land by the Jumbe (local leader), who normally consulted local elders in the area. Once land was allocated to a household, it was permanently held and inheritable. However, land that was not planted with permanent crops such as trees would revert to the community if left uncultivated for a period of 3-6 years. Once allocated, such land carried exclusive usufruct rights. But its disposal was subject to restrictions imposed by local norms or national land laws (such as the demarcation of the SGR boundary).<sup>8</sup> Local people also held individual and communal rights to plots of land utilised for the construction of houses and for cultivation (*shamba*) and, despite being primarily dependent on the sea for a livelihood, they also harboured strong claims to land ownership. Moreover, in circumstances where the seasons influenced the practice of exploiting their surrounding environments, and hence their livelihood patterns, land was regarded as a major alternative source of livelihood to the sea.

### **5.2.2 Claims to Rights of Land Ownership**

The establishment of the SGR minimised opportunities for the persistence of earlier forms of land ownership and use. As we have seen, land that remained under people's control allowed very little space for expanded cultivation. However, there was a general understanding among local people to treat land as communally controlled so that disposals of land had to be approved by other members of the community. This understanding was accepted, despite the existence of a village government which had the authority to handle land matters on behalf of the central government. Therefore,

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<sup>8</sup> Notes on Land Tenure, Bagamoyo district. National Archives, Tanzania files L2/4. 1954

while usufruct rights were given to individual local men or women, the ultimate right of disposal was understood to be in the hands of kin, usually males, or male elders of the village.

Individuals were strongly discouraged from disposing of any part of the land independently or without consultation. According to local people, non-residents or non-local persons could be granted usufruct rights to land. But a single individual could not grant anybody the right to own a plot of land for building purposes if the person had not obtained the consent of relatives, of people in the neighbourhood and of the village elders. This was the case even for cash purchases. The wider kin group remained in control of the land and village elders had to give final consent for a newcomer lacking local social ties to settle in the village. Only a male newcomer who married a village woman could readily acquire the privilege of entitlement to a piece of land allocated permanently to him. As one elder explained, this was because he was then accepted as "one of our own sons". Several households in Saadani had been established through this pattern of matrilineal residence.

The same principle governing the disposal of building plots applied to the disposal of arable land. In the case of arable land (*shamba*), even if an individual had been working a plot for a number of years, and possibly inherited it from parents or kin, the individual still had to have the consent of kin before disposing of it.

Claims to control of areas of arable land in Saadani were very prominent in 1998, despite the fact that very few households were engaged in both cultivation and fishing on an equal basis. I often encountered individual comments, filled with nostalgia perhaps, about how people understood the equal worth of the sea and the land. The following incident, illustrates. In the early 1990s, the SGR precluded one local person from cultivating an area which, the SGR claimed, was within the reserve. This was despite the fact that the person had been cultivating the plot for years, even after the SGR boundary had been demarcated. The incident rekindled resentment towards the SGR which villagers had harboured ever since the demarcation of the SGR boundary in the 1970s. Mobilized by one local person, who was also an employee of the Wildlife Division in Dar es Salaam, the villagers wrote a formal complaint to the

Wildlife Division (Mpote, 1994). But local people said that their complaint was received with the usual official response of 'we will consider it' (*tutaishughulikia*).

The following case offers another example to illustrate how Saadani people regarded land ownership as communally controlled.

### Case Study 5.2: Communal Claims to Land Rights

CM was entrusted with the care of a 2 hectare plot in Uvinje by his uncle, Mzee MKT. The original developer of the plot had been an Asian businessman who had left the village after its decline. This person left it to Mzee MKT on the basis of their friendship while he had lived in the village.<sup>9</sup> In 1997, CM broke his trust and sold the area to two Dar es Salaam city based businessmen who planned to invest in a tourist hotel venture, a step that was outright disapproved of by Uvinje villagers.<sup>10</sup> When the businessmen visited the village to inspect the area in 1998, Uvinje residents were annoyed and called a meeting to discuss the issue. In this meeting the residents decided to reverse the land transaction that CM had entered into and which had not been approved by other villagers. Local people claimed that CM had had no right to sell a village plot to an 'outsider', particularly since the available land was inadequate, even for Uvinje's own population.<sup>11</sup> CM was later informed of the decision and the Dar es Salaam businessmen were not seen again.

Recently, claims to arable land have been fuelled by the inability of some local people to fish using gill nets. These included the elderly and women. As we have seen, the use of gill nets for fishing requires enormous strength and thus excludes the elderly, the weak and many women. As gill nets became more popular such people gradually dissociated from fishing. One woman said that, after gill net fishing with her husband for two seasons during the early 1990s, she had started suffering from chest pains and

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<sup>9</sup> I have explained in Chapter Two that when Saadani declined in its trading prime many people of Indian, Banyan and Arab origin left the village for other urban centres along coastal Tanzania. Some of these people left the areas under their holding to villagers who remained in Saadani.

<sup>10</sup> The Uvinje hamlet chairperson, Mr. Madebe, who was personally involved in the discussions leading to the joint refusal by Uvinje people to let 'foreigners' (*wageni*) buy their land, explained that land ownership should remain with the villagers, not '*wageni*' (lit: newcomers).

<sup>11</sup> The conflict over land between Uvinje residents and the SGR has been discussed in Chapter Two. I return to it in Chapter Five.

had had to quit.<sup>12</sup> Such claims were common among women who used to fish when prawns were abundant.

In the past all participating fishers could benefit from the comparatively easier techniques involving fish traps (*madema* and *migono*) and fixed staked fishing fences (*uzio/wando*). But gill net fishing did not allow the elderly to earn as much as young able-bodied men, and older men felt that their capacities to hold both traditional authority and economic power was disintegrating. Some local youths even told me that the grievances harboured against the SGR regarding demands for arable land were based on the fact that older men could not handle gill nets. It was clear that elderly men were increasingly experiencing a power exchange which came to favour younger men who, through gill net fishing, were able to achieve considerable economic status. Younger men were hence able to usurp the power that elderly people had previously held. Demands by the elderly for the control over arable land reflected their attempts for a reversal of power distribution to what had prevailed previously, before the establishment of the SGR and the popularisation of gill nets.

### 5.2.3 Control of Production and Distribution

Local people also related to coastal resources through their attachments to the instruments of production, developed from learning how to make these instruments as well as from using them. Before the popularization of gill nets, local people used locally obtained natural materials to make fish traps or fixed staked fishing fences. I use the example of fish fences to illustrate people's attachment to instruments of production.<sup>13</sup> Traditional fishing fences were woven using reeds and mangrove sticks.<sup>14</sup> Small mangrove sticks of about one metre in length were erected on the sea bed in a 'V-like' shape, the open end facing the in-coming current (see figure 5.1). Longer mangrove pieces were then woven between and tied fast with rope or grass reeds. The size of the openings between the criss-crossing sticks depended on the size

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<sup>12</sup> Halima, a lady in her mid-40s who said her husband wanted her to participate in fishing in the 1980s had to stop because of a severe backache after fishing the gill net for several weeks.

<sup>13</sup> Fish traps (*madema* and *migono*) were also used by local people but mostly by the elderly. They were set in streams and inlets particularly after the major fishing seasons.

or type of fish or marine product targeted. From the 1970s local fishers had used twine from old vehicle tyres to fasten their traps and fish fences.

Local people claimed that the process of learning traditional fishing techniques such as constructing and using a fishing fence and fish trap, signified the growing of a boy into an adult fisherman. The absence of any other way to mark the coming-of-age for boys in Saadani made this process very significant. Boys learned the techniques from parents or older village men and aspired to become fishers too. Each project involved individual skill, time and labour to set traps or to locate ideal fishing places. Rituals were also conducted to increase confidence and success.

Ingold (1987) suggests that processes that demand the application of individual knowledge in the construction of a productive instrument, and later in using it, demonstrate the continuous engagement of an individual with the environment. Individuals become closely attached to the instrument since it metaphorically becomes an extension of the individual's body (like another arm applied for resource utilization), and thereby a connection to the environment.

Previously used technologies had also given local fishers the autonomy to control the process of production and the products of their labour. Fishers not only prepared their own productive tools, also they independently decided how and when to use them, as well as how to distribute the catch. Local fishers themselves marketed their fish, only sometimes using middlemen to sell fish at Bagamoyo town or Dar es Salaam. Prices were not fixed and fish were sold after considerable haggling between fishers and buyers. Prices depended on the size of the fish and the availability of a buyer. But for fishers, the most important factor was their autonomy in production and marketing even if one had to depend on the availability of buyers.

The introduction of gill nets reduced this autonomy and even the personal attachment fishers had to their instruments of production, since both ownership of the nets and marketing of prawns were controlled by prawn dealers, most whom were not

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<sup>14</sup> Modern fishing fences are fixed using gill nets strapped on stakes arranged on a straight line. Local people used stones fixed at the bottom to keep the fence stationary.

villagers. These prawn dealers provided gill nets, to local fishers under contracts requiring that only they would purchase the fishers' prawn catches. Since gill nets were very efficient for prawn fishing, they were readily taken up in Saadani, as occurred in other communities along the Bagamoyo district coast. However, since fishers now operated under contracts drawn up by prawn dealers, their autonomy in distributing catches was reduced.

A consequence was that prawn fishing and trading generated new values vis-à-vis fishing equipment. Controlling a fishing net was regarded as crucial since it enabled direct exploitation of the required marine resources. Gill nets thus came to be the medium through which the local prawn marketing chain evolved, and formed the platform from which local fishers and fish net owners entered to the prawn fishing and marketing chain, and thereby provided for their households.

In this section I have demonstrated the multiple ways in which local people give meaning to ownership and control of coastal resources. I have discussed how their engagement in everyday livelihood activities was their way of making sense of their world, and how the ability to maintain this engagement enabled them to retain a sense of power. For local fishers, a significant part of their livelihood activities was also their ability to provide food, in this case, to provide *kitweleo* (relish), whose provision fostered several significant relationships among people in the village, an issue which I now discuss.

### 5.3 Fishing for *kitweleo*

The word *kitweleo*, refers to the relish accompaniment to a basic food in a meal such as rice, cassava or *ugali* (a dish prepared from maize meal). "*Leo tunatwelea nini?*" is a question most women ask themselves each day, asking "what are we going to eat [the food staple] with?" *Kitweleo* derives from a verb in the Zigua dialect, *kutwelea* (lit: to have with). In everyday Kiswahili, the words *kitoweo* or *mboga* are used to refer to relish prepared from meat, vegetables (spinach, cabbage) or pulses (such as

peas, beans, or lentils).<sup>15</sup> In Saadani, however, and according to villagers' own explanations, *kitweleo* was used to refer to a relish prepared only from meat or a sea product, such as finfish or prawns, while *mboga* was used to refer to any relish accompaniment made of other ingredients. Finfish were regarded as the preferred *kitweleo*. And, although women sometimes substituted *kitweleo* for relish made of purchased green vegetables or pulses or those grown in small garden plots near their houses, the main meals of the day had to have a finfish dish to be regarded as complete. Fried finfish were also eaten for breakfast, eaten dry as a snack or used to prepare quick meals for unexpected visitors.

It was regarded as a man's responsibility to provide *kitweleo* daily for his household. Young unmarried men who still lived with their parents were also expected to bring *kitweleo* home. Through fishing, men were able to establish their gender identities by fulfilling their roles as providers of *kitweleo* for their households. And, since the establishment of the SGR had limited the ability of many households to get *kitweleo* through subsistence game hunting, also a preferred *kitweleo*, fishing came to be the main source for *kitweleo*.

It was in this context that the phrase '*mwiko haujaloo*' (lit: the cooking spoon is not wet [from cooking]) was coined to refer to an unsuccessful fishing trip. In this way a man laments his inability to provide *kitweleo* for the household's meal for the day. As fishing developed into the major source of income for many households, the saying '*mwiko haujaloo*' also came to refer to situations in which fishing did not provide any cash to buy immediately needed foodstuffs for the household. Inability to provide food for their households through fishing increased men's dependence on women's incomes, and this in turn challenged men's claims to household authority.

Provision of *kitweleo* also fostered various other relationships, such as between fishing folk themselves, between men and women, between kin and between colleagues. *Kitweleo* was, at times, exchanged freely between fishing colleagues. "*Wavuvi hawanyimani*" (lit: fishers do not deny each other [fish]), was what local

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<sup>15</sup> According to the Standard Swahili-English Dictionary (1999[1939]:474), *kitoweo* or *kitoweleo* refers to "anything eaten as a relish with other food – meat, fish, curry [with] gravy (*mboga*) ... although it really means vegetables, it is frequently used in the same sense as *kitoweo* for any kind of relish."

people said when referring to another social value of finfish. Local people explained that, in the 1980s when fish were in abundance, it was normal for a fisher to go home with several bundles of finfish tied on a straw made of grass called 'ng'ongo'. One bundle of fish was called 'chamato la ng'ongo' (lit: a bundle made of ng'ongo). If one fisher happened to have been unlucky that day, he would be given some ng'ongo by another, and would be allowed to choose the type of fish he wanted to make his 'chamato la ng'ongo' from another fisher's fishing fence. This was a generalized form of reciprocity, the fisher who offered finfish to his colleague expecting the same favour when he happened to be unsuccessful.<sup>16</sup>

According to local people, finfish were also offered freely to anyone in need of *kitweleo* for the day, ensuring that members of the community unable to fish for reasons such as age, illness and nature of household composition, did not go hungry for lack of *kitweleo*. Such gifts of fish were described as 'sadaka' (lit: religious offering),<sup>17</sup> and nothing material was expected in exchange. The exchanges fostered and reflected emotional and respectful relationships among people of different ages or sexes. For example, it was common for aged relatives or neighbours to receive fish for *kitweleo*, as the following case study illustrates.

### **Case Study 5.3: Kitweleo from 'my' Children**

Biti B, an 80 year old woman had only one asthmatic who could only do was to collect water from the Mvave River for a daily wage. His health did not allow him to fish, because he could not work in any sea water-related activity, and he could not handle gill nets which required a healthy person. But Biti B did not have any problems with *kitweleo*. She related to other men in her neighbourhood saying, "all of them are my children. How can I sleep without food? Some may pass by from fishing trips and give me some money to purchase food. Some give me fish for *kitweleo*. And so the days go by." In these circumstances Biti B's old age advantaged her, relative to other women, in terms of receiving *kitweleo* gifts.

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<sup>16</sup> Shields *et al* (1995) explain such relationships as a practice of extending social capital which they describe as "the reciprocal trust members of a given household feel towards an individual, family or another household that they can depend on in times of need" (1995: 10-11).

<sup>17</sup> *Sadaka* (lit: religious offering) is usually done voluntarily as an act of charity, sacrifice, alms or penance.

Elderly villagers were regarded as vulnerable, and people took upon themselves the responsibility to ensure their security. Neighbours and kin often checked on Biti B's well being, particularly as she grew more frail.

This form of hospitality was also extended to guests and newcomers in the village, a system of which I was also a beneficiary. During the period of my stay in Saadani, some fishermen would pass by the house in which I was staying and offer me a few finfish for *kitweleo*. *Kitweleo* was also offered to lady-friends of the fishermen, as a symbol of their friendship. It was common for single women heading their own households to expect some fish from their lovers, although they could not expect always to benefit. Households in which the betrothed girl of a fisherman lived, also received finfish most times the fisherman concerned had been successful.

#### Case study 5.4 : *Kitweleo* from her Friend

One day, Hawa, received a small bundle of black spotted snapper (*changu doa*) fish from Ss, her fiancé. The young boy who brought the fish to the house just announced on arrival "fish for sister Hawa" (*samaki za Da Hawa*). When I asked the mother how she knew who had sent the fish, she replied "they are from her fellow" (*zimetoka kwa mwenzie*). *Mwenzie* as used by Hawa's mother implied her daughter's male companion.<sup>18</sup> Since Ss was formally betrothed to Hawa, it was expected that Ss would send fish to Hawa.

The particular type of fish, black spotted snapper (*changu doa*), that Ss offered to Hawa that day also signified his appreciation of being betrothed to her. *Changu doa*, is usually fished in deep waters. It is known as a nimble fish, often able to evade fishers' nets. Catching *changu doa* thus signified luck on the part of the fisher. I was told that when it was offered to a betrothed, it symbolised the luck the man felt he had had in winning the hand of the young lady in marriage.<sup>19</sup>

Other single women did not enjoy such easy favours. A household lacking an adult man who could fish was even more disadvantaged. Sometimes they went without a

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<sup>18</sup> *Mwenzie* is the possessive phrase from the noun *mwenzi* which refers to a friend, companion, associate, acquaintance. *Mwenzie* is generally used to refer to one's close friend or companion without mentioning the name of the person. In those circumstances whereby customs do not allow mothers in law to pronounce their sons in law's names, many often refer to the latter as so-and-so's [their daughter's] *mwenzie*.

<sup>19</sup> Some people claimed that *changu doa* symbolised something delicious because they are quite tasty.

*kitweleo* made from finfish. Some of the women and young children in these households could be found scouting the shoreline after fishing periods and gathering discarded fish for their *kitweleo*. It depended on the personal attributes of a woman, such as friendliness and the welcoming characteristics of hospitality, to win over benefactors.

Offering *kitweleo* in exchange for hospitality services was practiced daily, but was more extensive during major fishing seasons when many relatives and other people from up-country and neighbouring areas came to Saadani. Some of these seasonal fishers stayed at the Saadani settlement rather than at fishing camps near the beach. As mentioned earlier, host households made no formal arrangements to charge for temporary accommodation, and they felt obligated to provide visitors with basic staple foods such as *ugali*. In exchange, therefore, *kitweleo* and some cash to purchase small requirements such as sugar, snacks and soap was provided by the guests. The guests also sometimes offered small cash gifts to their hosts, and some hosts offered other services such as fetching water and washing clothes.

Bi N was among those who received many seasonal guests. Yet she did not feel that hosting a large household was a burden because her guests always contributed to the household's daily relish requirements and petty cash needs. I discuss her as an example to illustrate these relationships and the reciprocities they entailed.

#### **Case study 5.5: Relationships around a woman's cooking place**

Heading a single parent household with no adult male, Bi N's 'welcoming attitude' to other people became an advantage to her. Bi N's cooking place (*jiko*) was one of a kind. This cooking space generated multiple relationships and nurtured friendships with kin, passers-by, seasonal fishermen, neighbours and other people. Resident members of her household averaged up to ten at any given time, including four of her own children, two grandchildren, a sick brother, and a niece and a nephew who attended the village primary school. During major fishing seasons, the house would be full of additional guests, from Zanzibar, Buyuni Kitopeni village in Pangani district, and elsewhere. Other fishers or prawn dealers used her backyard to store their fishing nets and bicycles. Bi N and her children shared meals with her resident guests. During the day other fishermen would come to request a piece of burning ember (*kijinga cha moto*) to light a cigarette, or to heat their left-overs, or just came round for a chat. Through these relationships, Bi N was able to establish

acquaintances and was given *kitweleo* daily and sometimes cash gifts from appreciative benefactors. These guests would also offer to transport her daughters free of charge on their bicycles, as they went about their business of selling fried fish inland (see Chapter Six).

These various forms of reciprocity were common. But it was also understood that fish offered for *kitweleo* was to be used for relish purposes only. It was understood not to be exchangeable for cash or for other foodstuffs. Local people regarded it inappropriate to exchange fish received as *kitweleo* for other items.

However, and particularly from the mid-1990s onwards, the form of these exchange relationships had gradually changed. The decline in local fish catches made it increasingly difficult for many fishers to offer fish free of charge to other fishers and neighbours, although the practice of sharing and giving was still extended to kin, intimate partners and the elderly. Consequently, gifts of *kitweleo* became less frequent and visitors were increasingly expected to offer more gifts and cash.

The increasing influence of monetary exchanges had various implications. Local people recalled that, before the 1970s, finfish and prawns had no significant market value. Even prawns fetched little cash income as there was little demand for them.<sup>20</sup> They were sometimes used for the preparation of *kitweleo*, or women would sometimes braise and dry them to be eaten as snacks. Demand for prawns grew rapidly when foreign markets led to their commercialization, and their cash value increased tremendously over the years, from TShs 7/= (about US\$1) a kilogramme in 1975 to TShs 4000/= (about US\$8.50) a kilogramme in 1998.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Prawns were sold for 5 cents each. In the 1970s TShs 7/= was equal to 1 US\$. 5 cents, therefore was the equivalent of about 1.4 US cents.

<sup>21</sup> The rapid devaluation of the Tanzanian shilling has caused its purchasing power to drop significantly over the 1975 to 1998 period. In 1998 one US\$ was equal to TShs 700/= (Bank of Tanzania).

**Table 5.1: Prices for prawns and shrimp November – December 1998 (per kilogramme)**

	Fish net owner ( <i>tajiri wa nyavu</i> ) purchasing from local fishers (Saadani prices)	Prawn dealer ( <i>tajiri mnunuzi</i> ) purchasing from fish net owner (Saadani prices)	Marketing prices at Dar es Salaam, Bag & Zanzibar (Tz)*
Shrimp ( <i>kamba</i> )	1200/= - 1400/=	1600/=	2200/=
Tiger Prawns ( <i>kaji</i> )	1600/=	2000/=	3000/=
Jumbo Prawns ( <i>kaji</i> )	4000/=	4500/=**	4500

Legend:

\* = These were local prices within Tanzania, not for export.

\*\* = Fishers not tied to fish net owners could sell their prawn catches at this price.

Source: District Fisheries Officer, Bagamoyo, Tanzania, Jan 1999.

The commoditisation of prawns made local Saadani people almost wholly dependent on cash for subsistence; at the same time, finfish lost their value as a primary source of cash income. All fishers fished primarily for prawns to sell. The only prawns local people ate were what were known as *telesya*, unmarketable prawns because their shells had not fully developed. All good prawns and shrimp were sold because they were the major if not the only source of livelihood. Every single prawn was equated to its cash value, and to what it could buy for the household. With jumbo prawns weighing between 100 grammes and 300 grammes each, even a small jumbo prawn of 100 grammes was enough to ensure that one's household could purchase one kilogramme of maize meal for *ugali* for a meal.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> One small jumbo prawn was worth TShs 400/= in 1998 prices, which was about the cost of a kilogramme of maize meal, locally sold at between TShs 350/= to 400/= a kilogramme. One kilogramme of maize meal was enough to make *ugali* for a household of eight adult members.

The commercialization of prawns has thus had several implications for the way in which people in Saadani have understood natural resources. While prawns may have brought significant cash income to many households, prawn marketing had also shifted the relationship between people at various levels into an exchange of values interpreted primarily in monetary terms. The fisher through his traditional activity became valued for the amount of prawns that he could sell, rather than for his generosity in supplying *kitweleo*. This was so even at household level where what was mostly highly regarded was the monetary value of the prawn catches to ensure household sustenance, rather than the amount of fish brought home to be used as relish. Hence a new dimension to social relations developed through cash exchange, as did a dependence relationship on the providers of the cash realized from prawn fishing.<sup>23</sup>

The prawn fishing industry also created a marketing chain that drew local fishers into relationships of dependence which usurped much of the freedom previously enjoyed in managing the marketing of marine products. Local fishers were however assured of at least being primary participants in the small-scale prawn enterprise, which enabled them to secure a livelihood. In the following section, I discuss this marketing chain to illustrate another dimension of local people's claims to autonomy.

#### 5.4 Prawn Marketing Relationships<sup>24</sup>

The current prawn fishing and marketing chain developed from the late 1970s, as Ujamaa collapsed. It involved four categories of participants who related to each other contractually around the supply and demand of prawns. Each participant had a certain degree of influence on the whole industry, but none had total autonomy in deciding how the industry should be run. The participants included: the fisher (*mvuvi*); the fish

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<sup>23</sup> The next chapter discusses some aspects of the gender implications of this shift and the changing relationships that developed between men and women as a result of increasing reliance on cash for a livelihood.

<sup>24</sup> In this section, I draw from Gibbon's (1997) discussions on prawn marketing chains in Tanzania and I use the term 'marketing chain' when referring to the kinds of relationships that Saadani fishers have entered into in the process of seeking a livelihood.

net owner (*tajiri wa nyavu*); the prawn dealer (*tajiri mnunuzi/mchukuzi*) and, business people (*matajiri wakubwa*).<sup>25</sup>

Fishers were the individual men (and some women) of Saadani whose livelihood activity, fishing, was a primary role in the chain. Fishers interacted almost daily with fish net owners through exchanges of prawn and shrimp catches. Fish net owners, who included local Saadani people and others from Bagamoyo or Zanzibar, allocated their fishing nets to pairs of fishers on the agreement that they were to be the sole purchasers of the pairs' prawn and shrimp catches. Fish net owners were thus the sole local purchasers of prawns from local fishers on a daily basis. And they sold them on, at a higher price, to prawn dealers. Prawn dealers (purchasers or transporters) were middlemen who purchased prawns from fish net owners. Prawn dealers were also referred to as transporters by virtue of the fact that they shipped prawns from Saadani to markets in Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar. By 1998, outsiders, mostly from Zanzibar and Bagamoyo town, who had the advantage of available cash, containers and means of transportation, such as engine-powered boats, dominated this category. Their material advantage outclassed local people, some of whom had ventured briefly, and successfully, into transporting prawns to Bagamoyo or Zanzibar. It was important for a fish net owner or prawn dealer who purchased prawns at Saadani to have a steady cash flow to cover the numerous expenses involved. Once local fishers were confident that he would pay them on time, their supply of prawns also became as steady as the environmental circumstances allowed. Big business people purchased prawns from prawn dealers and either sold them to hotels in the country or exported them to countries such as Kenya, Zambia, Europe and elsewhere. I will now discuss the relationship between local fishers and fish net owners since it was within these relationships that local people's claims to resources can be understood. I then discuss the implications of this chain of relationship on local people's sense of power and autonomy.

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<sup>25</sup> Except for fisher (*mvuvi*), other titles were not used in their literal sense. *Tajiri* (verb) literally refers to a merchant, wholesale trader, capitalist, or man of wealth, rich man. In the prawn marketing chain, *tajiri* was used to refer to property owner or man of wealth interchangeably. *Tajiri wa nyavu*, in this case which literally means rich man of nets referred to fish net owner. *Tajiri Mnunuzi* was a purchaser or buyer (from the verb (*ku*)*nunua* = to buy, to purchase, to bid for); *tajiri mchukuzi* was the transporter (from the verb (*ku*)*chukua* = (to) carry, bear, take); and *tajiri mkubwa* referred to big purchaser (*mkubwa* literally meant great, big, large).

*The fishers (wavuvi)*: Local fishers operated in pairs. Their 'pairing' was not predetermined by any fixed socially-constructed arrangement. An individual would select a partner on the basis of a range of qualities, including compatibility and diligence in fishing. Since fishing times varied with the tide, so that fishing sometimes had to be performed during what might seem odd hours of the day to be working (such as between 3 am and 5 am in the morning), a fisher needed a partner who would always be available.<sup>26</sup> Other qualities sought were knowledge of net preparation (*kurekebu*) and net mending (*kurakai*). Having these abilities precluded having to pay somebody else if a fishing pair's net required preparation or mending.

The manner in which the work and the proceeds from fishing were distributed among fishers who work together using gill nets has undergone several changes over the years. In the earlier (pre 1980) arrangements, fishers used to engage in fishing by sea craft. Usually, several fishers, mobilised by the owner of a sea craft, went to sea and fished as a team by means of seine nets. On returning to shore, the proceeds were distributed in three portions (*mafungu*). Two-fifths were set aside for the owner of the sea vessel, known as *tajiri wa chombo* (lit: rich person of sea craft - and implied owner of the sea craft), one-fifth was taken by the owner as a special fund called '*humsi*'<sup>27</sup> for maintenance of the craft. The remaining two-fifths were distributed equally amongst the fishers.

In the period 1997 to 1999, the two people who fished together using gill nets distributed two of the two-fifth portions amongst themselves. The third portion (one-fifth) was taken by the owner of the net for maintenance purposes. This arrangement was sometimes followed if the net owner was one of the two fishers in a pair. In this case, the net owner had to maintain the net either by giving the fishers cash for repairs or himself purchasing the material and labour required. When net owners neglected to fulfil their net maintenance obligations, a fishing pair simply shared the proceeds from fishing equally between themselves, and also raised the money or items required to maintain the net.

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<sup>26</sup> I often observed fishermen fishing during the night sometimes with torches tied on their foreheads to illuminate their way.

<sup>27</sup> *Humsi* is an Arabic word which means one-fifth of a certain amount of items, either cash or property. Its use in Saadani today refers to any 'portion' set aside for maintenance of the instruments of

*Fish net owners (matajiri wa nyavu)*: This category emerged in the late 1970s in Saadani and usurped the prawn purchasing role of the Saadani village government, as explained in Chapter Four. In 1998, eight local individuals were fish net owners, two having recently settled in Saadani. The other six had once been ordinary fishermen. They elevated themselves into fish net owners after accumulating enough to invest in fishing nets. By 1998, these six had been in the net-owning business since the early 1990s and they owned between ten and fifteen nets each. They allocated these fishing nets to fishers in Saadani, Uvinje hamlet, Kajanjo and even in neighbouring Buyuni Kitopeni. However, local people recall two Bagamoyo-based businessmen (Mzee Lila and Mzee Maembe) who were the earliest prominent prawn dealers, in the 1970s. It was they who among those who initiated the contract basis of relationships between gill net owners and local fishers. One of them also employed several local Saadani people as his 'purchasing agents', and gave them fresh-produce packaging containers<sup>28</sup> so that they could purchase prawns for him. But, I learnt, some agents used the packaging containers for their own prawn purchases and managed thereby to accumulate sufficient money to establish themselves as independent fish net owners. Some local people silently berated these local agents as having caused the downfall of those business people in this way.

Local fish net owners had also managed to accumulate capital by taking advantage of the trust of local fishers when they took prawns from local fishers on credit and sold them on personally, paying the fishers only thereafter. Such arrangements were possible because local fishers regarded the small aspirant traders as local livelihood seekers (*watafutaji*) and peers.

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production. Other fishers distributed the income in two portions. One portion, three-tenths went to the owner of the instrument of production and the rest, seven-tenths was distributed among the fishers.

<sup>28</sup> A container (*kontena*) is a box sometimes made of plywood and lined with polythene material. It is used to store ice blocks and packaging of prawns and for transporting prawns from the village to marketing centres. Although capacities vary, on average a container can be packed with 25 kg of tiger prawns or 30-35kg of jumbo prawns. The cost of one container is TShs 2000/=. A local fish net owner said that these containers are bought at the Kigamboni ferry in Dar es Salaam. Preferred containers were those used originally as medicine containers brought by donor organizations, which the Ministry of Health distributed, periodically to village dispensaries. Business people preferred this type of containers because they were made of a firmer material than those made of plywood.

Another way of accumulating capital was by capitalizing on ice blocks that the agents purchased on credit in Bagamoyo or Dar es Salaam from business people there, to whom they then sold prawns obtained in Saadani. They thus accumulated from the difference between local Saadani prices and prices received at the markets (ref. Table 5.1). Through a combination of these strategies, local agents were thus able to purchase fishing nets and hence to establish themselves as local fish net owners.

Each fish net owner followed his fishers daily wherever they went, to minimize the possibility of another fish net owner taking advantage of his absence and buying prawns from fishers connected to him. Following fishers as they shifted from place to place in the fishing season thus enabled fish net owners to monitor them, to observe the actual catches and to prevent dealings with other people.

In the early 1990s local fish net owners had also briefly operated as prawn dealers and transporters, shipping prawns to Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. But after a few years, their efforts were stymied by the lack of refrigeration facilities and unreliable means of transportation and by the high costs of transportation (ref Appendix v). The situation worsened when prawn catches dropped significantly, and some local fish net owners-cum-prawn dealers were unable even to pay local fishers after losing their working capital through successive transport failures. By late 1998 most had limited themselves to owning fish nets and acting as purchasing agents for outside prawn dealers. But most were reluctant to revert to fishing because they now understood that middlemen made better returns than fishers.

Their short-lived experience as prawn dealers-cum-transporters was, however, individually quite significant. For example, in acknowledgement of their achievements as prawns dealers in the early 1990s, one local fish net owner called himself 'Hugo' and another one 'Jafu', both names of prominent business people in the prawn export marketing business in Dar es Salaam, I was told. Another one, had used the profits accrued as a prawn dealer to purchase a coconut plantation and an area to cultivate maize at Buyuni Kuu, north of Saadani central. When, during the 1998 fishing season, catches declined badly, he reverted also occasionally to fishing. But he soon realised that it was no longer a viable form of livelihood for him, and he turned his attention to local salt production.

Several issues as regards power and autonomy arise from these marketing relationships. Firstly, there were power struggles in the relationships between local fishers and fish net owners. These were not relationships based entirely on trust, but rather displayed a kind of balanced reciprocity. Most local fishers generally felt compelled to respect their contracts with local fish net owners, and to maintain cordial relationships, in order to be assured a reliable source of income. Acheson (1981) has noted a similar pattern of establishing long-standing relationships between fishers and fish traders in other fishing communities in order to reduce the uncertainties of the market. Through such relationships, Saadani fishers were able, in times of poor catches, to secure assistance in food or cash loans from fish net owners to whom they were contracted. The fact that Saadani-based net owners contracted only local fishers reinforced their sense of mutual obligation. Such kind of contracts were clearly there also in the relationships between seasonal fishers and their respective trader-cum-net owner under whose auspices most came to Saadani each year, and who assumed responsibility for their well being while there. But fishers sometimes dishonoured their contracts by selling part of their catches to another agent for a better price. In the 1998 cases, the difference in price was TShs 500/= per kilogramme, an amount that significantly affected the fishers' incomes.

Selling part of one's prawn catch to a trader other than one's contracted fish net owner was called *kupiga panga* (lit: to strike with a machete).<sup>29</sup> This saying implied chopping off the catch as if using a machete. Local fishers usually resorted to *kupiga panga* only when they had not received payments for earlier catches and felt they needed to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. But sometimes they also fell prey to the lure of higher prices and immediate cash payments offered by traders other than their contracted fish net owner. Such offers were called *kuiba kucha* (lit: stealing fingernails) because they were understood to be made stealthily (as if using fingertips only) so as not to cause alarm<sup>30</sup> and thereby to reduce a fisher's right to obtain assistance from their contracted fish net owner.

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<sup>29</sup> The phrase, *kupiga panga* is coined from the words *kupiga*- an act, from the noun *piga* (lit: strike, beat, hit) and *panga*, noun (lit: machete).

<sup>30</sup> Michasi, my local informant's daughter, and a prawn dealer from Zanzibar explained to me that *kuiba kucha* was steadily increasing since many local fish net owners who also operated as prawn dealers were facing financial problems and had been unable to honour their debts to fishers. Many

Fish net owners also worked to maintain harmonious relations with their contracted fishers since they depended on receiving continuous prawn supplies. As indicated, when a net owner repeatedly defaulted on regular payments, fishers sold to another trader. But a net owner would withdraw his nets if he discovered his contractees bypassing him simply to obtain better prices, or refuse to loan money to fishers who had proved untrustworthy by selling their catch to another trader, and the fishers were then left to seek a contract with another net owner. Given that such fishers were already supplying another trader, it would seem that they had a good chance of establishing a new contract. But the fact that the net owner-fisher relations included expectations of advances and loans meant that such opportunities were limited, particularly if the trader being supplied was not a readily accessible local person<sup>31</sup> or owned no nets for allocation to local fishers, as was the case for many prawn dealers. Moreover, local net owners were loath to contract fishers who were known to have cheated other local net owners.

Generally, prawn dealers from elsewhere respected the principle that they should purchase supplies from local net owners, and not directly from fishers. But conflicts did occur, particularly when an outside dealer regularly practiced *kuiba kucha*. Then, local net owners would collaboratively threaten and/or refuse to sell prawns to that dealer. Local fish net owners could also mobilize fishers to do the same because they all knew each other and many of them were Saadani people.

Equally, net owners and traders sometimes collaborated against fishers, taking advantage of the poor state of transport and storage facilities. As one informant explained, fishers were every so often told that "the catch went bad because of delays at the village or on the way to the marketing centres, so the prawns became only worth chicken feed which fetches a lower price."<sup>32</sup> Fishers accepted these

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prawn dealers took advantage of the situation to entice local fishers to sell directly to them for immediate cash.

<sup>31</sup> Absentee net owners usually did not stay for a long time in the village and could be inaccessible for extended periods

<sup>32</sup> I was told that several companies producing chicken feed in Dar es Salaam purchase marine products which are not fit for human consumption and add them in their produce. Prawn dealers thus sold to them prawns which had gone bad which were local called *mbochocho* or *pochocho*. However local people suspected that it was not always true that the prawns had gone bad. But they could not argue against that claim.

disappointments which occurred infrequently, and because they could not prove traders were dishonest. Yet, they disliked being bound in arrangements with net owners and traders which they understood as a kind of wage employment. (which I understood was their way of describing a form of proletarianisation). But they realized that to subsist they had to cooperate with net owners and prawn dealers.

Local fishers resented being dependent on others for fishing nets, and objected to being tied to a single fish net owner in what they saw as a master-worker relationship. But their ability to be self-employed was limited. Fishing nets depreciate rapidly and must be replaced often. Many fishers could not afford that because the high cost of living did not allow them to accumulate enough money to purchase and then replace their nets often. Although some local fishers owned nets bought during the 1980s, most could not now afford to purchase replacement nets of their own as often as they needed to because prices were continuously increasing and incomes falling.

Local Saadani fishers were also unable to enter the marketing sphere primarily because they lacked the necessary business skills, capital and tenacity in comparison to well-placed business people in Dar es Salaam or Bagamoyo. Saadani fishers were also peripheralised from the major markets due to poor transport facilities which meant they had to depend on dealers who could transport the prawns to markets.

The unfolding of the above relationships between people and between people and natural resources illustrates how the meanings people in Saadani had previously attached to natural resources were increasingly challenged, and how they gradually lost their power to control those resources. Local people felt that, whatever its material benefits, the prawn fishing and marketing chain had led them into a situation whereby their existence depended on their being employed in the prawn industry. The prawn fishing and marketing industry dominated the lives of the entire village. Fishers saw their labour being exchanged for a price. They also felt increasingly dependent on other people and outside (market) forces for their livelihood, and denied the autonomy they had earlier enjoyed. Nevertheless, they understood that success and social recognition could come to those able to transcend the category of fishers and elevate themselves to fish net owners and prawn dealers. In the context of steadily declining catches in marine products, it was common also to find people falling back on local

belief systems and practices to make sense of their changing world. I now turn to discuss the role of local belief systems in local people's understanding and use of resources.

### 5.5 Respect and good luck: practicing and believing

'*Heshima na Bahati*' (lit: respect and good luck) are central to Saadani's livelihood endeavours and are reflected in all natural resource use practices. Good luck in production activities was understood to come from respecting nature and all forms of life, such as marine resources which were accorded a special status. Prawns and finfish were seen as 'beings' that deserved the same respect accorded people. Fishers referred to the presence of prawns in a particular location by saying "*kaji wapo pale*" (lit: prawns are present there) rather than "*kaji zipo pale*", which literally means the same thing, but with less respect because the verb-form '*wapo*' expressed notions of human-like souls that are different from other living things such as trees, goats or chicken. The verb-form (*zipo*) (lit: [things] are available) is conventionally used for things such as chickens, goats, clothing, houses and other inanimate things. People's reference to finfish and prawns as if they were human indicated an element of respect in the way they understood that natural resource.

Local people also believed in the existence of sea spirits who ruled over the sea and influenced and guided the behaviour and existence of prawns and finfish. The migratory nature of the fish, and the unpredictability of the location of marine life, were believed to be influenced by these spirits. Thus variations in the daily catches of fishers during a single fishing season were said to be because "prawns are possessed by spirits" (*kaji zina mashetani*), an expression used particularly on unsuccessful days. It was common that just one fisher pair was successful during a period of spring high tide (*bamvua*), and such successes were attributed to the sea spirits.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For example, one day in February 1999, only one fisher pair hauled in about 22 kilogrammes of prawns worth TShs 100000/= while others bagged an average of 1.5 kilogrammes each.

Local people also believed that fishing misfortunes were the result of abusing or not respecting marine resources, either directly or indirectly. They claimed that the gradual decline in prawn resources since 1996 was a punishment unleashed by the spirits of the sea after extreme displays of disrespect to marine resources. Young people sometimes refuted the idea that sea spirits could influence their catches. Yet some still commented that “there is too much blasphemy after fishing” (*kufuru zimezidi katika mavuvi*). Reminiscing about the earlier prosperity of the village. An older villager lamented:

People should remember that success in fishing or cultivation is made possible by one’s respect for the area that provides those resources. Finfish and prawns are also God’s creatures, as are human beings. Therefore it is not advisable to abuse them. When people are successful in fishing, they throw away most of the finfish, or blaspheme through heavy drinking and unruly behaviour from expanding the proceeds of prawn sales. It is obvious that we will suffer in the end.

A widely discussed incident of blasphemy involved various youths who had misused their unexpected gains during the 1995 season when prawn-fishing catches peaked. One of the youths was said to have taken too much drink, then tore up a bank note. Another bought a potful of cooked rice, enough to feed about ten people, and discarded what he could not finish. In the eyes of local people, the sharp decline in prawn catches since that time is closely related to these kinds of incidents.

The current way of using fishing space was also sometimes taken to exemplify disrespect. In the past, local fishers practiced certain rituals to purify fishers and fishing areas. For example, certain rituals were performed at Utondwe, south of Saadani, where fishers camped during major fishing seasons, and which was believed to be a sacred area for having been the ancestral home of Saadani’s (*wenyeji*) people. There, fishers refrained from ‘unclean’ behaviour such as sex, having women around, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Some claimed that one had to squat instead of stand while urinating, to demonstrate respect. Visiting fishers soon learned about and shared this respect for the Utondwe area and believed that lack of success would follow non-adherence to these rules. Yet, these rules are still honoured only at Utondwe. In Saadani, they were honoured only in the breach, and people felt the consequence was declining catches.

Women too expressed a view that people should demonstrate respect for natural resources, particularly if they exploit them. Dada M commented that “often, people who extract primary resources from the earth forget that they are supposed to maintain an appropriate behaviour regarding the resources they extract.” She was commenting on the way contemporary fishers show little respect for resources. She added:

A fisher, a small-scale miner and a charcoal maker are one of a kind. They are people who extract God’s creatures, living creatures whose difference from human beings is simply that they cannot speak. Their successes are unpredictable and they have common patterns of lavish expenditure when they become successful. But they do not even remember to be thankful to God when they are successful. So their wealth is never long lasting, however successful they may be in their endeavours.

Various other resource exploitation practices were also regarded as environmentally abusive. Industrial prawn trawling, and the way trawler operators discarded finfish, were particularly identified. The trawlers disposal of unwanted finfish (particularly fingerlings) was said it “turned the trawlers into killers of premature fish and destroyers of what the people would need in the future”.

Unlike in other communities where certain ritual practices were conducted to enable human beings to cope with the physical risks associated with fishing (Malinowski, 1948, Prins, 1965), in Saadani, such physical risks were minimal. This was because fishing in Saadani was performed on the fringes of the inter-tidal zone, where the physical risk to human beings was relatively less compared to those communities that predominantly used sea craft. However, since it also believed that people or evil spirits could bring misfortune, rituals to ‘protect’ people and instruments of production were frequently performed. One person said:

It is important for a person to protect his instruments of production, because one never knows when or in what way he may be harmed by an evil being. It is like people who are working in offices [referring to me]; you protect yourself so that misfortune bypasses you.

Rituals were also performed to appease the gods and spirits of the environment. The most common ritual practices in Saadani involved performing a *tambiko* (pl:

*matambiko*).<sup>34</sup> *Matambiko* in Saadani were directed towards ancestors as well as spirits of the land and sea to ask for assistance for a specific purpose; to seek for general blessings; to counteract evil forces among people; to protect property; and to reinforce relationships. A *tambiko* was sometimes performed in conjunction with *zindiko* (lit: protection) and *zinguo* (lit: aversion) rituals,<sup>35</sup> the latter performed to counteract ill spells or when it was believed that a person or an activity had been bewitched.

A common practice of *zindiko* was called *kuosha nyavu* (lit: washing the net), and was performed by many fishers. *Kuosha nyavu* was performed to cleanse and to protect fishing nets. It was commonly conducted after a net had been used for one period of spring high tides (*bamvua*). A fisher cut the branches of *kivumbasi* (a small bush with a pleasant aroma) and mixed them with the leaves of a mangrove specie, *avicenia marina* (*mchu*).<sup>36</sup> The net was then rubbed with the mixture before being rinsed in shallow sea waters as a prayer was offered to the sea spirits requesting successful fishing ventures. The net-cleansing ritual was believed to protect the net from what local people termed the 'shadow of darkness' (*kivuli cha kiza*) which, it was said, could cause it misfortune when used for fishing.

Adherence to the net-cleansing ritual differed between young and old fishers. Young fishers were of the opinion that fishing was a physical process and success depended primarily on the fisher's skill. Nevertheless, some recognized that they sometimes found themselves in situations where they needed to explain unexpected declines in catches which older people saw to be a consequence of modern practices of relating to resources which gradually eroded people's spirituality, turning fishers into mechanical beings who had to mould themselves to fit the demands of new technologies.

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<sup>34</sup> A *tambiko* (noun / pl: *matambiko*) comes from the verb *kutambika* which means to make offerings to propitiate the spirits of the dead (*mizimu*) and to ask them not to trouble the living. Although the practice is performed in a variety of ways, *tambiko* is more commonly performed as a ritual offering of an animal (goat, chicken, cattle) or food accompanied by prayers to ancestors. In Saadani, *tambiko* was also understood to refer to rituals to propitiate spirits other than the ancestors.

<sup>35</sup> *Zindiko*, the act comes from the verb *kuzindika* (lit: make firm, establish firmly) but with a special sense of protection with a spell or charm, keep away evil spirits. *Zinguo* (noun) literally means exorcism, or removal of a spell.

<sup>36</sup> Semesi & Howell (1995) also found that in some coastal communities the *avicennia marina* tree was used for medicinal purposes, as an aphrodisiac or contraceptive.

The *zinguo* (aversion) ritual was performed whenever misfortune or bad luck had befallen a person and was associated with evil doings. Ill health, the sudden loss of property, a breakdown in intimate relationships or successive poor yields in production activities were all regarded as misfortune. A local elder within the Islamic faith often performed *zinguo* for individuals by using verses in the Islamic holy book (Koran) on a person who felt afflicted.

*Tambiko* was performed directly by individuals for ocean based spirits (*vibwengo*) and land based spirits (*vinyamkera*) whom people believed mediated the production and utilization of natural resources and the general relationships between people and their environment. Local people believed that *vibwengo* and *vinyamkera* were spirits, created by God just as humans were, and which sometimes appeared in human-like apparitions.

According to the villagers, ocean based spirits were normally observed as a shining light on rocks covered slightly with water in deep sea areas. This light would delude fishers on sea craft into thinking that they were near the shore, and caused them to lose their sense of direction. Some fishers who managed fishing fences claimed similarly to have seen sea based spirits in different forms while they were checking their harvests.

Land-based spirits were detected through an aroma of rice being cooked in the fields and seeing such a spirit was likely to bring illness or misfortune. For example, Bi B told me that she had once briefly seen a figure resembling a man but which vanished before she could look properly. She later fell seriously ill and was told that the reason for her illness was her encounter with a *kinyamkera* (lit: land-based spirit).

People were often reminded that they had to perform *tambiko* to propitiate both the land-based and the sea based spirits. This was an act of respect and also increased a person's success rate in his/her ventures. In contemporary Saadani, an individual usually consulted a person of knowledge on the occult, locally called *mtaalam* (lit: expert), or the Islamic religion elder. The *mtaalam* advised the person on the most suitable *tambiko* and the offerings to be made. These offerings were then placed on a

small shrine beneath a big tree adjacent to or on the premise of, the specific production venture.

This type of *tambiko* was performed for both agricultural and fishing enterprises. For those who claimed ancestry from Wazigua people who were regarded as the original inhabitants of Saadani, this form of *tambiko* to support agricultural and fishing enterprises related closely to ritual practices described by British colonial ethnographies as having been conducted during the cultivation seasons in their ancestral homes (BDB, 1935). At the start of the cultivation season, Wazigua people made offerings at the sites of the graves of two ancestral rulers, Mwenekambi and Mwenekambi Mwigwa. People made offerings of cooked food and slaughtered chicken as they prayed for rains and good harvests. If the harvests were good, a second ritual offering of thanksgiving was performed in the same manner as before at the time of harvest (BDB, 1935).<sup>37</sup>

Preferred trees under which the offerings were placed in Saadani included baobab, tamarind (*tamarindus indica*) and *mng'ongo* (*sclerocarya caffra*) because, as one woman said, they are large and thus protect the offerings. Several types of food offerings were made, including honey, roasted maize, rice, sugar cane and bananas. Other people used to bake millet bread and placed seven small pieces under the selected tree, or seven lumps of mud to represent such bread. In the past, for cultivation plots some placed two figurines made of mud, or two small pieces of cloth flags, one black the other red representing the good and evil aspects of the spirits. The words chanted in prayer were individual, each person framing them in accordance with the request being made. The following comes from one of my local informants who cultivated rice on her tiny plot in Uvinje hamlet.

I have come, land based spirit. I have built your shrine, and I have placed your offerings. I request that my plot should be fruitful so that I may reap well. When I am successful, I will duly offer my appreciation to you.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Oral sources claimed that people also made ritual offerings to avert sickness, diseases and misfortune whenever the need arose.

<sup>38</sup> In Kiswahili, the person chanted the following words - *nimekuja kinyamkera, nimekujengea kibanda chako, nimekutilia mada yako, ninataka hili shamba langu nililolima liwe zuri, nivune vizuri, nikesha pata, nitakupigia ngoma yako ya kinyamkera.*

Before harvesting, and if the rice crop was good, she placed a few ears of rice (*masuke ya mpunga*)<sup>39</sup> in the shrine. After harvesting her rice, she placed cooked rice in the shrine in gratitude to the land based spirit.

Local people who erected fishing fences (*uzio*) used to make similar offerings to ocean based spirits. They believed that the catches of a fisher who performed such a ritual were usually so good that a single person could not harvest it alone. It was also believed one might not catch even a single fish, if one did not honour the spirits' presence.

By 1997, the frequency of individual performances of *tambiko* rituals for both land and ocean-based production was gradually decreasing. One reason for this, I was told, was the limited acceptance of the necessity for *tambiko*. Another reason was the reduced use of fishing fences. Yet another reason was that most people were not currently engaged in cultivation because they had lost their lands to the SGR, and thus they could not relate to the land in the same ways as before. Only those households still cultivating in the Uvinje and Marumbi areas, still found meaning in *tambiko* related to cultivation. Although such people no longer constructed the shrines anymore, they still put aside food and crops for the land based spirits.

An experience at the tourist camp illustrates how the establishment of the SGR boundaries has impacted on the performance of *tambiko*. One of the camp's directors recalled how their employees had experienced discomfort in their sleep when they were setting up the camp structures in 1996. After consulting some of the village elders, it became clear that part of the area of the camp had been a villager's rice field, and that the land spirit the villager had propitiated at his field shrine was still haunting the area. Only after the man had agreed to 'remove' his possessions at the shrine were the camp personnel able to work and sleep peacefully.

Several community-based *matambiko* were also organized, but only when the need arose for the whole community to appease the spirits and ancestors, for example when a misfortune had befallen the whole village, or when there was need for a particular

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<sup>39</sup> *Mpunga*, in the term *masuke ya mpunga* refers to rice which has not been husked.

blessing (*neema*) over production activities. Usually, one of the villagers would offer a goat for the purpose. The village religious leader claimed that, according to the Islamic religion, *kutawasur* (an Arabic word which refers to making an offering of a beast in prayer to God), is often necessary when there is general distress. For three successive years (1994, 1995 and 1996) a village level *tambiko* had been performed for the sea spirits as villagers sought to appease them and reverse their declining prawn catches. Before slaughtering the goat to be ritually offered, local Islamic religious leaders led it around the whole settlement, reciting Koranic verses. Women and children remained near the village mosque and prepared cooked food for all the villagers. The goat was then slaughtered at the edge of the sea and its blood allowed to flow into the sea, in order to appease the sea spirits so that they would increase the fecundity of the sea. In all years except 1996 (see below), the goat meat was then cooked and eaten by the villagers at the village mosque.

In 1996, when prawn catches fell dramatically, the village elders consulted local occultists for an explanation. Using the Koran and other forms of divine knowledge, it was explained that evil sea spirits were holding back the prawns. The goat offered for sacrifice was then slaughtered near the sea and its blood poured into the waters as before. This time its body was also thrown into the sea. After a few days, the carcass was washed ashore near the Kijito Kombe stream. And, when the prawn-fishing season that year was somewhat improved, local people believed that the spirits had accepted their offering.

This success convinced Saadani elders to arrange another ritual sacrifice when prawn catches fell again in 1997. But they were unable to perform another *tambiko* that year, primarily because of lack of support from the youth. Young men who had previously contributed money for food items, refused to do so. Some claimed that they did not have any money. Others said, "to make ritual offerings is outdated", although they agreed that it was important to seek God's blessing for production ventures. One young fisher who said "*uvuvi wa sasa hauna tunguli*" (lit: modern fishing does not have a gourd) implied that fishing was a physical process that could not be enchanted in the way older people claimed. He thus reflected a position held by many local youth that, since they were more capable than their elders with gill nets, they should control how the sea should be treated, rather than resorting to rituals controlled by

elders. Village elders responsible for the *tambiko*, however, expressed much bitterness about the failure to conduct another one.

In September 1998, the village elders thus organized a *ziara* instead of a *tambiko*.<sup>40</sup> Most of the village households contributed between TShs 500/= and 1000/=. The money was used to host visiting religious elders from neighbouring villages and to purchase food for those attending prayers. During the *ziara*, Islamic religious leaders declaimed the virtues of Islam, as preached by the Prophet Muhammad, and encouraged people to praise God, and to seek his blessings on the people's livelihood activities. Prayers were also directed to the sea, which the villagers called 'their *shamba*' (lit: cultivation plot), from which, as local people used to say, "*riziki yote inatoka baharini*" (lit: all the necessities of life come from the sea).

Several issues regarding control over natural resources arose from local people's beliefs and rituals. Firstly, they illustrated contestations over the control of resource management practices. Understandings about these rituals led local elders to claim the power to negotiate (on behalf of the people) about the provision of natural resources. But the youth, as we have seen, did not want to succumb to the control of elders.

Secondly, the ideas that local beliefs propagated enabled local people to "transcend the dichotomy between the material and the meaningful" (Gezon, 1999: 59). By relating issues such as morality and the meanings of sacrifice to the availability of prawns, local elders were recognizing that ideas and material artifacts are mutually constituted, and that has implications for natural resource management. Modern ways of natural resource management, such as what the youth were propounding do not spring within that framework.

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<sup>40</sup> A *ziara* is a religious ceremony in which prayers and teachings on the Koran are held in public. In Saadani, a *ziara* was also used as a platform to seek for general blessings according to the ways of the Prophet Muhammad.

## 5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated ways in which local people relate to their immediate environments. My discussion has illustrated how local ways of understanding natural resources are imbedded in locally constructed meanings. Local people's perception of their environment, whether in its spatial dimension (boundaries) or physical attributes (natural resources), has been shown to be based on social categories, relationships and associations developing from their multiple livelihood endeavours and their claims to resources that derive from their own holistic understanding of the means to satisfy their social and material needs. I have also shown how Saadani people understood their rights of access to environmental space as having developed from their cultural and social history.

I have also shown that local classifications of forms of resource utilization in the area were premised on socio-political rather than merely economic relationships. Local people regarded seasonal fishers as fellow human beings who also sought subsistence. They were not regarded negatively because they have traditionally been local people's partners on the sea, and their means of exploitation are similar to those of the locals. By contrast, other resource users, such as the SGR and trawlers, are seen as illegitimate competitors for the same resource, albeit for different objectives and using different means and instruments of production.

I have also illustrated how externally induced NRM processes, such as industrial prawn trawlers, were seen as interferences in Saadani people's understandings of, and rights to control, local natural resources. According to local people, their traditional tenure patterns not only allowed access to resources that they could exploit, but also assured individual security, both materially and spiritually. The introduction of trawlers interfered with their livelihood patterns, without providing sustainable space for local people or alternative means for them to subsist. People thus felt they were continuously engaged in struggles to maintain the kinds of relationships they have long had with resources, and to make sense of their lives, as it is within these relationships that they find their power. Yet even opportunities that arise at a local level, such as the prawn marketing chain, seem to undermine their autonomy and

control. Local people thus resorted to the supernatural to avert their gradual dislocation from their resources.

Women, who were not as deeply engaged in fishing as Saadani men, also realized they needed to retain their own kinds of power in their relationships with natural resources. In this way, they resisted being reduced to what they regarded as meaningless beings with no relationship to the world around them. The following chapter discusses the extent to which gender has influenced such resource use practices, and the impact of such relationships on women in particular.

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## CHAPTER SIX: Gender and Power in the Use and Management of Coastal Space and Resources

### *“Mwanamke shughuli”<sup>1</sup>*

#### 6.1 Introduction

In many coastal communities, fishing has been culturally constructed as a masculine productive activity. This chapter discusses how this cultural construction has come about and how women’s involvement in aspects of fishing sometimes undermines and sometimes leaves intact that cultural construction. The most visible kind of fishing in Saadani is manual gill net trawling, an activity practised almost exclusively by men. However, there are other means of utilising coastal and marine resources in which women predominate. They include catching small shrimp, as well as secondary activities such as trading in fried fish. In practice, therefore, the environment where fishing takes place is utilised in multiple ways, and to meet a variety of social requirements. Gender categories in such utilisation are often made to appear as simple principles of difference, classifying the world into parallel processes, which either contrast or appear as complementary. Only when it is realised that such classifications also embody certain values related to social power and the person, rather than being simple expressions of the relationship between men and women, does it become possible to understand how women and men are positioned in the utilisation of the coastal environment.

I draw on ethnographic material to illustrate the range of meanings that have been derived from women’s interactions with coastal space and resources. My evidence from Saadani corroborates that of other analysts who have claimed that the coast is essentially masculinized and that men’s lives are privileged over women’s

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<sup>1</sup> The words *mwanamke* (lit: a woman) and *shughuli* (lit: activity, business; occupation) have been used to form the idiomatic phrase *mwanamke shughuli*, which implies that a woman’s worth can be judged from the activities and kinds of work she is engaged in. *Mwanamke shughuli* is a common saying among women in Saadani. The saying implies that a woman self-actualises herself through the work she does. Other women also acknowledge the abilities of a fellow woman who is self sustaining from her own activities.

(Byashemererwa, 1994; Caplan, 1989). However, I challenge generalising assumptions, such as those adopted by several analyses of gender relations along the Swahili coast which portray "a pervasive theme of gender segregation and gendered subcultures" (Askew, 1999: 75), and an ultimately disadvantaged coastal woman. Parpart and Marchand (1995) blame this kind of analysis on "post-colonial literature, with its discourse on the powerful, [and which] offers important insights into the forces silencing women, but has less to say about the way women actively construct their own identities within the material and discursive constraints of their lives" (1995: 18). I draw from Parpart and Marchand's thesis in my attempt to demonstrate how women try to modify the spatial landscape of gender and power. To do so, I examine the subjective evaluations of work by women, and the extent to which, through individual perceptions and actions, women's participation in coastal resource utilisation can be socially negotiated (Cole, 1991). Through their actions, women have been able to derive a kind of power which is different from the standard form of male power linked to fishing and the control of coastal space. Many women experience a sense of power when they have the autonomy to sustain themselves and their immediate dependants. In this chapter, I also address the ways in which gender and forms of power converge and are articulated in local meanings regarding the use of coastal space and resources.

A recent approach to understanding local uses of the environment regards the environment as "a context through which cultural constructions of both environment and gender are created and recreated" (Leach, 1992: 76). Leach has argued that the study of gender should be linked to agency-based approaches in order to 'dynamize' what have traditionally been static approaches to the study of gender and the environment. She perceives the environment as a space whose understanding and mapping 'speaks about social relationships' (cf. Ardener, 1981; Deshingkar, 1995), a space that is sometimes expressed in the ways in which we give spatial metaphors to social relationships in our everyday language. But, Leach (1992) argues, to limit the study of the environment only to existing socio-structural relationships may deny a full comprehension of how gender is instantiated, created and recreated. She thus applies a set of interpretive concepts, which she terms performance, event and action, to signify the relation of an active agent to the source or reason of an individual's action in an

environment. In this way, she argues, “[gender] relationships come to be seen not as static, but as fluid and negotiable” (1992: 77).

Individual agency, as my analysis will illustrate, cannot be understood through performance and actions alone. It should be simultaneously problematized as a meaningful development of social experiences and interactions within localised social relations. To a large extent, these relations define what is allowable as the performances, actions and discourses of women within that social environment, and as a result also demarcate separate kinds of agency.

In the case of Saadani, historical processes and economic necessity have effected changes that have had particular consequences for women’s material lives. Opportunities for cash-income generation have opened up possibilities for women to negotiate their participation in previously male-dominated spheres. Changes have also developed within the cycle of marriage. Several examples below illustrate that, as partners mature together, they may allow each other to take on new and different roles, or perform new and different activities.

Given such developments, some women, and some men too, have come to question and ultimately reject apparently commonly held definitions of aspects of the environment as gendered. They do so as they interact with coastal space and its related environment, and they press for new understandings and meanings that arise from those interactions. They thus turn the environment into a discursive spatial context within which the individual and the social both clash and complement one another. The difficulty in recent approaches to gender and the environment arises from their failure to demonstrate the relationship between material conditions and the kinds of genderised meanings that individuals attach to natural resources in changing circumstances (Rocheleau *et al*, 1996). New experiences lead to new kinds of understandings of the environment (Berry, 1993) and of gender. To women, these experiences recognise a dynamic environment which, although it can be dominating, also offers possibilities for their emancipation from male dominated practices (Sawicki, 1991).

## 6.2 The gendered use of space: Appearances of egalitarianism

My initial impression of the daily relationships between men and women in Saadani village was one of relative egalitarianism between the sexes with considerable freedom of association between men, women and children. Women would mix freely with men in both domestic and public spaces, joking and exchanging friendly remarks without any immediately observable constraints. A significant observation concerned the way in which female and male body cleansing spaces along the Mvave River often overlapped, and how the boundaries of these spaces were blurred. This river is the major source of general household water for Saadani residents, and many residents wash there in the mornings and late afternoon. During such times, some adult women and girls would wash themselves in the river, wrapped in a *khanga*.<sup>2</sup> They did so in locations quite visible to people who were crossing the river. Noticing this behaviour led me to revisit my prior expectations of the social relationships in a community I had earlier perceived as predominantly influenced by an Arab-Islamic way of life, and where I had anticipated finding that women would normally shy away from any public disposition of practices related to their person such as body cleansing (Nicolaisen, 1983). I later realised that this sense of dissonance between my own expectations and what I saw was because people in Saadani had a much more hybrid and dynamic approach to life and culture than I had anticipated.

As fieldwork progressed, I came to appreciate local understandings of the use of different spaces and the ways in which people articulated the influences of several social institutions and processes working within their environment, despite the initial appearances of egalitarianism. I found several forms of spatial distinction and gendered difference in the use of natural resources that have long characterised Saadani, as they have in other coastal Tanzania villages. In certain spheres of life gender designs had privileged men in several ways. Yet women had their own arenas of power. The institutions that may have created a basis for gendered difference include the local

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<sup>2</sup> *Khanga* is a brightly decorated piece of cloth which women wrap themselves and is a common type of dress or attire for East African women. Some women also use old pieces of *khanga* to catch small shrimp.

belief systems and local gendered discourses. In what follows, I illustrate the extent to which there has been a degree of both continuity and change in certain dominant cultural forms and practices which have a bearing on contemporary gendered patterns of using natural resources. In the following section, I discuss the social construction of work and the ways women and men have come to maintain distinct but complementary definitions of the use of space through such practices.

### 6.3 Work, Roles and Responsibilities

Local people understood work as having certain basic characteristics and meanings. They generally perceived work (*kazi*) according to the time and labour embodied in it, the cash income it generated and the social recognition or identity it accorded the person performing it. To men, fishing was work because it provided them with an identity, of people of the Saadani coast, and because it was their major means of generating sustenance. Other activities referred to by men as “*shughuli ndogondogo tu*” (lit: merely petty activities) were understood as only important to supplement income or to pass time. Even though most women did not fish, they also regarded their own activities as work, and attributed to them the same prestige as men did theirs. ‘*Mwanamke shughuli*’ (lit: a woman – activity) which implied that a woman was worth the kinds of activities or businesses she engaged in, was a phrase many women used when they spoke about the importance of their income-generating activities. Any activity that brought substantial income to their household was highly regarded, not only because it ensured a person a daily living, but also because it gave an individual a sense of identity and personality. To women, it was the achievement of autonomy in pursuing one’s choice of activities, and controlling the proceeds of those activities, that amounted to what one called work. Women furthermore recognised that new types of work were necessary to give them access to an independently controlled income, and many women strove to achieve such an independent status. “*Kazi ni kama mume*” (lit: work is like a husband) was another common phrase used by women to imply that one’s own work could replace one’s traditional reliance upon a man to be the main household provider. According to some Saadani women, engaging in one’s own income-generating work served to reduce one’s dependence on a man. As one woman

explained, “a man cannot trouble me if I have my own income”. With this understanding, women sometimes resisted, and sometimes accommodated local discourses about work and its gendered nature, depending on how these discourses impacted on their ability to achieve autonomy.

Women in Saadani engaged in a range of productive activities to generate a livelihood. These activities included petty trading, such as the sale of fried fish, snacks, cooked food and items made from raffia palm (*ukindu*). The items made from raffia palm included mats (*majamvi*), food covers (*kawa*), fans (*vihangaisho*) and wall decorations. Some women also engaged in subsistence agriculture. During the dry season a number of women also worked as (seasonal) daily paid labourers in the nearby Coastal Salt Works Company, and, very rarely, a few found labouring jobs with the SGR. Apart from cultivation and working for the salt works, in which a few men participated too, the rest of the activities mentioned were regarded as women’s work only to be added to their responsibilities of daily household maintenance.

These findings corroborate the work of earlier studies on the gender division of labour in Tanzanian coastal communities. Earlier anthropological/sociological studies on the Swahili coast have shown a sharp division of labour and separate spheres of activity for men and women (Caplan, 1975; Landberg, 1986; DSU, 1995).<sup>3</sup> In her study of Kigombe village, also on the north-eastern Tanzanian coast, Landberg (1986) noted that the main economic activity of the male inhabitants was fishing. Other activities included cultivation, petty trading, small craft enterprises and wage labour. Women, she said, were restricted to subsistence agriculture, handicraft production and some petty trading (1986: 108-109). Women were also responsible for daily household maintenance and they contributed significantly to the financial support of their households through their various petty income-generating activities, such as those mentioned above.<sup>4</sup> As regards the direct use of the sea, however, only a few women in Saadani used to fish for finfish and prawns using gill nets. Even fewer women caught

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description and analysis of gender relations along the Swahili coast see Caplan (1975); Landberg (1986) and Middleton (1981).

<sup>4</sup> Caplan (1975) and Swantz (1985) have noted similar patterns. Their studies of Mafia Island and Rufiji district communities respectively, have also indicated the heavy responsibility placed on women for household subsistence.

small shrimp (*ushimba*). And only those who were desperate, collected dead fish discarded by trawlers, and then only for their own immediate household use.

The sexual division of labour in Saadani was a product of established gender responsibilities and identities, and created the primary basis from which contemporary gender-based practices of coastal resource utilisation had developed. They had also led to the development of spatial distinctions, which were an integral part of this division of labour. According to local oral history, men from the neighbouring Wazigua people used to leave their settlements to fish (and also to hunt wildlife) and to bring food back to their homes, thus working within gendered expectations which required women to remain at home. This arrangement was said to be particularly evident among people living in the nearby interior. Men used to leave their villages for weeks at a time, and camp along the Indian Ocean coast, especially during the major fishing seasons. Women remained at home to cultivate and maintain the homes. Fishing thus developed alongside hunting into an activity conducted by men, and the sea came to be their work environment.

Several belief systems and prohibitions against women's involvement in fishing served to augment this division of labour which established fishing as men's activity. One prohibition regarded women's menstrual blood which was said to drive the fish away and pollute the marine environment, which was perceived as a sacred environment inhabited by good spirits that looked after fish and other marine life.<sup>5</sup>

Acheson (1981) and Lessa (1966) have noted similar beliefs as regards women's contact with fishing communities elsewhere in the world. Lessa (1996), who studied people in Micronesia, explains that concerns for purity and pollution in relation to contact with women when preparing for fishing trips were highly significant in local fishing enterprise. In their descriptions, as in those I heard about Saadani in the past, direct or even indirect contact with a menstruating woman during fishing periods was regarded as undesirable. Women's presence around fishing camps and the general fishing environment used to be discouraged, and women were taught that if they were

menstruating, they should avoid men who were on their way to fishing. Fishermen also avoided greeting women by a hand shake when on their way to fishing trips, and especially after they had 'cleansed' their fishing nets and other equipment en route to go fishing. They did this to avoid misfortune (*mkosi*) in maritime activities. Offering their hand was regarded as opening themselves to negative influences from women that might affect the ability of fishing equipment to catch fish. In 1998, fishermen still avoided offering their hand in greeting to women when on their way to fish, thus indicating the extent to which the prohibition was internalised.<sup>6</sup>

It was also regarded as taboo to engage in sexual activity before a fishing venture. Sex was seen to bring personal misfortune (*nuksi*)<sup>7</sup> to a man, and made him unable to attend to his fishing duties well. The village religious teacher said that "sex is a source of distraction if performed during periods that demand one to work". Nicolaisen (1983) has mentioned similar ideas when she says that, in some societies, "women's sexuality was seen as destructive because it distracted men from their social [and religious] duties" (1983: 5). Yet Herbert (1993), who analysed discourses about the relationship between sexual activity and production activities and studied them within the context of power relationships, argued that "sexuality is too powerful a force, socially and cosmologically to leave unregulated" (1993: 227). Drawing her analysis from rituals in iron-smelting, Herbert (1993) claimed that people normally safeguard those processes their societies regard as representing major forms of power. In her study, iron-smelting, the domain of men and a few women, had to be safeguarded from the sexual potentials of both men and women because these potentials would otherwise have disrupted the smelting of iron, and hence the powers that iron-smelters were supposed to maintain.

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<sup>5</sup> An elderly lady commented, "menstrual blood emits powerful but negative forces around the woman".

<sup>6</sup> One of my local informants commented that "you cannot offer your hand to a woman when you are going to fish, because you do not know in which condition she is, lest she may give you bad luck" (*huwezi kumsalimia mwanamke kwa kumpa mkono unapoenda kuvua, maana hujui yuko katika hali gani, asije akakuletea nuksi*).

<sup>7</sup> *Nuksi* and *mkosi* are both nouns used to describe misfortune or bad luck. In Saadani *nuksi* was used to refer to certain peculiarities that a person possessed that often brought bad luck, while *mkosi* was used to explain generalised misfortune.

In Saadani, these ideas about sexual relationships came to be one of the contexts within which conditions regarding the use of coastal space were encountered and challenged by local people themselves. The encounter manifested itself by the way in which some men struggled to convince themselves that engaging in sexual activities before fishing had negative implications for fishing. In one case, one fisher commented, “abstaining from sexual activity for fishing purposes [especially if one is married] was a sacred achievement which very few men attained”. He also said that it was difficult to adhere to such a provision, especially in the current circumstances where fishers lived together with their wives, even during major fishing seasons. Some seasonal fishermen from other settlements also brought their local village girlfriends from the village to spend time with them in the fishing camps (*madago*) where they resided, and I often observed local Saadani girls visiting these camps without restraint. This behaviour challenged the prohibition restricting women from being around fishing areas. Moreover, several women employed their sexual potential to satisfy new suitors or to maintain existing relationships, while some women employed them to ensure a livelihood for themselves. In these cases, the temptation was high, for both men and women to engage in sexual activity that disrespected fishing times and seasons. In these circumstances, some local fishers increasingly looked to other factors that they thought influenced their rates of success, such as the type of instruments they used.

Fishing was also culturally constructed as a man’s activity by the use of local terminology that spelt out gender differences within various sea-based activities. For example, fishing was described as “an activity in which resources were taken from the sea”, but local people did not describe all the people involved in taking resources from the sea as ‘fishers’. In local people’s language, all fishers had a male identity, and did not include women in its description of a fisher (*mvuvi*). The community also did not describe women’s activity of catching small shrimp as ‘fishing’. Both men and women would say “a woman is not a fisher, she just catches small shrimp” (*mwanamke sio mvuvi, anatanda ushimba tu*), implying that the activity women performed in the sea environment was not really fishing.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Even the verb *kutanda*, (lit: to spread) which referred to the action of spreading a piece of cloth over or under the shrimps to catch them, and not fishing as local people understood it to be done with a gill

Catching small shrimp was thus also regarded as a lesser activity than 'fishing' (for finfish and prawns). However, there were a few women who did fish for finfish and prawns, although they usually did so only during major fishing seasons. Men, on the other hand, were said never to have participated in catching small shrimp. Moreover, during the period of my study, only three women were regularly involved in catching small shrimp (*ushimba*). They were all about 50 years of age and lived in one neighbourhood. Two were single and the third was married to an old husband who provided little income. Thus these three women had little choice but to engage in any income generating activity that could sustain them.

Small shrimp were normally caught in the intertidal area during high tide (*bamvua*), in the early hours of the day when the tide came in. Before going into the water, the women scouted the sea along the beach to locate signs of jumping small shrimp. When the shrimp were sighted, the women waded into the sea in twos, with pieces of old mosquito netting or cloth which they manoeuvred below the surface. Then, each holding one end of the net, they scooped up the shrimp as if using a large strainer. Sometimes women used an old piece of *khanga* for such purposes. They caught small shrimp in small quantities. The average catch per day during my stay in the village seldom exceeded 1-2 kilogrammes per woman, a quantity that had little significant market value. The small shrimp were then dried and later usually sold at the village market or, sometimes, in front of the women's houses. A tea mug full was sold for TShs 100 – 200/= (1998 prices). The activity therefore generated very little income and, in many cases, the whole catch was consumed by members of the women's households if it could not be sold. Catching small shrimp was thus regarded as an activity whose produce or income was only significant for household sustenance and not for the competitive public enterprise related to fishing, which was regarded as men's arena.

It nonetheless had a particular value as part of women's work, recognised as necessary but of a different order from men's work. The reason only three women were involved in this activity was that other women had chosen to pursue alternative production

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net. All other kinds of fishing are referred to as *uvuvi* (noun) which literally means fishing, from the verb *kuvua* (lit: to fish).

activities, and which they regarded as more meaningful in terms of their livelihood pursuits.

#### **6.4 Women in fishing**

Despite the fairly tight rein held on the sexual division of labour regarding fishing, several interventions challenged the sexual division of labour and the use of coastal resources in Saadani. These had several implications for accepted understandings of the division of labour. Some had managed to effect a certain degree of change, especially in facilitating women's acceptance in fishing. Yet, many women resisted being 'transformed' into fishers (*wavuvi*). They demanded to participate in fishing, but only on terms they felt were favourable to them, incorporated a lesser workload, or enabled them to earn an independently controlled income. The Ujamaa villagisation programme had attempted to revolutionise the sexual division of labour in fishing by encouraging and mobilising Saadani women into fishing. The co-operative principles introduced by Ujamaa included one of equal participation by all adult men and women in major local production processes. Ujamaa also assumed that women would attain [social and economic] power through participating in what was, up to then defined locally as the dominant arena of power. However, Ujamaa protagonists failed to recognise the importance and significance of women's discourses and practices of power outside the male-dominated arenas. Ujamaa thus expected women to enter into those (men's) arenas, without obliging men to enter women's arenas. This doubled the load on women, because women then had to perform both their household responsibilities and participate in fishing.

Ujamaa also facilitated communal access to the means of production, albeit under the administration of the village government. In Saadani this involved establishing communal rights to the use of fishing equipment and rights of access to sea space. These provisions enabled both adult women and men to have access to fishing grounds and to the instruments of production (fishing nets).

Yet the principle of equal participation was initially seen as an obligation, although later several households adopted it as a way of increasing household income. Hence, some women recalled how after Ujamaa their husbands had encouraged them to fish so that they would add to the household income. But not many women were happy to be obliged to work as fishers. Having been compelled to work as fishers under Ujamaa principles, they realised how doing so simply increased their workload because women who fished were still required to perform other household responsibilities, and many still practised cultivation. The willingness of some to participate in fishing was, in one way, supported by the matrilineal principle of control of domestic resources common in many Tanzanian coastal communities. The principle gave men and women distinct arenas of resource control, independent of the other's influence (Caplan, 1975). Women were thus able independently to control the proceeds they obtained from fishing.

Local people also knew of women who were fishers elsewhere. In some places, they said, such as at Usongo village, north of Saadani, women-focussed development projects introduced by the government had encouraged the women there to fish. But Saadani village in 1997 did not have a women-focussed programme which could have encouraged women's participation in fishing (and it had not had one in the last ten years). The lack of such projects in Saadani may have been due to what I felt, Saadani having been overwhelmed by various development projects. The existence of various NRM programmes within the Saadani area, such as the SGR and the mangrove management project, may have caused the village to be overlooked by possible 'women-interested' development programmes. In any case, the existing NRM programmes in Saadani did not encourage production activities related to the natural resources they managed. In fact, they restricted use of those resources, and since women's development was often considered in terms of production-stimulation, it was not possible to encourage any such activity related to these resources.

Some Saadani women were supported by their partners or relatives to engage in fishing. However, only a very limited number of women took up fishing as a daily livelihood endeavour, and the participation of most declined in the mid 1980s. These women were unable to combine the physical work involved in fishing with their other

responsibilities. The work arrangements involved in fishing meant that, in order to be successful, one had to maintain a time schedule that did not interfere with the domestic work demands most women were obliged to meet. It also required one to match one's fishing partner's zeal for fishing. These factors discouraged men from taking women as fishing partners, as they regarded women as too slow at the work and unable to endure fishing for long periods of time. Therefore, women fishers were obliged to take other women as partners, once they had been taught by men how to handle gill nets.

Several other factors denied women the opportunity to fish. Fish net owners claimed that women did not know how to mend nets, and were therefore expensive to maintain in a contract that necessitated paying another person to mend the net. The few young women who claimed to know how to mend fish nets, did not participate in fishing. Therefore women were not allocated nets by net owners. Women who wanted to fish had therefore to depend on male kin, and to request men to act as their brokers in fishing contracts. Women then sold the prawns they caught to the fish net owner from whom their male relatives had obtained the nets. Alternatively, male relatives gave women their worn-out nets to fish with and then acted as brokers to sell the prawns the women caught to net owners. Sometimes the women would themselves sell directly to any prawn dealer for a higher price. This was because the women in such cases were not tied to the usual type of arrangement between fishers and fish net owners. But mostly they had to sell through a local man.

Another reason fish net owners avoided allocating nets to women was because of the claim that women were less productive than men. I repeatedly noticed that women fishers managed to haul the nets in only twice or thrice per day, compared to a minimum of four times that able bodied men dragged their nets. Fishermen thus caught larger quantities of prawns than fisherwomen, and were therefore worth more to net owners.

In general, then, men did not regard women as ideal fishers. Even their short-lived enthusiasm for gill net fishing, when Ujamaa had prevailed, was regarded by men as an

influence only of what was described as *maendeleo* (modernisation),<sup>9</sup> and that without it, women would never have participated in fishing. In support of that contention, one man said:

Fishing for prawns using these modern nets is like cultivation, where you just pick up a hoe and dig as our inland neighbours do. Modern ways of fishing have made it easier, not only for women, but also for other people who are newcomers in the fishing enterprise. But fishing using traditional techniques is like the way people used to hunt for game meat. You have to know how to make a fish trap (*dema/mgono*) or fishing fence (*uzio/wando*). You have to know the rules and skills of the trade to be successful. You have to know where to place the fish trap or fence, how to place them, and in what season. Women did not know all these things.

Yet women themselves had other ways of looking at fishing. They understood that fishing activities tied men to a gill net owner and into a prawn marketing chain which undermined their autonomy as producers. This was unlike the income generating activities in which women did engage, most of which did not depend on a middle-person. Women also realised that, for them, the local prawn marketing chain was too complicated for them to benefit. The fact that they had to attach themselves to a man to act as their proxy, simply to ensure fair transactions with prawn dealers, irked them. Further, they regarded fishermen as very difficult to deal with, especially if one wanted to operate as a female fish net owner or prawn dealer. One woman said:

If you become a local fish net owner who distributes nets to local fishers you will be required to follow 'your' fishers wherever they go. Otherwise they may cheat you and sell the prawns to another person, and you may not be able to confront them. If they can sometimes cheat their fellow men, to cheat a woman could be easier.

Consequently, not a single local woman had ventured into the prawn business as a fish net owner or prawn dealer. In 1996, two women prawn traders came to Saadani from Dar es Salaam. Neither settled in Saadani, both operating as 'foreign' prawn dealers, travelling between the village and distant markets. For two fishing seasons, they collaborated with local fish net owners who provided them a constant supply of prawns. However, after these seasons, they admitted that they could not cope with the

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<sup>9</sup> *Maendeleo* is a generic term in Kiswahili used to refer to many modernisation processes including

inconveniences of poor and unreliable transport to do business in Saadani. By early 1997 they had left Saadani.

Many local women commented to me that the various structural constraints of time, strength, mobility and workload that were part of gill net fishing and prawn trading had been responsible for keeping them out of fishing. Yet, they insisted, they remained outside of those activities primarily by choice. For women who, under Ujamaa, had previously demonstrated their ability to fish alongside men, it was important now that they could regard themselves as having the freedom to be able to choose the type of work they wanted to do. Women were determined that the type of work a woman participated in should be influenced by local cultural desires, choices and abilities. For some women such choice entailed gaining men's acceptance by proving 'gender fitness'. Musolf (1992) explains that women who enter into activities that have been culturally ascribed as men's, normally strive to prove they are not different to men, so that they may achieve the status that the ascribed role carries. However, my experience with women in Saadani was that they did not enter fishing to attain that status. They sought simply to be able to generate income independently, even if it meant crossing local gendered work boundaries.

Proving gender fitness was thus one way in which some women were able to do that as the following case illustrates. With the support of her husband this woman strove to win acceptance among men by proving her own equal ability to 'work' in what was normally seen as a men's activity.

#### **Case Study 6.1: *Gender fitness***

50 years old ZM lived at Saadani Chumvi with her 74 year old husband, Mzee JSM, in a household of nine members. In 1971 Mzee JSM had settled there after retiring from the SGR. He started work as a full time labourer with the Coastal Salt Works company, and started fishing the same year. He married ZM in 1974 and they had eight children. After their fourth child was born, Mzee JSM taught ZM to fish using a gill net. By 1988 ZM was a full-time fisher, and continued to be one throughout my fieldwork. She normally fished in partnership with her husband alongside other men. Like most fishers, she

dragged her net at least four times each day. ZM was the only woman whom all village people, acknowledged as a real fisherwoman. Indeed she was known locally as a *mvuvi* (fisher). This was because ZM had taken to fishing the same way men had. She went fishing every ideal fishing day although she and her husband always fished close to their home.

“Fishing is a kind of work,” ZM said. “Work is any activity you do that you depend upon for subsistence. I am proud of my abilities as a woman, and I am proud of my physique because I am able to engage in any kind of work. And that is why I can fish.”<sup>10</sup> During the dry season, when she was not fishing, ZM worked alongside other women as a daily-paid labourer for the Coastal Salt Works Company where they packed salt into 50 kilogramme bags. ZM was also responsible for her own house’s daily maintenance. But, she said, household activities were not work, they were just women’s daily responsibilities.

ZM was a devout Muslim and understood that dignified Muslim women did not expose their bodies by wearing revealing clothes. But because “God blesses everything one does in good faith”, she would not allow religious rules to hinder her work. And so, when fishing with her husband, ZM wore shorts and a T-shirt under a loose gown that reached below her knees. She also wrapped a *khanga* (cloth) on her head to cover herself and to shade her head from the sun. She adopted this heavy attire to obscure her bodily features when she got wet, a practice which, she told me, complied with the Islamic provisions regarding women’s dress. Men, she pointed out, had no need to cover themselves such.

Mzee JSM was proud of his wife’s distinction as a fisher, particularly since it was he who had taught her to fish. He also said that, “I was not happy with the way in which the proceeds from fishing had to be distributed between two people [fishing partners] from different households, which was the common system in Saadani. So I thought it would be wise that my household benefits from all the prawn sales rather than that I should distribute the takings between me and a partner from another household”. Since he realised his sons would grow to have their own homes, he taught his wife. ZM too preferred to work with her husband, having previously had unfruitful experiences in fishing with women partners who lacked the necessary skill and commitment.

ZM’s case illustrates how the sexual division of fishing labour can be overcome by individual definitions of work and by individual performances that deny claims of natural gender differences. ZM’s determination had enabled her to be called *mvuvi*, and thus gain the recognition normally accorded to men. People acknowledged her by saying

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<sup>10</sup> In Kiswahili she said: “*kazi ni kitu chochote unachofanya unachotegemea maisha yako. Najivunia uwezo wangu kama mwanamke na najivunia maungo yangu, maana kazi zote ninazifanya, ndio maana naweza kuvua*”.)

“that one, she is a woman!” (*yule, kweli mwanamke!*), implying that, at the same time as she broke convention, she still had to reflect what society expected of her as a woman. Some gender theorists would argue that by being called *mvuvi*, ZM was being masculinised (Cameron, 1998). But in doing so they fail to recognise how subjective experiences and understandings allow a person to challenge dominant ideas about relationships, and simultaneously maintain her individuality. Through emphasising her femininity as a Muslim woman, a wife and mother, even when working in a men's arena, ZM was able to challenge and modify gendered uses of natural resources without having to compromise her dignity.

ZM's example enables us to understand that, “women [do not necessarily] elect to use modes of expression men can understand, because it is the best way to get men to listen” (Sawicki, 1991: 2), but can also be the authors of their own practice. Although it was ZM's husband who had encouraged her participation and supported her to overcome women's exclusion from fishing, ZM complemented her husband's encouragement by proving her ability to fish ‘as men do’. Yet, being aware of a possible conflict between her religious ideals and the nature of her work, she modified her approach to the work by wearing appropriate clothes. And, despite her active involvement in fishing, ZM did not claim to have equivalent power to her husband neither in amount, nor in kind. Her participation in fishing did not make her into a ‘pseudo man’ even though she fished ‘as men did’. Rather it reinforced her status as a productive and caring mother and wife, and reinforced her power in that domain.

A few other women also fished periodically, but only during the major fishing seasons. In Uvinje hamlet for example, Mama J, her daughter and two daughters-in-law were occasional seasonal fishers a few days each season. Like ZM they too dressed appropriately for the task, and were encouraged by Mama J's two sons and a son-in-law who fished in the same grounds as the women. Yet, the women claimed, they fished only because “*maisha yamekuwa magumu*” (lit: life has become tough), and circumstances had compelled them to do so. For these four women, then, fishing was seen as an unacceptable imposition, brought about by changing social and economic circumstances. In contrast, ZM perceived her fishing as simply another activity which

was part of her life, and which reinforced her ability to exercise her power as a woman, wife and mother.

Yet other women perceived marine resources, and fish in particular, as providing quite different means of generating income and helping to achieve some autonomy of their own. They claimed that fishing was conducted in too cumbersome a way, and opted to capitalise on other fishing-related opportunities, rather than to harvest fish from the sea themselves. Trading in fried fish, selling locally produced spirits and operating local eating places called '*hoteli*'<sup>11</sup>, all which were popular during major fishing seasons, were examples of these kinds of activities.

#### **6.5 Incomes from alternative fishing related activities**

*Hoteli* were local eating places, run by individual women who sold a range of cooked food. In 1998 there were six *hoteli* where one could buy snacks or proper meals throughout the day. These six operated from permanent and established positions in Saadani central settlement. During the major fishing seasons, women elsewhere in the village also set up *hoteli*. Most seasonal *hoteli* were located on women's homesteads, where the woman could provide service to her customers while simultaneously attending to her household responsibilities. Usually a few chairs, benches and tables were placed outside the main house, in the shade of a veranda where food was served. Other seasonal *hoteli* sprouted up at places along the beach where fishers congregated after fishing, or in the vicinity of fishing camps.

Many women who ran *hoteli* obtained ingredients on credit from the village shops at the start of the season, and easily paid back their debts before the season's end. Most *hoteli* were active only during certain periods of the day, depending on the timing of the fishing periods which were influenced by the tides. Seasonal *hoteli* operated primarily during the times when fishers went down to sea or when they returned from fishing trips. If the ideal fishing time was in the early hours of dawn, *hoteli* operators

made sure that tea and snacks were available for the fishers before they went to sea. Customers for these *hoteli* were primarily seasonal fishers and unmarried local men. Married fishers too sometimes ate at these *hoteli*, especially when they had to leave home early in the morning. Then, most did not rely on their wives unless they were also *hoteli* operators serving tea and snacks early in the day. Full meals were usually served in the afternoons, as the fishers came back. Women who fished did not eat at these *hoteli*. They took their meals at home. Sometimes the women fishers would even prepare snacks for sale at a colleague's *hoteli*, and they would collect the money later in the day.

The fact that only women ran these *hoteli* expressed local genderised perceptions of work. Producing cooked food was seen to be women's not men's work. Through it, women were able to extend their household cooking tasks into an income generating activity that enabled them to benefit indirectly from the major local productive activity. This was so because fishers purchased cooked food, spending what they realised from prawn fishing. The following experience of a woman *hoteli* operator illustrates how women understood the relationship between running a *hoteli* and the local fishing production process. During major fishing seasons, women running permanent *hoteli* had the same experiences as women running seasonal *hoteli*.

### **Case Study 6.2 Operating a *hoteli***

Mamkubwa established her *hoteli* at *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu* fisher's camp every major fishing season because many visiting fishermen liked to rest there before returning to their camps or to the village. She prepared *chapati*, buns and beans cooked with coconut milk at home and then carried the prepared food to *bandarini kwa Mzee Rajabu*. She said, "almost every evening during the major fishing season my daughters and I knead dough for making buns and leave it to rise before I fry the buns in the early hours of the morning. I also cook beans in the evening and only add the coconut milk and a few onions in the morning. We then make *chapati* early in the morning and prepare tea in time for the fishers. The time of waking up to prepare other foods depends on the times fishers go to, or come back from the sea. It is sometimes 3 o'clock in the morning or 6 o'clock, depending on the tides. The tidal variations determine our working periods."

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<sup>11</sup> The word '*hoteli*' is a corrupted version of the English word hotel. In Saadani, *hoteli* referred to small [and mostly informal] eating places.

Mamkubwa purchased the ingredients she required for the preparation of food on a daily basis. For making buns she needed white bread flour, yeast, sugar and cooking oil which cost TShs 3300/= from which she earned an average daily profit of TShs 1000/=. She also derived a profit of TShs 500/= from the sale of cooked beans. However, her income depended on the success rate of each fishing day. Sometimes she gave food out on credit to fishers who paid her later when they were able to catch prawns to sell. This was because often some fishers would be unsuccessful sometimes for five consecutive days. She had to do this because she understood that she had to keep hold of her customers for her business to survive, otherwise they might go to another *hoteli*.

Clearly the *hoteli* business required much hard work and commitment. Mamkubwa explained that running a *hoteli* was tough and time-consuming. But the advantage was that one could do most food preparation at home. Similar to fisherwoman ZM's experience, the women who ran *hoteli* had to combine their activities with their daily household responsibilities. Although profits from *hoteli* were low compared to what fishers earned from their prawn sales, Saadani women were proud of their *hoteli* businesses because they enabled women to engage in self-organised activities which assured them income throughout the fishing seasons. As one Saadani woman said, "we both live from prawns. When men are successful in fishing, our businesses become successful too. If they don't get much prawns, then we also lose". Women felt that, through running *hoteli*, they were able to benefit autonomously from fishing without participating directly in fishing.

Long distance sale of fried fish was another means for Saadani women to attain a sense of autonomy. The trade provides an example of how women were able to dominate a sector of fish retailing while men concentrated on another sector. Utilisation of the same resource thus acquired a gendered significance in the manner of preparing the fish.

## **6.6 Women's fish: Fried fish trading**

Many local women were involved in long distance sale of fried fish (*samaki wa kukaanga*), an activity that had mushroomed in the mid 1980s when fish and prawns were in abundance and every household was easily able to satisfy its own needs for

cash and *kitweleo*. However, it was mostly larger fish that could be sold either fresh or sun-dried to inland customers or in Bagamoyo township or Zanzibar. There was little demand for juvenile fish and smaller fish species although these were harvested in quantities so large that many would have to be thrown away. During those days of abundance in fish, men from the village used to travel inland to sell salted sun-dried fish (*ng'onda*). In the villages and settlements they went to, they saw women from other villages conducting successful businesses selling fried fish to travellers at stations along the Ruvu–Mnyusi railway line.<sup>12</sup> Once back in Saadani, these men encouraged their women to join the business.

Three related Saadani women were local pioneers in the venture.<sup>13</sup> All were single mothers with a number of children. One was a widow, the other two divorcees. They could thus travel without having to obtain a male partner's consent. Two had small children whom they used to leave in the care of their elder children, neighbours and relatives. The three formed a trading trio, travelling together to Ruvu station and Mombo in Tanga region. After first travelling by road to nearby Mvave station, they would board a train, usually packed with people and luggage, stopping off at various stations along the northern railway line.

The three recalled with amusement the hardships they had undergone, especially when travelling third class in a packed train, where "one could not move an inch from where one was seated, sometimes for up to four hours". But they endured these hardships, including the pain of leaving their children, and became successful fried fish traders. Their successes inspired other village women. Since then, long distance fried fish trade has become a major income generating activity for Saadani women.

Between 1997 and 1999, women traders travelled to wherever they heard of a good market, moving shop between locations until all their fish was sold. Before travelling, a

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<sup>12</sup> In the 1980s, *ng'onda* traders usually travelled long distances by rail sometimes to Tanga region, where they deposited their wares wholesale. Along the way they saw women at Mkalamo, Mwakinyumbi and Mombo stations selling fried fish.

<sup>13</sup> These women, Kinyamate, Ngozani and Mwanalipi are still very active today but age and family commitments has reduced their frequency in travelling to the hinterland.

woman spent about 3 days collecting and frying fish, until she had amassed between 150 to 200 pieces, and packed them in large plastic containers (usually 20 litre buckets), or coconut palm leaf baskets. The poor means of transportation meant that plastic containers were a better form of packaging, protecting the fish from dirt, even though coconut palm baskets were better for preservation. One piece of fried fish was sold for between TShs 100/= and 300/=. But sometimes, market demand was so low that traders returned with their fish and gave it away, or sold it at very low prices.

Selling fried fish also had other complications. It often required staying at the market place often for up to a week or more. And in each of these days, traders would spend almost the whole time seated with their wares in front of them. This was because fried fish were bought in small quantities. To pass the time, women took raffia palm cuttings (*ukili*) for making mats (*majamvi*) and plaited them throughout the day as they waited for customers. Some of these items were then also displayed for sale, while others were brought back to the village to be sold or used in the women's houses. In this way, women were able to seek and obtain an income from multiple sources, a finding which corroborates Berry's (1993) analysis of African farmers. Berry (1993) has contended that, faced with economic, political and environmental instabilities, African farmers "seek out patterns of production and social interaction which allow them additional flexibility in allocating their time among alternative undertakings" (1993: 184). What we see here is women engaged in fried fish trading extending their activities flexibly to spread their risks and increase their income by generating a range of alternative chances.

The organisation of the fried fish trade was almost the same as the petty businesses women conducted within their home surroundings, such as retailing foodstuffs at their door steps or in outlets such as *hoteli*. The only difference was the change in location, which, fried fish businesswomen claimed, was outweighed by the profits they obtained when the market was good and was not flooded with fried fish from several places.

Moreover, many women regarded trading in fried fish as better than fishing, as we can see from the example of Bi K, who, in 1997, was one of the most prominent fried fish

traders in the village. Previously, Bi K had fished with her female relatives, but had stopped doing so after she realised that fried fish trading was less onerous. She said:

Why should I be inconvenienced by getting wet from fishing and sunburnt from long hours under the glaring sun only to realise a small amount of money, when I can earn even more from selling fried fish, and with less trouble?

Although her claim that gill net fishing brought in little income was only applicable from the mid 1990s when fish catches fell, Bi K's views had considerable support among other women. More importantly, it demonstrated how women could benefit from fishing without being involved in the actual process of fishing.

Several men had also expressed interest in venturing into the long distance fried fish trade. But, they said, they were discouraged by the length of time involved in waiting until their wares were sold. They were thus more comfortable trading in salted sun-dried fish, which could be sold wholesale. Moreover, preparation of salted and sun-dried fish (*ng'onda*), was conducted primarily by men, and was seen as a masculinised activity, its skills handed down through generations to the present. According to local oral histories, camping fishers used to salt and dry a lot of fish near the beach before returning inland to their homes where they were used for domestic consumption, and also sold.

According to local informants, the processes of salting and drying fish for *ng'onda* shifted from the beach-side fishing camps to the surroundings of village residences, as Saadani grew, and it was no longer necessary for fishers who lived in the village to remain for long periods of time in the fishing camps. However, the preparation of *ng'onda* for sale continued to be done by men and boys only, boys working with and learning from their fathers.<sup>14</sup> The salt was bought from the village shops or local salt makers. During my fieldwork, I saw only larger-sized fish selected for drying because they fetched a better price. Small-sized fish were used as food for the household. The fish were then put out to dry on small platform built of poles, which, during the late

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<sup>14</sup> Many young boys were also able to prepare fish in a way that included allowing it to decompose a little in plastic containers, a technique which added a particular flavour that was preferred by some consumers.

1990s, many Saadani houses had in their front or backyards. Girls were not involved in preparation of *ng'onda* for sale because, as one person said, “the preparation of *ng'onda* is a man’s job and has been so for ages”. Women were generally also not involved in the sale of *ng'onda*. When the *ng'onda* were ready for sale, local men travelled to inland settlements to sell them wholesale. Usually such trips took around three days. However, some women, particularly those in households with no adult male member, sometimes dried fish obtained for household needs to preserve them for later use as relish for their own households. These were fish of smaller sizes and were laid out to dry on a mat or on top of the roof of their houses. They were never sold.

Women’s fried fish trading affected local gender divisions of labour and intimate relationships in at least three ways. Firstly, fishermen husbands or male partners who had long supplied fresh fish to their women, as an obligation of providing *kitweleo*, started taking all smaller fish to their wives or partners for preparation as fried fish, and no longer discarded smaller fish. Other products, such as prawns and shrimp, continued to be sold to fish net owners and prawn dealers, and bigger sized fish were salted and sun-dried for sale or were sold while still fresh.

Women without fisherman husbands also used to request fish for their trade from unmarried male fisher relatives. On some occasions they were given the fish without charge. But often single men preferred to sell their fish to women to whom they were not related, rather than give them free to their female relatives. This was because the men understood that their women relatives wanted them for the fried fish business and not for *kitweleo* (relish) purposes. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, even when commercial demand for fish had significantly increased, local fishers still adhered to local obligations to make gifts of fish for *kitweleo*, and the principle was now extended so that husbands and male partners continued to feel obliged to give small finfish to their wives and partners, even when used for fried fish sales. But women with no husband or partner or close male kin had to buy such fish, paying an average of TShs 20/= each.

The poor transport infrastructure serving Saadani affected women fried fish traders more than men who traded in salted and sun-dried fish, because fried fish spoiled more

rapidly than dried fish. Moreover, because women did not possess bicycles, women fried fish traders had to negotiate their transport to the market places with men.<sup>15</sup> Women whose husbands or partners did not have bicycles had to hire them for TShs 2000/= or 3000/= to Miono (see map 2.1), the nearest inland location where road transportation was available. Alternatively, the husband or partner borrowed a bicycle from a friend at a lesser cost (sometimes only the cost of tyres or tubes about TShs 1200/=) and took the woman himself. The costs of hiring a bicycle to Mvave railway station (see map 2.1) was TShs 500/=: if one decided to go that route. But in 1999 many refrained from doing so because rail transport had become very unreliable and women feared that the fish would be spoiled before they were able to sell it.

These constraints notwithstanding, the fried fish trade enabled many women to obtain an independent income and reduce their dependence on men. It also necessitated both men and women at least temporarily renouncing some of the traditional conceptions of women's space which in Saadani, was the kitchen or cooking place. This was because the trade compelled women to travel from home for long periods. In their absence, husbands took over daily household keeping responsibilities. They cooked, fetched water and took care of young children, as the following case study illustrates.

### **Case Study 6.3: Shifting domestic boundaries**

MG and his wife Bi K lived in Uvinje hamlet with two of their four children, as their older two stayed at Saadani with relatives while attending primary school. Bi K was one of the most active long-distance fried finfish sellers in Saadani. With or without a colleague, she travelled by bicycle or train to wherever her mission took her. She would travel to Miono and to stations along the Ruvu-Tanga railway line as well as to other settlements. She was usually away once in two months, and, during the peak fishing seasons, she used to travel whenever she had enough fried fish to make a trip worthwhile. When she was away, MG took over the responsibility of cooking food and taking care of their two younger children. This was in addition to his own daily fishing activities which involved spending at least four hours working on the sea.

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<sup>15</sup> During the period of my fieldwork (1997-1999), the main markets for fried fish from Saadani had shifted to places which were accessible by road because transport by rail had become unreliable, and also because of stiff competition at railroad stations. Because almost no vehicles traversed the roads to Saadani, the bicycle became a crucial means of transport for those involved in the fish trade

MG did not complain. He even encouraged his wife to continue her business. He supplied her with fresh fish from his own fishing activity. But he was unable to give his wife the money to buy ingredients such as cooking oil, because he did not generate enough money for its purchase. Bi K therefore obtained cooking oil on credit from one of the village shops, and repaid the loan immediately on her return from a fried fish selling trip.

MG's income from prawn fishing was used to maintain the household's daily food and kerosene requirements, and to provide school uniforms for the children. But, as he could not always meet these responsibilities, MG agreed to Bi K's frequent trips away to trade, while he cooked and fetched water and fuel wood. MG used to take Bi K by bicycle to Mvave railway station or to Miono whenever she left on a business trip. After she had sold her fish, Bi K would sometimes send a message for MG to collect her. Through her business, Bi K was able to purchase valuable items for the house, including a bed and mattress, a set of living room chairs, and a number of other domestic items which MG would never have been able to afford.

Summarising his situation, MG said, "married life these days is like a mouse chewing a person's toe. *"Unauma na kupuliza"* (lit: you bite and soothe at the same time). You make your wife work for you, sometimes at home and sometimes for income generation, while you attend to her various needs and responsibilities at home. So does a woman. She leaves you with household responsibilities but what she brings back is reasonable."

Many married women had to seek their husbands' agreement to participate in the long distance fried fish trade, but not all men gave their wives that opportunity. For example, MT, the wife of a local fish net owner, told me that her husband did not allow her to travel with her cousins who were long distance traders in fried finfish. But he allowed her to run a *hoteli* during major fishing seasons as long as it was located on her domestic verandah.

It was possible for a woman to earn a gross income of TShs 50,000/= per fried fish trip, of ten days to fourteen days. Women were able to make such trips once a month, particularly during major fishing seasons, and once every two months for the rest of the year. The net profits varied from one trip to another, depending on the personal maintenance costs involved in each trip. On average, women who were fried finfish traders were able to earn a net income of TShs 10,000/= and 20,000/= per trip.

Although income from fried fish trade became the most dependable of the various sources of income in many households, women understood clearly that their income was smaller than what men obtained from selling prawns. But a monetary comparison between men's and women's incomes and means of livelihood was not the only criterion to influence what a woman chose to do. Moreover, both women and men understood that men's prawn earnings were very erratic. In cash terms, men's earnings in the period 1997 to 1999 fluctuated weekly from TShs 500/= to TShs 5000/= in the major fishing seasons but for many days for the rest of the year, they got nothing other than finfish for *kitweleo*. Incomes from *ng'onda* ranged between TShs 15000/= to TShs 20000/= a trip, but they were becoming increasingly rare because fishers could not catch large enough fish for preparation as *ng'onda*.

The overall benefit of the fried fish trade to women was that it met women's demand for convenience and the ability to organise an independent productive enterprise, albeit within certain genderised parameters. Autonomy was thus often of paramount importance. Its achievement through productive enterprises was also understood to be realisable through certain forms of property holding, which I discuss below. Indeed, the distribution of property ownership, which clearly expressed gender divisions, influenced the ability of individuals to utilise coastal resources in Saadani, and in that way to maintain a sense of their own productive and subsistence autonomy.

## **6.7 Transcending gender work boundaries**

In Chapters Three and Five, I discussed how ownership of and access to fishing nets and sea craft was regarded as the most secure form of local property ownership for men, since it ensured them the ability to utilise natural resources. I also discussed how women were usually excluded from inheriting or purchasing fishing instruments because of the genderised values attached to property. And I mentioned that very few women wished to own such property. Moreover, most local women avoided direct participation in the fishing and fish marketing, because they often needed to have a man acting as their proxy. Yet, despite these constraints, some women did break the gender boundaries, less for the material value attached to property ownership, which

was the way men viewed it, but rather for the social value of being able to be part of the coastal production enterprise and thereby to use local natural resources for their subsistence.

The following case study illustrates how one woman, through personal initiatives, pursued an individually-designed strategy to participate in fishing through purchasing a fish net for erecting a fishing fence. Her experience illustrated the possibility of transcending gender-based boundaries of types of work, despite the differentiation of work types normally associated with men or women.

#### **Case Study 6.4: Transcending gender work boundaries**

MM was a middle-aged divorcee cohabiting with Mzee N, a Saadani man employed by the SGR as a Game assistant. MM was an independently minded and aggressive woman, qualities that had earned her a reputation of arrogance. She was previously employed for six years by the Forestry Division, at Kibaha township, the Coast region's headquarters. In 1995, she was retrenched and returned to Saadani, her father's home village. Soon thereafter she started living with Mzee N.

MM initially found part-time work with the SGR. From her savings and the redundancy package she had received, she managed to construct a very good house, by Saadani standards. Her daughter from a previous marriage came from Mkange to live in the house with her child. In late 1998, Mzee N proposed marriage to MM, but MM declined, arguing that she was not yet ready. Some village gossips claimed that one reason MM declined Mzee N's offer to pay bridewealth for her was that she wanted to maintain independent control over her own property and to manage her life without a man's interference. After all, Mzee N was already married to another woman with whom he had eight children, and MM was not ready to become a junior wife.

In his free time, Mzee N managed a fishing fence in the area local people called *bichi*. Sometime in 1998, Mzee N taught MM how to check and harvest fish and also how to mend and erect the net. Thereafter, they had gone down to the sea together when the water ebbed, checking and cleaning the net together. In February 1999, MM requested me to purchase a fishing net for her when I went to Dar es Salaam. She gave me TShs 20,000/= . She said, "I have thought of what to do and realised that I could put up a fish fence of my own. After all, it is not much hard work". She also told me that she had consulted Mzee N and he had approved. She added that she had done so because she did not want to tarnish her relationship with Mzee N by showing too much independence through purchasing a fishing net. She said, "it is important that you understand your man and know if he is likely to let you own something of your own,

because some men feel threatened if they see you owning valuable property such as fishing nets or a house. Otherwise he may think that, since you have valuable property, then you are a woman who cannot be controlled. Therefore, “you use your head” (*unatumia akili yako kichwani*).

I bought a 10 metres by 1.5 metres net for MM from The Tanzania Fishnet Company in Dar es Salaam for TShs 14,000/= . I obtained a receipt for it including MM’s full name and address, assuming that somebody might come to claim the net later. This was because of my own understanding that people in Saadani regarded men only to be the rightful owners of fishing nets. However, on giving her the receipt, MM assured me that nobody would take ‘her net’ from her. Neither would she give it to anyone. She said was going to use and handle it by herself.

By using the phrase *unatumia akili yako kichwani* (lit: you use your head), MM implied that a woman had to balance her individual desires against her gender-ascribed status in society. In her case, the need for an independent and reliable source of income did not mean that she wanted to sacrifice her commitment to her relationship with Mzee N. However, the way in which she raised with him the issue of her owning and handling a fishing fence was in itself an act of political discourse. Such revolutionary approaches to ownership of property used for fishing were not very common among Saadani women. Yet MM proved the exception to the rule and became the first woman in Saadani to realise an intention of erecting a woman-owned fishing fence. Her courage may have developed from her previous experience of working closely with men when she was employed in Kibaha. But moreover, she wanted control of certain property, understanding that her emancipation could only be successful through such independent control. However, like ZM (case study 6.1) she also understood that she was still a Saadani woman. While she may have been driven by material needs, her perception of autonomy did not mean that she had to sever relationships with people she realised were important. Many women in Saadani also worked to control certain forms of property, such as a house, but within parameters that did not openly challenge their men. These processes of relational change within contexts of ideational continuity were evident in several other situations as my discussion below illustrates.

## **6.8 Continuity and Change in Understanding Gendered Use of Natural Resources**

Saadani women's experiences illustrate how changing social and economic circumstances have influenced negotiations and contestations on the gendered use of space and natural resources. Within these changing conditions women described and understood themselves to be socially better off than men, even though they realised that men's dominance of prawn fishing gave them a higher cash income overall. However this cash income was seasonal, so that during a large part of the year, men who had no alternative income generating activity, such as salt making, became almost completely dependent on their wives for sustenance. Women's income generating activities brought in small but quite regular amounts of income, which was very significant in terms of meeting daily household requirements.

In part this was why most Saadani women, were not keen to do the types of work men did. Yet they understood that, even without being directly involved, they shared their men's experiences of fishing. In daily conversations amongst themselves, women expressed diverse feelings according to daily or periodic incidents related to fishing or to the marketing of prawns. Women would praise and spread word about a fisher who had taken a significant catch, or commented with much humour, the exploits of a fisher who squandered his money on hard liquor after a successful catch.

The disappointments the fish net owners and prawn dealers endured in the prawn trade were also felt by women, as they related stories to each other of how Mr A's load of prawns went bad because Mr B had cast off without loading Mr A's prawns, or because Mr A had run out of ice blocks to preserve his purchases. Others would say, "Mr. A was greedy and kept on buying prawns without thinking of the unreliability of transportation." Fishing was thus central to the social and economic life of both women and men in both private and public spaces. But its importance was genderised.

It was particularly fishing itself that genderised work boundaries persisted, excluding most women from fishing. However, some women did break the boundaries thereby being more flexible than men while men had to endure public ridicule if they took on

particular types of what was locally defined as women's work. The sale of fuel wood by men is one example.

The collection of fuel wood for household usage was a task usually performed by women and young children of both sexes. Normally a woman collected fuel wood once a week except during major fishing seasons, when they collected fuel wood twice a week to use it later for cooking food for a *hoteli* or for frying finfish for long distance trade. During the month preceding Ramadhan, fuel wood was collected daily for about three weeks, until enough had been stocked up to last for the Islamic holy month of fasting. Normally a group of neighbouring women went together to the coastal forest, to collect fuel wood. Women whose households were adjacent to the mangrove area collected small quantities of dead wood there during low tide. But they too had also to go to the coastal forest area to collect more substantial amounts of fuel wood. The SGR's prohibition on tree cutting meant that, since men's needs for timber for house construction or furniture purposes could not be met from the forest, the coastal lowland forest had become almost exclusively women's space.

Married women were discouraged from selling fuel wood since it was understood that they were only supposed to collect fuel wood for their own households' needs. Women understood that selling fuel wood implied shifting their household responsibilities to the public arena. The very few married women who did resort to selling fuel wood were those with limited sources of cash income. And a few single women also sold fuel wood from their homes, to any customer who might require it, including single men. Other single women supplied fuel wood to one of the health staff and the local shop-owning households to own a daily wage.

Occasionally, some men gathered driftwood sticks and logs on the beach en route home from fishing trips. Very few, however, joined their wives fetching fuel wood from the coastal forest. Those who did said they did so out of necessity, because of the danger of wild animals, particularly buffalo which, during the period 1998 to March 1999, became a frequent menace. Other men claimed that they escorted their wives out of love, an expression interpreted by one young woman as jealousy and fear that women were using that time in the forest to meet their lovers.

I found, however that most men who accompanied their wives to the forest to collect fuel wood were elderly and middle-aged. At this age only a few could still engage in other income generating activities, apart from fishing, and they were therefore freer to accompany their wives than were younger men.

A change, occurred in the early 1990s when a few men began to collect and sell fuel wood, particularly during major fishing seasons. Some men collaborated with their wives in fuel wood sales. Others worked independently, just as single women fuel wood traders did. Men who collected and sold fuel wood were mostly newcomers who had not yet become accustomed to fishing, or old people who could no longer fish for prawns. But men who sold fuel wood were often a source of mirth, especially among some women. One woman commented:

A man collects fuel wood only if he is unable to fish or has been unsuccessful in fishing. And, because he has to eat, he resorts to selling fuel wood. This only happens because "*mwenye njaa ni kama kichaa*" (lit: one who is hungry is like a crazy person).

When used in Saadani, the idiom implied that a desperate person (in whatever situation) is likely to break all accepted norms and behave crazily. In this instance, a man's inability to succeed in the 'men's activities', of fishing, was a cause of desperation that might compel him to take on work previously required only of women or slaves. From their experiences and oral histories, local people understood that the only men who had fetched fuel wood or water for a living were slaves or servile labourers in more affluent households (see Chapter Three). After the decline in slavery, local men had therefore conscientiously refrained from collecting fuel wood or water, since they did not want to be stigmatised by association with slave labour or servility. Consequently, aged single men suffered much ridicule if they resorted to selling fuel wood and water because it was regarded as demeaning for a man to reach old age without a wife who could collect fuel wood for him. Recent widowers were regarded with some sympathy if they resorted to selling fuel wood or water. But they were expected soon to seek out a new wife to do so for them.

## 6.9 Conclusion

This chapter, has offered some commentary on the gendered nature of power and autonomy in Saadani by considering individual and social experiences in the use and understanding of coastal space and natural resources. The processes and practices I have explored illustrate that changing circumstances have variously affected the ways Saadani people have come to understand themselves as women and men. These practices not only created a basis for mediation between Saadani women's and men's spaces and social divisions, but also between the way in which individuals valued, utilised and laid claims to coastal resources. Yet, while some agency was apparent, there was also an apparent persistence in certain conventional forms of gendered work-categorisation which both women and men strove to maintain.

Outside interventions, such as the Ujamaa villagisation programme and the commoditization of prawns, brought with them both constraints and new opportunities, to women in particular. Ujamaa had envisaged that women's empowerment could be achieved if they participated equally with men in major productive activities, and compelled them to fish 'as men do'. However, most women resisted operating under a principle that did not consider their particular cultural situation. Women's resistance reflects an underlying weakness in Ujamaa-type policies which, based on a limited social analysis, fail to recognise the meanings of local divisions of labour and their implications for women's responsibilities. Most Saadani women resisted being expected to engage in what they saw as man's activities, and thereby having to adopt masculine activities. Yet women willingly participated in and integrated themselves socially into what prawn fishing had brought to the village, but without themselves doing the physical work of prawn fishing. Women's understanding was that their relationship with natural resources could not be the same as men's. Yet it did not mean that gendered categorisation of activities and spaces limited their sense of self worth. Even though the sea, was seen as symbolically associated with men and with male identities, women too saw it as a source of livelihood for themselves. From the sea they got their food, cash income and self-esteem, albeit through secondary relations with most sea products.

Women understood that fishing for prawns enabled men to earn significant incomes, particularly during major fishing seasons. Yet women in Saadani did not want to compete with men in the prawn-fishing arena. Their attitude justifies arguments advanced by theorists such as Amadiume (1987) who criticised discourses on power which demanded that, for women to have power, they should take on the roles and activities conventionally associated with the power held by men. Amadiume argues that, by doing so, women become trapped by the symbols of power which rest with men, rather than using other kinds of power. Saadani women sought separate but equal kinds of power and practised separate but equal means of exercising power. They were thereby able to avoid encapsulation in the dominant means of exercising power. Women understood that their income-generating activities, such as operating *hoteli* or trading in fried fish, could not compare directly with prawn fishing since the amount of money they realised was significantly less than what prawn fishing brought during major fishing seasons. Yet, they did not seek to be measured in terms only of the amounts of money earned but rather by what their activities could give them. To Saadani women, the primary value of earning money from an individual activity was that the woman was independent and able exercise her autonomy in controlling the benefits. The fact that women made such claims to autonomy also meant that they rejected the idea of power as defined materially in the ways men defined it.

Women's resistance to be drawn into arenas of power they associated with men, and their struggle to retain gender autonomy, reflects how Saadani people have in fact responded to most NRM approaches through time. The Ujamaa programme, the SGR and the prawn trawlers symbolised extraneous forms of power in which local people did not want to participate. This power, according to local people, was based only on material capacities, technology and wealth, and operated as forms of domination or 'power over'. What Saadani people valued was the power to remain autonomous: to retain the ability to stay independent of externally imposed structures. It was not a 'power over' so much as a 'power to'. The examples used in this chapter show how women in particular, strove to achieve the power to maintain themselves in ways that minimised their dependence on broader political economic structures and processes, and through means that they regarded as properly and uniquely their own.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

*“There are other powers in the world beside fear and greed and every form of life has its dignity and beauty ...”<sup>1</sup>*

### 7.1 Introduction

This study has focussed on the relationships that have developed between people and natural resources in a village on the coast of mainland Tanzania, and between individuals in the process of resource utilisation over time. It was founded on an assumption that it is through understanding and accounting for such relationships that Natural Resource Management (NRM) strategies can become sustainable. My primary objective has been to seek analytical explanations about the ways in which local people lay claim to natural resources as an attempt to develop people-sensitive NRM approaches in the contemporary contexts of social, economic and political changes.

The study was informed by contemporary concerns over conflicts in the understanding and exhibition of power, particularly over natural resource management. These conflicts occur between various resource users, between individuals themselves and between the state and individuals. Understanding these conflicts has been central to theories of ecological relationships because their persistence has continued to hinder implementation of people-sensitive NRM processes throughout the world. Their persistence has also tarnished claims of existing NRM policies that they uphold local people's rights to control and maintain access to natural resources.

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<sup>1</sup> I use this sentence from the comments of Nancy Spain, of the Daily Express on Ernest Hemingway's book, 'The Old Man and the Sea' to highlight the thrust of my thesis that, while we duly recognise the other powers of governments and government-backed institutions in NRM approaches, it is still necessary to recognise the ways in which local people understand and define what power is to them. And how, through maintaining their relationships with natural resources, local people's power is sustained.

My study about the people of Saadani elaborates upon these kinds of conflicts. It illustrates a continuing contradiction between local ways of understanding natural resources and natural resource management, and the philosophical assumptions guiding government-driven NRM approaches. The way this general contradiction has been reflected has been influenced by shifts in both the internal and external logic within the Saadani environment, shifts which have generated several changes in the nature of the relationship between people and natural resources over time.

Local people related these shifts to processes generated by development interventions that had particular implications for their social and natural environment. These development interventions included Ujamaa communal production principles, the commercialisation of prawns for a world market, the introduction of gill nets, the entry of prawn trawlers and the establishment of the SGR. All had, in different ways, interfered with how individuals related to natural resources. For example, local people claimed that the commercialisation of prawns and the introduction of gill net fishing, had diminished their ability to control fishing for, and the marketing of prawns since these processes came to be controlled by outsiders.

The study also illustrates that there are several dimensions to this contradiction. Firstly, local people expressed dissent about the current NRM processes within their environment. This dissent manifested itself in two ways. One was disagreement with NRM practices that involved social engineering through ideologies of development, such as those instituted by Ujamaa, (particularly in the period when local people realised that they had been taken advantage of). Local people also showed dissent to forms of control and legislation introduced by fisheries and wildlife management procedures that ran against people's previous understandings and relationships to resources. The second was a dislike for superior technologies operating in prawn fishing, technologies which were based on claims to different kinds of authority to exploit resources from that held by local people. Technologies used by trawlers were also disliked for the damage they caused to the environment, particularly since local people's technologies were more environmentally friendly.

A second dimension to the continuing contradiction between local and imported natural resource management principles was reflected in the fact that there was no single local perception of the meanings of resources, so that the contradiction was therefore not a simple one. Diverse local meanings arise from local people's diverse social contexts that produce significant social differentiation. Local people are differentiated along age, economic status and gender lines. Such differences influence people's understanding of and interaction with natural resources, and also manifest in their different claims to power and autonomy. For example, the fact that most older men had realised that they could not handle gill net fishing, because it demanded considerable physical strength, made them place more emphasis on ritual processes or religious ceremonies which they have always controlled. By maintaining control in these areas, older men could counteract the challenges of 'modernisation' which were moving them outside the major production process. Younger people who could fish using gill nets, held the opposing view that production ventures were primarily physical processes and did not need invocations of the supernatural. The understanding of power with regard to resource use based on gender categorisations was also derived from principles of social-cultural difference.

Local people understood that it was through their ability to exhibit locally meaningful kinds of power in autonomous ways, that they realised their power over resource use. This is because autonomy as power is about the meanings people give to their lives. And it is through the realisation of these meanings that power held by local people is also realised.

## **7.2 Autonomy as Power**

The Saadani case study has implications for further theorising about power, particularly power as understood by local people. As the study demonstrates, local people exhibited practices and demands that indicated particular interpretations and practices of power – that were different from conventional understandings of power. Saadani people had their own explanations for this differentiation in powers. They described one power as a dominating power which, using their own words, was

described as “*uwezo*” (lit. ability, might, strength or capacity).<sup>2</sup> This kind of power was associated with the government. As one person explained “*serikali ina uwezo*” (lit. the government has strength, capacity) which implied that the government has the capabilities to do what it wants. The influx of industrial prawn trawlers from the early 1990s, and the earlier establishment of the SGR, were exhibitions of this power as *uwezo*. Further, each process generated contestations on the use of space and resources and threatened what local people had always understood as their rights to the control of space. And as the resources became scarcer, the multiple kinds of resource uses introduced by these processes fuelled the potential for conflict.

Local people also recognised that the state was powerful because it had access to powerful technologies and was able to exercise superior ways of resource management, such as through the introduction of prawn trawlers and the establishment of a Mangrove Management Project and the Coastal Salt Works Company. In addition, local people understood that the state could exercise its power by determining the direction NRM approaches should take, to suit its own objectives. Local people realised that the power that the state held was everywhere; as one person said, “the government is everywhere. It is in salt making where we are forced to comply with strict production regulations and where we co-exist with big companies such as the Coastal Salt Works Company, it is at the Saadani Game Reserve, and now it is with the trawlers.”

People also recognised that the government usually manoeuvred to maintain its grip on local natural resource management processes, for example, through processes of licensing and resource use regulations. Village-based natural resource management structures such as village governments and committees for environmental protection, were also seen as ways the government extended the reach of its power, particularly when village government leaders assisted government officials to enforce the state’s resource management regulations.

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<sup>2</sup> *Uwezo* (noun) comes from the verb *kuweza* which means to be able, be strong, be capable, have strength.

Local people also realised that they could not compete with that kind of power on an equal footing, nor could they resist or overcome further incursions by the state in their environment. Yet they also did not want to be completely subsumed under the state's systems of handling power. Neither were they interested in becoming part of that power structure. They said that they did not need that kind of power. They only needed to ensure that their ways of life were secure and that they thereby maintained a sense of autonomy: a power beyond the reach of state power. On occasions that they did welcome state power when it came, they did so only in so far as it benefited them.

People in Saadani also described another kind of power, in terms which I understand as an autonomy, or an ability to exercise autonomy without being trapped by the embracing and dominating power of the state. People's search for autonomy was reflected in their efforts to maintain their day-to-day ways of using resources and to prevent themselves becoming reduced to be wholly dependent on the state for their livelihoods.

Local people demanded autonomy in several arenas. One was to maintain their rights of ownership and occupancy over resource bases. A second was to ensure their rights to maintain social relationships as they knew them to be able pursue their chosen livelihood activities. People drew from their history of occupancy and their long time use of sea space and adjacent land space to underpin their claims to ownership. Mzee M's claim that "this is our sea, our fishing grounds" (*hii ni bahari yetu, uwanja wetu*), is just one expression of these claims. The phrase became particularly meaningful when people narrated their history and the way in which, through the years, they have depended on the Saadani Bay area to provide multiple livelihoods and relationships; including how their sense of power had derived from their long occupation of the area. Conflict with the trawlers, whom local people regarded as not adhering to acceptable resource exploitation principles, illustrates their antagonisms to outsider interference with their sense of rights of occupancy.

Struggling to maintain their rights of occupancy also helped reinforce relations between local people and other people with similar needs and social values. The data presented in Chapter Five demonstrate how local people recognised that certain

resources, such as the sea, were open for communal or collective use, an understanding which brought local people into contact with many other users of the sea. However, the idea that certain natural resources such as the sea space [i.e. Saadani Bay] could be for communal access shifted between a notion that incorporated individual livelihood seekers from other settlements to a notion of exclusive local-communal ownership. This shift depended on a range of circumstances or conditions. For example, when catches dropped towards the end of major fishing seasons, local Saadani people claimed exclusive rights, sometimes by using idiomatic phrases that emphasised the prior rights of local people to a meal. Moreover, traders or immigrants who wanted to settle at Saadani, as had been the case with Mzee Rajabu, and to have access to the surrounding environment for a living, had to be 'sanctioned' by local elders. Access to resources was available once they had met the criteria for entry into the Saadani social environment.

The above issues had further implications for the question of local power and autonomy, particularly with regard to the debates over whether natural resource management can be an exclusive local affair. This is because the current contexts of internal and externally induced changes have questioned the place that locally based management systems occupy. The ambiguity of NRM in delineating people's rights of access to resources, such as has been the case with Saadani, has aggravated the issue (Little & Brokensha, 1987). In the case of Saadani, the practice of sharing resources is a local management principle that has always been related to the notion of local ownership of resources. As mentioned above, Saadani people's understanding of autonomy embraced the principles of egalitarianism and of private rights to resources. This is because people understood that their lives were dependent on social interactions and relationships. The principle of egalitarianism allowed local people and outsiders to share resources when these were available, such as during major fishing seasons, and to recognise local people's exclusive rights when resources were more constrained and limited. However, according to local people, NRM approaches have abused this understanding. For example, NRM approaches have represented the Ujamaa programme, the entry of industrial prawn trawlers and the establishment of the SGR as if they aimed to share local resources with local people. But, instead of sharing, the NRM strategies co-opted resources for themselves, and thwarted the

expectations and trust of local people. Village based structures, such as the village government or local natural resources management committees which had been designed to regulate natural resource management at the local level, failed to enforce the sharing principle because they too were biased and constrained by external pressures.

Local people also understood that they derived their own sense of power only if they were able to maintain their livelihood patterns and gain satisfaction from the small details of their daily lives. Since local people still depended on direct extraction of natural resources for their livelihoods, they wanted to maintain the kinds of access to resources that they have had, and the right to understand those resources in the ways that they have done.

The sea and the land embodied both material and symbolic values on which people's meanings and ideas about life were based. The ways in which people needed to go to the sea to fish, or women needed finfish for their long-distance trade, are such examples. Their ability to maintain such kind of activities also reinforced local social relationships. We have seen how the provision of *kitweleo* (relish), for example, reinforced relationships in the village. The people also sought spiritual fulfilment through their livelihood activities. For example, it was widely accepted that there was a need to appease the spirits and ancestors in order to be successful in their ventures, although this belief was predominantly adhered to by older people.

Other kinds of claims to autonomy were expressed by the way local people resisted being completely subsumed under a system that would drive them into what they regarded as a form of slavery, where they were employed by others (their expression of proletarianisation). While people realised that the Saadani environment could not provide enough opportunities for wage labour, at the same time they could not ignore its benefits. As I indicated in Chapter Three, some local people found employment with the SGR and the Coastal Salt Works. Yet, people claimed that incomes from such kinds of employment were very low and the work regulations they entailed were not as flexible as they would have liked. Moreover, memories of slavery, and their experiences with SGR demarcations, and later the trawlers, had limited their sense of

freedom and given people a sense of being trapped within their own environment. They felt as if they were being marginalised and that their ability to earn a living through their direct utilisation of local natural resources was gradually being undercut even while there were not enough opportunities to enable them to earn enough to buy what they needed.

In order to maintain their sense of ownership of local natural resource management processes, Saadani people therefore designed various ways to uphold their rights to those resources. Outwitting the state was one. It included ways in which people manipulated, circumvented or sought to collaborate with the state to ensure their participation in natural resource management. Local people sought collaboration with the state in so far as they were able to maintain their own ways of life. This was because they also understood that, irrespective of the influences generated by external pressures, their livelihoods were still very dependent on interactions amongst themselves as well as on their relationships with the state and its institutions. Local people were thus quick to take advantage of new economic opportunities as provided by the state, such as those provided by the prawn marketing business.

However, they still wished to maintain relative autonomy through controlling the manner in which these relationships were arranged. Hence, many local people boycotted state-imposed mechanisms of control, or undermined state power by acting as passive participants in NRM programmes.

Indirect or direct resistance to the dominating or hegemonic processes of the state was another common strategy used to retain a sense of autonomy. Local people demonstrated this resistance by insisting on their rights to engage in their established livelihood activities. Resistance was also expressed through discourses of protest when people openly expressed their anger, for example when they observed prawn trawlers working the sea in a manner they regarded as abusive of the marine environment.

### 7.3 Power relationships based on gender

My study has also examined the influences of what Ilcan (1996) terms master narratives (including ideas propagated by taboos, entitlements, and local ideas on morality) that locate women and men in different positions, and are responsible for reproducing gender-based relationships of power. Often, government institutions, put in place to safeguard or address local people's situations, fail to capture the diverse needs in a population, and fail to account for the different ways in which people's diverse local understandings impose upon, weave into and shape local resource utilisation.

As have previous studies on Tanzanian coastal communities (Caplan, 1989; Swantz, 1985), I too have found that gender is a significant social construct which influences the way in which men and women relate to natural resources in Saadani. Yet, I have also found that gender definitions are not static. While changing social and economic circumstances may sometimes perpetuate particular gender asymmetries, these processes may also initiate gender re-interpretations, even to the point of leading to a visibility of women in areas where traditionally they were not present. As my data have illustrated, the changing nature of gender interpretations does not imply that women always seek to acquire the same power as men. Saadani women sought to derive a kind of power which is different from the standard form of male power linked to fishing and control of coastal space. To many women, autonomy in achieving self-sustaining subsistence made them feel powerful. In the context of such changes, Saadani women (and sometimes men) re-interpreted gender and re-organised the use of space and labour. They also gave new meanings to resources, and to their lives.

My study also demonstrates that the gendered environment is continuously being reconstructed through agency and practice. Thus as we have seen women's access to fishing could be negotiated, as ZM succeeded in doing, thereby illustrating that women in Saadani could and did actively construct their own identities within the material and discursive constraints of their lives. This was despite women's continuing dependence on male kin who had better access to fishing equipment and had stronger leverage with traders in market transactions. These findings have clear implications for policies that

attempt to address gender inequality in natural resource utilisation simply by directing women into men's production activities.

My focus on Saadani women thus demonstrates the importance of addressing the ways in which gender and forms of power converge and are articulated in local meanings regarding the use of coastal space and resources. The way in which women show individual and innovative decisions with regard to use of natural resources illustrates that they often challenge narratives that tend to disempower them (Cole, 1991).

#### **7.4 Conclusions: Policy Implications**

The Saadani case study has several implications for NRM policy and, particularly for coastal zone management approaches in Tanzania. The existing approaches are based on the assumption that obvious benefits from resource management will follow from rules and regulations imposed upon each resource user. Yet, as I have shown, these approaches have often given rise to conflicts between state-backed resource users or managers, and local people. State-backed resource management has imposed regulations such as licensing, demarcations of areas of use, and the introduction of multiple processes of exploitation. In Saadani, these steps were taken without an adequate understanding of how local people regarded resource management processes. As my study illustrates, many local people still attached meanings to locally based resource management practices, particularly as regards principles of ownership. Maintaining their claims to ownership of resources gave them the power of access to, control over, and use of resources that were otherwise undermined by various state-backed processes. Recognising how local people understand ownership of resources is thus important.

However, recognising how local people understand ownership of resources should take into consideration the influences of changing social and economic circumstances, and the way people themselves incorporate new values into their systems of ownership. The Saadani case study illustrates that shifting social, economic and political contexts demand new local interpretations of social reality and of the meanings individuals

attach to their ways of life. Such developments thus demand different ways and ideas of looking at the ways local people use and perceive the environment, since “meaning is indeterminate and must be contextualized within the subject’s own history of lived experience” (Denzin 1989: 13).

Since my study illustrates that power in NRM processes manifests itself at various levels, it is necessary for concerns about coastal zone management to incorporate not only an understanding of local situations, but also to provide a basis from which local forms of power are nurtured. The task, which my study aims to address, has been to propose a new way of conceptualising local forms of power and claims of and access to, resources in the context of people who understand themselves in very different ways from conventional theorising on power.

Coastal zone management also needs to develop policy-making processes that can accommodate not only a local versus external contradiction, but also a diversity of local arrangements with regard to resource use and which have an impact on NRM policy and its consequent practices. That is, policy has to be engineered to be able to identify and accommodate people’s diverse life experiences (whether according to age or sex), including their historical, cultural and other social concerns. It is through these concerns that people give meaning to natural resources, and it is through realisation of such meanings that individuals relate to NRM processes in general. The essence of this realisation lies in the individuals’ abilities to maintain their relationship to resources, which is what I refer to as ‘the power of meaning’.

Appendix (i)

Cartoon in the Cape Argus of December 10, 1999 illustrating the conflicts within the fisheries of South Africa. I use it here to represent a dimension of the power struggles in natural resource management in many places in the world.



Appendix (ii) - Saadani Village Basic Information (1998)

Name of hamlet	Number of household / hamlet	No. of people (adults)			No. of children			Women headed hh	Tribal affiliation	Established businesses		Fishing camp owners		Fish net owners ( <i>matajiri wa nyavu</i> )	Prawn dealers ( <i>matajiri wanunuzi</i> )	Salt makers ( <i>wapika chumvi</i> )
		M	F	Tot	m	f	t			shop	hoteli	locals	visitors			
Bomani	12	22	23	45	15	16	31	3	Zigua, Yao, Pare, Ngoni	2	1	-	-	3	1	
Pwani	12	19	21	40	21	16	37	6	Zigua, Doe, Nyamwezi, Arabu	2	-	-	-	1		
Mbuyuni	28	48	39	87	39	29	68	5	Zigua, Doe, Makonde, Yao	1	-	-	-	3	-	1
Januari	19	23	26	49	36	20	56	6	Zigua, Doe, Nyamwezi, Sambaa, Masai	-	-	4	2	-	-	1
Jangwani	8	13	14	27	11	15	26	4	Zigua, Doe, Nyamwezi, Zaramo, Ngoni	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Kati	11	18	17	35	12	10	22	2	Zigua, Doe, Luguru, Arabu, Makonde	-	4	-	-	1	-	
CCM	14	20	26	46	21	16	37	3	Zigua, Doe, Ha, Nyamwezi, Pemba	1	-	2	-	-	-	4
Mkwajuni	15	27	28	55	19	20	39	6	Zigua, Yao, Nyamwezi, Ngoni	-	1	3	-	-	-	
Total Saadani		343	314	384	174	142	316							-		
Uvinje	14	10	14		14	19	33	4	Zigua,							

Source: Saadani village Baseline survey – 1998.

Appendix (iii)

Summary of Fishery Statistics for the Marine waters of Three regions of Tanzania Mainland - 1994-1996

	YEAR								
	1994			1995			1996		
	Tanga	Pwani	Dsm	Tanga	Pwani	Dsm	Tanga	Pwani	Dsm
Total Number of Fishers	4485	4551	3276	4202	2060	3845	4202	2060	3845
Total Number of Vessels	698	996	577	896	786	553	896	786	553
Total Weight of Fish in Metric Tons	5373.5	9147.9	16615.9	5871.34	13564.12	26188.86	6599.18	13564.12	30403.41
Total Value of Fish in 000's TShs	1727088.11	1751181.35	6163172.46	3349060.34	2826805.79	14859765.89	4394971.73	6898649.83	23132096.96

Source: Statistics Section, Fisheries Division, MNRT, Dar es Salaam, 2000.

## Appendix (iv)

### Summary of major activities and income ranges in Saadani – 1998

Activity	Ingredients and Costs of production in TShs	Period of production	Profit per unit sales in TShs	Person involved
Daily paid labourer ( <i>kibarua</i> ) -Packing salt (Coastal Salt Works)  -fetching water	-10 x 10m area (gather & pack salt in 50 kg bags)  -1 pail (from Mvave River / well)	-3-5 days  -½ hour	-1 bag @ 100/= x 50 bags =5000/=  70/= per pail	-M&W  -W (1M)
Salt making	-18-20 pails (20 litre) of brine -fuel wood*** -iodine*	9-10 hours	4-5 pails of salt (75kgs) @ day -800-1000/= (local market) @ pail =4-5000/=	M
Fishers	-borrowed or self owned gill net	4 hrs a day	-prawns = 4000/ @ kg* -shrimp = 1200/= a kg*	M (5W)
Trading in fried fish	-fresh fish (@ 10-20/= a piece) =100-200 pieces** -12 bottles cooking oil @ 800/= a bottle -9600/= -fuel wood*** -fare and subsistence to market - 10,000/=	1 week to 10 days	-sells for 100-400/= @ piece =30,000 to 45,000/= @ trip	W
Selling fuel wood	-120/= @ bundle -5-600/= a big bundle	3-4 hours fetch from SGR	-fishing seasons can sell 5 bundles every day = 600/=	W & M
Selling home brewed liqour ( <i>gongo</i> )	-sugar 5 kg @ 500/= = 2,500/= -water -fuel wood***	1 day	½ 330ml bottle @ 400/= (fishing season -10-12 bottles two days)	W
Selling snacks -Maandazi  -Chapati	-baking flour kg 4 @500 - (2000/=); amira 20/= sugar ½ kg 250/= cooking oil - 800/=) costs - 3070/= -baking flour 3kg = 1500/= cooking oil - 800/= (20 x 3 = 60 chapati)	2 hours  -3 hours	@20/= x 200 buns = 4000/=  @60/= x 60 chapati = 3600/=	W  W

<i>Hoteli</i> (lucrative during major fishing seasons)	-beans 3kg @ 500/= (1500/=) -1 coconut -rice 2 kg @ 400/= (800/=) -tea (sugar 1 kg @ 500/=)	-2 hours -2 hours -1 hour	-20 tea cups @100/= = 2000/= -10 plates @ 150/= =1500/= -20cups of tea @50/= -1000/=	W
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**Legend**

- \* = variable depending on season, individual capacity,
- \*\* = costs depend on attachment to fishers
- \*\*\* = obtained by individual labour

Source: Socio-economic survey of Saadani, 1998.

University of Cape Town

## Appendix (v)

### Costs/Profit of a Prawn dealer (*tajiri mnunuzi/mchukuzi*) trading with Saadani

#### I. Costs

Transport of container of ice blocks (Znz/Bag to Saadani)	-TShs 1000/=
Transportation of full container by boat (Saadani – Bag)	-TShs 4000/=
Handling of container to/from boat and village	-TShs 600/=
Fare (boat) of dealer to Bag or Znz = (negotiable)	-TShs 500 2000/=
Tax at Kizuiani (on entering Dsm from Bag) @ container	-TShs 1000/=
<i>Kipiga hodi</i> (for dealers who are not local people)	-TShs 10,000/=
Costs of petrol for vessel (80litres x TShs 418 (1998) =	-TShs 33,440/=
One container = 4500/= (purchasing price at Saadani) x 25 =	-TShs 112,500/=

#### II. Profits

From difference of selling prices at Bagamoyo , Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar

One container of tiger prawns (@ = 6700/=a kg) x 25 = -TShs 167,500/=

(profit per container varied according to the total number of containers one was able to transport and market).

Source: Juma Shomari – Prawn dealer from Bagamoyo. December, 1998

## Appendix (vi)

### List of most commonly used words in the thesis (as used by people of Saadani).

Bahari	- the sea
Bamvua	- spring high tides
Bandarini	- harbour
Banyan	- An Indian who is a follower of Brahma, (were usually small retail tradesmen, craftsmen - barbers, carpenters, tinsmiths)
Boma	- fort
Chombo	- sea vessel or sea craft
Dago	- fishing camp
Dau	- planked construction dhow
Dema	- basket (fish) trap
Jahazi	- dhow
Kaji (pl: makaji)	- prawn(s)
Kamba	- shrimps
Kazi	- work, occupation
Kiwanja	- plot
Maji Mafu	- neap low tide
Mashua	- boat
Mgono	- fish trap
Mshipi	- hand line
Mtumbwi	- dug-out canoe
Mvuvi	- fisher
Ngalawa	- dug-out canoe with outriggers
Nyavu ya kukokota	- gill net
Shamba	- farm, cultivation plot
Tajiri mnunuzi	- prawn dealer
Tajiri wa nyavu	- fish net owner
Uzio/Wando	- fixed staked (fish) trap or fence

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### People and places:

Wazigua	- The people
Uzigua	- The area where the people originally reside(d)
Zigua	- (something, a characteristic) of the Wazigua

## **Appendix (vii)**

### **Issues of Study**

**1.0 Resources Management Framework in Tanzania as addressed by NRM policies**

#### **2.0 Population and demographic characteristics:**

Literacy and education

#### **3.0 Social structure and organization**

Construction of the household; Gender and Intra-household relationships; Division of labour; Marriage and divorce; social differentiation.

#### **4.0 Household resources**

Production assets (fishing nets, land, house), needs and services; Property ownership and acquisition; Other resources (money, land, labour, food, men, women and children)

#### **5.0 Work, roles and responsibilities**

Who does what and why? Major activities; Production for sustenance and income-generating; Part time and full time activities; Relationship between work and gender and age identities;

#### **6.0 Natural resource utilisation, Power differentiation and conflict in resource use**

Types of resource users; relationships in resource use; access control and ownership - legal (statutory); cultural constraints; nature of entitlements; does any population group suffer from erosion of its resources due to the influence of outside intervention; nature of control of household resources, household decision making; dependence by gender or age on resource use.

#### **7.0 Space and Organisation**

Social and physical boundaries in resource use; common and private property - ownership, perceptions and attitudes on related user practices, associated problems and needs.

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