

## Chapter 4: Analysis

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature of this study revealed that the chief preconditions for successful rural community participation in tourism-based developments include the political **empowerment** of the rural community to legally own land and to act as an equal stakeholder in the management of this land, as well as to use this empowerment as a foundation for the further **involvement** of the community (see Fig 2.1). Chapter 3 presents the Mabila Tribe of the Sodwana Bay region as an example of a previously marginalized rural community that have gradually been given the opportunity to participate on an increasing level in the tourism-based developments of their area.

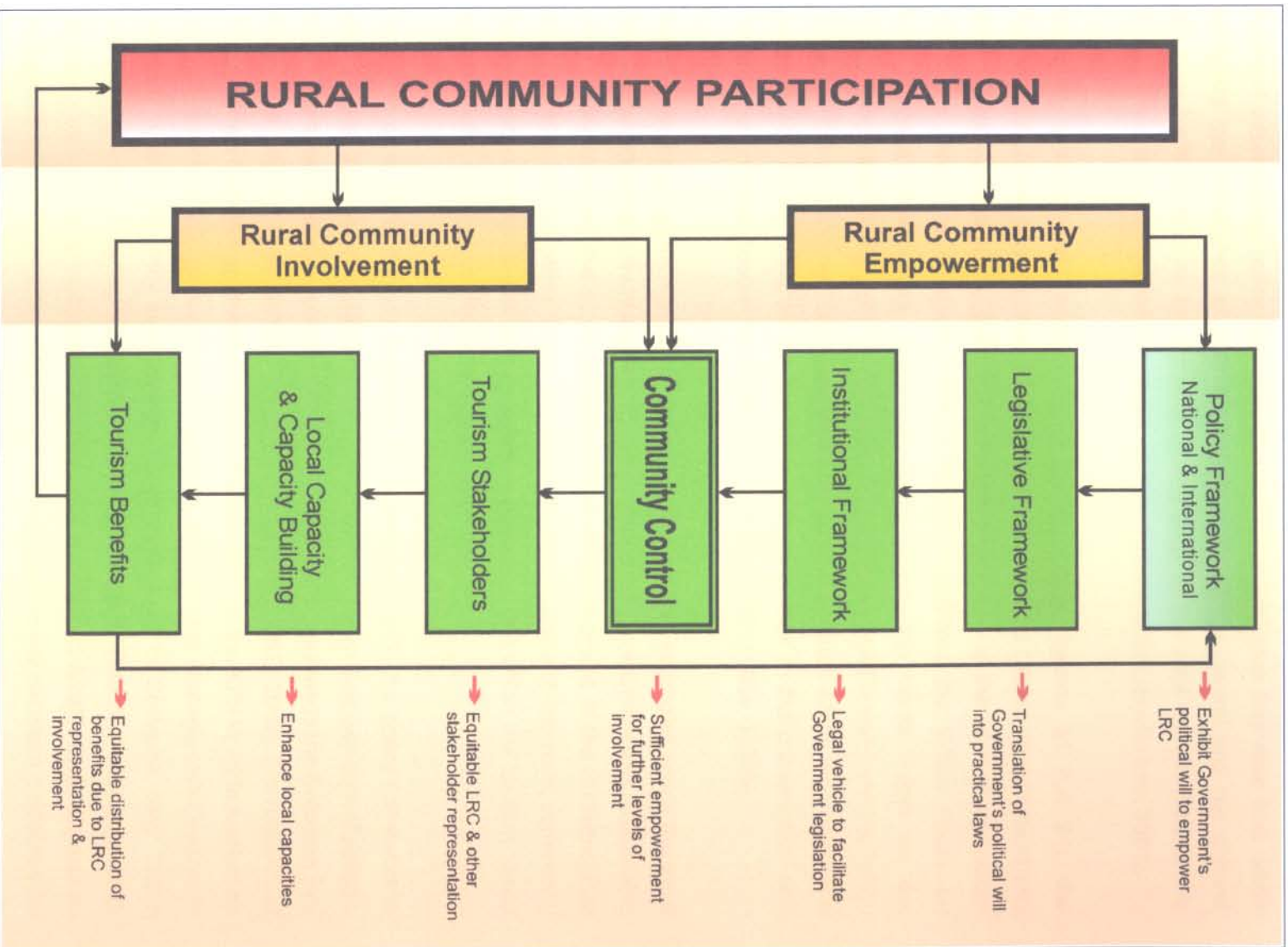
This opportunity arose due to the improvement of the level of control (through political empowerment) which the authorities have provided the community with. The following discussion will now aim to measure the success of the present state of empowerment and involvement of the Mabila community (Chapter 3) against the fundamental elements needed for true rural community participation in tourism-based developments that were developed in Chapter 2. Figure 4.1 provides a summary of these elements and will serve to guide the discussion.

### 4.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

At the policy framework level, it is evident that the relevant institutional actors from the international to the local government level have, over the last few years, strived to produce policies, strategies and conventions that actively promote equitable community participation in conservation and tourism-based activities (see Section 2.4.2.1). While there is sure to be a whole host of applicable new policies, strategies and legislation relevant to the current study, the research aimed only to provide examples which present a clear indication that the authorities that have jurisdiction over the level of rural community participation that occurs today do in fact reveal a definite commitment towards this feat. Hence a summary of the policies discussed in Section 2.4.2.

International sustainable development policies such as the World Conservation Strategy of the IUCN (1980), Agenda 21 of the UN and Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism

Figure 4.1 : Summary of the Framework Diagram of the Fundamental Elements Required For Equitable Rural Community Participation in Tourism-Based Developments



Industry guided the initial steps towards the active rural community participation in the tourism-based developments of today (IUCN, 1980a; IUCN, 1980b; IUCN, 1980c; South Africa, 1997; Inskip, 1998). Conventions such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the World Heritage Convention are additional forms of international policy that are relevant to the Sodwana Bay area and which recognize the importance of both the conservation of the natural and the cultural resource base as well as the dynamic participation of the rural communities in the development and management of these activities in these areas (Enviro Info, 2001).

Nationally policies and strategies such as the Local Agenda 21 (LA 21), the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP), and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR) serve as the enactments of the international policy objectives (ANC, 1994; South Africa, 2000). In addition, the White Paper on Environmental Management Policy for South Africa, the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biological Diversity and the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of tourism in South Africa also affirm the governments' stance towards the role of rural communities in the conservation and management of these resources (South Africa, 1996c, 1997, 1998a, 1998b).

Together these programmes provide practical step-by-step strategies which the local institutional actors can use to implement sustainable development initiatives. Sustainable tourism development (the most productive form of development in the Sodwana Bay area) could therefore utilize these strategies to help implement the rural community participation procedures that these strategies prescribe and which the tourism-based developments require in order to be truly participatory.

Finally, in order to sufficiently empower the Mbila community, the policy framework is supported by the local institutional actors, who have developed their own sets of policies to be able to adequately accommodate the unique local conditions in the Sodwana Bay area (LSDI, 2001c; Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Services, 2002; URC, 2002). The research of this study has furthermore revealed that institutions such as the KZN Wildlife Authorities have in addition to the abovementioned policies, implemented strategies which serve to enhance rural community participation initiatives unique to Sodwana Bay. These strategies are often only implemented by the relative KZN Wildlife Staff members (such as the community Liaison Officers) within the various local KZN Wildlife stations (such as Sodwana Bay) and should be documented as they can provide excellent guidelines for other institutions faced with the same task.

The Mbila community possess a variety of policies and strategies that notably exhibit the political will of the authorities under which they reside to effectively empower their community to participate significantly in these activities. Sections of other legislation, which has specific reference and relevance at other locations, such as the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), Notice No. 22690 of 2001 (beach driving), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 and Section 52A of the Child Care Act (Child Labour Legislation) have however already had immense impacts on the potential of the Mbila community to be involved in the tourism-based developments at Sodwana Bay (South Africa, 1997; Bosch *et al.*, 2002). In the case of Sodwana Bay specifically, the frailty of their development options has already been described in detail in Chapter 3. The relevant governmental authorities should therefore be careful when applying this kind of restrictive legislation so as not to harm the already critically limited development options which rural communities have at localities such as Sodwana Bay.

On the part of the Mbila community, it is understandable that aspects such as the current level of literacy in the community (especially of the older members), and the distribution of the relevant information on what the policies and strategies provide them with on all the relevant Mbila Tribal Authority levels and with the rest of the greater community, can severely hamper the community in exploiting their rights to the full extent. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Mbila Tribal Authority and the rest of the Mbila community address these issues as far as possible. This will ensure that they can reap the maximum benefit from the participation in the opportunities that arise as a result of the empowerment brought about by these policies and strategies.

### **4.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The real effectiveness of the policies and strategies that are described in Sections 2.4.2.1 and 4.2 lies in their ability to change the quality of life for the Mbila community at a grassroots level. For this to happen, it is of vital importance that the community be able to effectively represent themselves at the correct institutional level and with effective legislative powers to be able to participate in the development and management of their area (Wells and Brandon, 1992; Hall and Lew, 1998; Ashley and Jones, 1999).

First of all, Section 24b of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa endows the Mbila community with the same environmental rights as all other South Africans. Although this is broad level legislation, the constitution specifically states that all the

citizens of South Africa have a right to have their environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures (South Africa, 1997). This Section of the constitution has further bearing on the Mbila community and their present situation by specifically stating that the community also have a right to secure ecological sustainable development and use of the natural resources within the boundaries of justifiable economic and social development (South Africa, 1997).

Furthermore, Section 25(7) of the Constitution focuses on the restoration of land rights (South Africa, 1996), with the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act 22 of 1994) as the specific legislative instrument on land restitution (South Africa, 1994). This legislation, in addition to the Communal Property Associations Act, 1996 (Act 28 of 1996) (South Africa, 1996a) provides the Mbila community with the appropriate legislative power to represent themselves as a legal authority and also endowed them with the entitlement rights they needed to legally reclaim their land, which they had lost as a result of injustices committed by previous governments (see Section 2.4.2.2).

The legislation described in this Section therefore appears to have adequately provided the Mbila community with the legislative authority that they need to legally participate in the development and management activities that have an influence on the present and future existence of their community in the area. Sections 3.4 and 3.5 describe the variety of tourism-based developments and the level of Mbila involvement that currently exists in Sodwana Bay. Through this it is evident that the tourism industry and the Mbila involvement therein is still in its very early stages and that much development and capacity building still needs to be done before the Mbila community can really fully participate in the opportunities which the Sodwana Bay area provides. Security of tenure is, however, regarded as one of the critical elements (if not *the* critical element) in the process of equitable rural community participation in the tourism-based developments of the area. The fact that the Mbila community have gained the relevant legal rights over their land therefore provides them with a huge advantage in light of future tourism developments and their involvement therein.

Although the South African government seems to have adequately provided the Mbila community with the legal equipment they need for effective participation from a legislative point of view, certain practical aspects of the landownership between the KZN Wildlife authorities and the Mbila community still need to be clarified (see Sections 3.2.4.2 and 3.2.4.3). Whilst the Mbila community enjoy the principal rights over the form of development that occurs on their land, all is not resolved with regard to their land

within the KZN Wildlife Service's boundaries. With regard to this land, the Mbila community are only involved in deciding what kind of developments will be allowed, they are currently not involved in the development of these activities and facilities. In addition, the Mbila Tribal Authority (MTA) also expressed their need to further the discussions on settlement possibilities on this land as well as for additional grazing for their animals.

The research has revealed that the Mbila Tribal Authority specifically feels that much more communication is needed on these matters and that the progress concerning the settlement and the grazing specifically is much too slow. Although it is understandable that caution must be taken when deciding what kind of developments are allowed within the boundaries of the relatively sensitive protected area of the Sodwana Bay National Park, Mbila Tribal Authority concerns are also realistic in relation to the legislative rights which they have over the land. It is now the responsibility of both the Mbila community and the relevant institutional actors to work towards productive communication to allow the legislation to come into its full potential to be able to produce meaningful Mbila participation and meaningful partnerships.

#### **4.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The institutional framework presents the final component (from an authoritative point of view) that is needed to effectively empower a rural community to achieve satisfactory control over their resources (see Sections 2.4.3.3 and 3.3.4). In this regard the South African government, through the Communal Property Associations Act, 1996 (Act 28 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996a), has provided the community with the correct institutional capacity to firstly represent themselves and their concerns and secondly to establish a central social organization which can effectively interact with the pertinent institutional actors.

Concerning the other institutional actors in the area, the region possesses a more than adequate institutional infrastructure to be able to handle matters from the homestead to the regional and provincial level. The Mbila Tribal Authority structure seems to be handling the internal community affairs quite adequately with only a small amount of cases progressing to the headman's and the iNkosi's courts (see Section 3.3.2). In addition, the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, the KZN Wildlife authorities, the Uthungulu Regional Council and the other provincial and national departments seem to be suitably represented in the area and relatively easy to contact, if the need arises. iNkosi Zikhali also fosters good relations with most of the representatives of these

institutions and this seems to have assisted him greatly in the implementation of some of the facilities and other projects in the area (see Section 3.3.2).

What seems to be a major difficulty, however, is that of communication between the Mbila community and some of these institutions, as well as within some of these institutions themselves. The research revealed that it is perceived by some of the prominent Mbila Tribal Authority members that they as the Mbila community, are occasionally considered be significant enough to consult in matters relating to the development of the area and that they are only visited for matters that require their consent so that outside developers are able to proceed with their own developments.

Some of the interviews held with respondents in the Mbila community indicated that the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative and the KZN Wildlife Authority were the main offenders in this regard. It must also be said, however, that these organizations represent the two institutions that stand at the forefront of the management of the area and that these kinds of positions are usually accompanied by many management-based indifferences.

As for the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, the community pointed out that they are definitely very grateful for all the developments and initiatives that the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative has initiated in the area. However the Mbila Tribal Authority specifically reiterated their stance of not knowing enough about the development and management objectives which the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative have for the region. This concern has in fact also been lodged by the KZN Wildlife Services as well as by the Private developers in the area. The community would therefore like to be involved to a much greater extent in the planning and management of the region as a whole and especially in all the different phases and activities of these developments.

An additional obstacle in the relations with both the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative and the KZN Wildlife authorities comes in the form of a lack of information on the organization of these authorities and the subsequent misunderstandings that follow. Some of the Mbila Tribal Authority and regular members of the community had huge misgivings concerning the community Levy System and do not understand how the funds are administered. The fact that there was (at the time of the gathering of the field data) no Mbila Tribal Authority or other Mbila community member to represent the community on the community Levy Committee further serves to exacerbate the situation and can lead to considerable damage in this fragile relationship.

It is conceivable that a series of meetings between these parties could contribute vastly towards the understanding of the Lubombo Spatial development Initiative and the KZN Wildlife authorities, of the need of the Mbila community to understand the organization of these authorities and the inner workings of some of the major projects that have an influence on their community. At present, quite a few Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative - KZN Wildlife community-based committees exist, which administer the management of some of the current projects (see Sections 3.5.2.1 and 3.5.2.2) This example should be carried further to also involve Mbila community members in committees such as the Community Levy Committee. Such involvement would ensure the transparency of initiatives like these and should eradicate any form of mistrust that can weaken the relationships between the Mbila community, the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative and the KZN Wildlife authorities.

#### **4.5 LEVEL OF COMMUNITY CONTROL**

Sections 2.4.2.1 to 2.4.2.3 and 4.2 to 4.4 have illustrated the ways in which the international, the national and the local authorities have endeavoured to effectively re-empower the Mbila community with the basic rights that were taken away from them by the top-down centrally driven mode of development as well as the policies and legislation of these discriminatory governments (see Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 3.3.4). New policies, strategies and legislation were needed to endow the Mbila community with the appropriate legislative and institutional powers to be able to participate effectively in the development and the management of the tourism-based opportunities that the Sodwana Bay area has to offer.

In the case of Sodwana Bay specifically, there are quite a few factors that contributed significantly to the way that the area developed as well as to the slow pace of these developments. One of the paramount reasons that caused many of the policy and legislative instruments that empower the Mbila community only to be developed in the past decade can be attributed to the fact that these policies and laws were themselves only developed in the past few years. The 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development, Brundtland Report, the first World Summit on Sustainable Development in 1992, and the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 were instrumental in these policy changes.

Apart from the fact that these new policies and legislation all had to undergo lengthy introductory procedures within the South African governmental system, other aspects



also contributed to the often-slothful progress in the implementation of these empowerment tools. South Africa, in particular had to deal with the integration of a totally new government, which involved vast changes in the governmental structures, and is sure to have delayed the empowerment process. This new government system, however, would later present rural communities with legislation granting increased participation.

Aspects such as the necessary capacities which all the relevant stakeholders need to introduce and to implement participatory approaches, represent a crucial facet which requires a lot of time and effort to achieve. The field research revealed that this aspect is in fact still preventing the Mabila community from participating to their full potential. One of the main reasons for this situation is the general deficiency in the quality education in the region, as well as the lack of proper training in the appropriate tourism fields. Although some of the more popular tourism activities involve feats that stand in stark contrast with the cultural background of the Mabilas (see Section 3.4), some of the community members have already demonstrated that they are adaptable to these activities and have also communicated their will to manage these activities. The necessary training could therefore supply the Mabila community with much better employment opportunities than is currently observable.

Further difficulties are also experienced in the cooperation between the various stakeholders in the Sodwana Bay area. These difficulties can be attributed to an insufficient level of understanding and integration between these groups. These deficiencies are currently not only resulting in many missed opportunities in the tourism development arena, but they are also preventing the Mabila community from being able to be fully integrated in the already limited opportunities that exist.

Additional aspects which are currently hampering the Mabila community from obtaining a greater degree of participation in the tourism-based activities and in the benefits that flows from these activities, include the sometimes contradictory nature of national legislation. Although it is believed that the South African government is striving to empower the community, it is evident that some of the laws passed serve to severely limit the development and participation opportunities which the area offers (see Section 2.4.2.1). Finally, the lack in depth of the tourism activities that the area boasts translates into a shortage of available tourism-based employment opportunities themselves and further obstructs the ability of the Mabila community to really have a significant influence in the control of the tourism-based activities in the region.

It is therefore clear that, although the Mbila community have been endowed with sufficient political authority to be able to participate significantly in the tourism-based developments in the region, some of the inherent difficulties of the area (such as the lack of proper communication between some of the stakeholders and the lack of sufficient education and training) are still causing them not to be able to enjoy the level of control that they should.

#### **4.6 STAKEHOLDERS**

One of the paramount objectives in the whole process of successful rural community participation in tourism-based developments is to legally affirm the rural communities as being legal stakeholders in the tourism developments of their region (see Section 2.4.3.6). From a policy, legislative and institutional point of view, it is obvious how all the relevant institutions have laboured to provide the Mbila community with the legal powers that they need to be officially recognized as stakeholders in the tourism industry at Sodwana Bay. These measures have also resulted in specific actions taking place such as the lodging of a successful land claim and the initiation of a few tourism-based development initiatives in the area (see Section 3.5).

On paper it would, therefore, seem that the Mbila community are well represented as equal stakeholders in the tourism industry at Sodwana Bay. However, as is the case with the level of community control that the Mbila community currently exert, their rights as proper stakeholders are significantly hampered by several circumstances at a grassroots level. Aspects such as the fairly youthful stage of implementation of all the policy and the legislative measures the limited amount of current tourism opportunities and the deprived state of local education and training all contribute to the community not being able to act at full capacity in relation to the tourism activities in the area. These aspects also have a specific bearing on the involvement of the different segments of the community (e.g. women, children and elderly people). Although they suffer the same difficulties as the rest of the community, these groups seem to be sufficiently represented at present.

In addition, elements such as the partial breakdown in communication between the community, the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative and the KZN Wildlife Authorities (in certain cases), further disadvantage the community by discouraging opportunities for the initiation of possible new community-based tourism development projects (see Sections 3.5 and 3.6). Various individuals from the Mbila community, who were interviewed during the course of the study, exhibited the insight and the skills which the

author believes can turn them into highly successful future tourism operators in the area. It must therefore again be stressed how important it is to eradicate the obstacles that are currently causing the Mbila community not to be able to function as equal stakeholders in the tourism industry of the area.

#### **4.7 EXISTING CAPACITIES AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Local capacity and capacity building are described in Section 2.4.3.6 as the ability of the rural community in an area to use their ownership of and access to knowledge and technology as a means of effectively managing their environmental and social resources. Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that the relevant government departments and developers are also frequently in need of training and extension programmes to provide them with the capacity they need to be able to fully participate in the tourism-based developments of these rural areas.

In the Sodwana Bay example Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 have described the quantity and the quality of the environmental and cultural resources that the area fosters and has thereby illustrated the potential wealth that this area and its inhabitants possess. Although the region is presently in the process of slowly developing these resources, the area unfortunately still reflects the numerous aspects which have contributed to the severely underdeveloped capacities, of the Mbila community. Of these, the harshness of the natural environment, the alienation of the Mbilas from their land, the critical shortage in development and employment opportunities, and the unsatisfactory level of education and training prove to be the factors that have caused, and in some instances still cause, causing the most difficulties in this regard.

As in many similar examples in other parts of the world, the research revealed that a serious lack in appropriate literacy levels is the main contributor towards the presently deprived state of capacities in the Mbila community (see Section 3.3.3). Significant levels of illiteracy were found to exist in important community-based committees, such as the school governing bodies and in most of the locally conceived development initiatives. The study also revealed a series of shortcomings in the quality of schooling that the local schools are able to provide, as well as in the specific education programmes which are offered by these institutions. These conditions are characteristic of areas that offer restricted economic development opportunities and are causing considerable difficulties in the development of the appropriate local capacities.

The research has revealed that almost all of the private and other tourism operators that were interviewed in the Sodwana Bay area required their staff (especially those that are in direct contact with the tourists) to be able to at least communicate in English. The need to be adequately trained in order to be successfully employed also surfaced in most of the interviews held with members of the Mbilal community and especially with those in the 13 to 20 year age group (see Table 3.1). This proves that the Mbilal community are aware that education and training are important in order to participate in the tourism-based development that the area offers. Although most of the Mbilal members that were interviewed were able to communicate relatively understandably in English, only a very small group exhibited the ability to write their own names.

In light of these circumstances some of the private tourism developers have taken it upon themselves to aid the community in their attempts to acquire these skills and have, in addition to the in-service training that they provide, created various initiatives to assist the community in their educational needs (see Section 3.6). Consequently, some of the employees employed by private tourism operators have not only excelled in the positions they held, but have since also been employed at similar tourism ventures at other destinations (See Section 3.6).

With regard to the capacities exhibited by the tourism developers and the government and non-government stakeholders in Sodwana Bay, weaknesses were also evident. The most prevalent difficulties hampering the extension of local capacities seem to be in the communication between these parties, specifically in the conflict resolution department. From the interviews held with some of the Mbilal Tribal Authority members it appears that they believe that the KZN Wildlife authorities (as representatives of the government) are not always in touch with the Mbilal needs and are sometimes also insensitive towards these.

From the part of the KZN Wildlife authorities, the major complaint was that the community sometimes behave reluctantly concerning conservation matters and development in conservation areas. The KZN Wildlife authorities feel that the Mbilal community are not always familiar with the intricacies of these matters and still need much exposure to fully contemplate their magnitude. Much communication is still required to establish an adequate level of transmission of information which will allow more understanding and interaction between these parties. Currently the relationship between the private tourism developers and the community exists on an employer employee basis and doesn't really allow for broader participation activities.

Almost all of the members of the Mbila community that were interviewed have demonstrated an understanding of how tourism can change their circumstances. They have also exhibited their potential to initiate and manage their own tourism ventures (see Section 3.5). In addition, they have also shown their determination by conquering age-old traditional beliefs such as going into the ocean to learn how to scuba dive and how to angle, and have subsequently proved that they are willing and able to develop the necessary capacities to participate effectively in the tourism-based developments at Sodwana Bay. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all the relevant educational authorities on the local, regional and provincial level should tend to their responsibilities to develop the appropriate educational and training programmes. These programmes should then allow the Mbila community to take full advantage of their capacities and should enable them to be in the best possible position to build additional capacities where these are required.

#### **4.8 TOURISM BENEFITS**

One of the more conventional justifications for many tourism-based developments in and around protected areas is that nature-based tourism can promote conservation by demonstrating the importance of protected areas by generating tourism-oriented employment and income (see Section 2.3.2.3). This justification has also been used in the Sodwana Bay situation where significant tracts of the terrestrial and marine environments have been set aside as protected areas and where the Mbila community (who are the closest neighbouring community) are presumed to benefit from the tourism activities that are being generated in the areas.

Unfortunately, although the type of tourism activities (scuba diving and deep sea fishing/angling – predominantly the tag-and-release fishing variant) that have developed in the Sodwana Bay National Park support the notion of ecologically sensitive development, the nature of these activities does not at present benefit the community in extraordinary ways. Section 3.4, for instance, describes how some of the tourism activities of the private tourism operators, in particular (which constitute the majority of employment in the area) clash with the cultural background of the Mbila community, and how they require skills that are not commonly represented in the rural communities of the region.

The Mbila community are not conforming very well to these activities at present, and the development of the necessary skills to be able to participate at greater levels in these

activities are progressing at an extremely slow pace. This results in the possibilities of employment at the management levels of these activities being very low and also forms the basis for the fact that there are currently no community-based tourism development initiatives in these more popular tourism varieties. Some of the members of the Mbila community have however shown that it is possible to bridge these difficulties (see Section 3.4.2.2) They have become the very first members of the Mbila community to qualify themselves in aspects of the diving and fishing activities and have thereby ensured themselves of increased employment opportunities (with excellent promotion prospects) in the Sodwana Bay area as well as in similar ventures elsewhere in the region.

The bulk of the tourism-based benefits which are currently accruing to the Mbila community, presents itself in the form of employment in the service sectors of these activities (e.g. aiding the divers on the beach, assistance in launching of boats, washing of gear, cleaning fish (see Section 3.4). Significant employment is also generated by the restaurant and the accommodation ventures in the area, and both these and the diving and fishing operations supply considerable casual job opportunities during the peak holiday periods (see Sections 3.4 and 3.6).

These ventures provide much needed job opportunities in an area where employment is extremely hard to find if an individual doesn't possess the necessary education and training. One of the most significant benefits which the Mbila community is currently receiving from the tourism industry in the area, is most certainly that of in-service training. This instructs the people in the trades which are most likely to provide them with future employment in the area, and it also provides the community with occupations which are in demand in other parts of the country as well (see Sections 3.4 and 3.6).

The Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative is another form of tourism-based benefit and has already contributed significantly to the creation of tourism-based opportunities in the area. The chief contribution of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative is undoubtedly that of the improvement of the infrastructure in the region. The remoteness of the Sodwana Bay area, as well as earlier problems with access and the containment of tropical diseases, has caused it to be rather unknown and the region is therefore still in a very early state of development (see Section 3.2.2).

The upgrading of the roads has, however, opened the area up to a much greater variety of tourists, a fact confirmed by the accounts of the private tourism operators that the area is experiencing a steady rise in the number of tourists (including international visitors).

Plans to expand the tourism products and the tourism facilities in the area are also under discussion and are sure to further increase the number of tourists visiting the area as well as the opportunities that arise from the activities of these tourists (Hicks, 1991; Heynes and Hornby, 1994).

Another major contribution from the part of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative consists of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative - Craft Initiative (see Section 3.5.2.1). This initiative consisted of the assistance in the building of a craft market, various training sessions (such as product diversification and the financial management of the initiative) as well as the continued aid that is provided with aspects such as the printing of the product catalogue and visits to other craft markets. Although the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative has assisted greatly in the establishment and partial upkeep of the initiative, difficulties have cropped and many of the Mbila members involved currently feel that the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative is not assisting them efficiently.

Concerns that were mentioned in the interviews with members of the craft initiative included notions that some the training sessions were of little or no use. It seems as if many of these training sessions are perceived as a type of hit-and-run experience, where the ladies are presented with an enormous amount of information which is, for the most part, totally foreign to them. The lectures that they were given regarding the financial management of the initiative, for instance, were totally inadequate as many of the ladies are illiterate and the lectures also contained financial concepts that were unfamiliar in relation to their cultural background.

Many of the respondents in the interviews also indicated that they were experiencing extreme difficulty in sustained communication with the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative administrators of some of these projects. They pointed out that many of the administrators come from places outside of their area and are foreign to them. The ladies believe that these administrators do not fully understand their needs and that this is most probably the reason why these Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative representatives often present them with irrelevant information. It is therefore clear that although this contributes significantly to the tourism development on an indirect fashion, serious restructuring is necessary with regard to their direct community involvement procedures.

Funding for development projects was identified as one of the major constraints at the onset of the study (see Section 1.2). In this regard, the KZN Wildlife authorities have initiated an ingenious system whereby the Mbila community can benefit directly from the

tourists that visit the area. The community levy system entails the collection of an additional levy from the tourists entering the Sodwana Bay National Park. The money collected in this way is then deposited into an account that is utilized by the KZN Wildlife authorities for the funding of development projects for the Mbila and Mabaso communities (see Section 3.5.2.2).

The levy funds have already been used for quite a few Mbila community development projects, but have also run into a series of difficulties. These difficulties can be grouped into two main categories: misunderstanding regarding the administration of the funds and the inability of the community to present acceptable initiatives, which would qualify for assistance from this fund. Concerning the suspicions regarding the administration of the community levy fund, the problem seems to spring from a lack of understanding of the inner functioning of the KZN Wildlife authorities.

Some of the respondents interviewed expressed their doubts concerning the KZN Wildlife authority's statements of not keeping the money that they collect from the tourists. All they see are the vast amounts of tourists that enter the area, which contradict the status of the local KZN Wildlife authority's lack of funding for aid to the community. The money collected for the community levy fund is administered by a community levy committee that is located at the KZN Wildlife authority's headquarters in Pietermaritzburg. The Mbila community is currently not represented on this committee, which accounts for their lack of understanding and their mistrust. It would seem that proper representation, accompanied by a clear understanding of how the fund is administered, would serve to answer the community's questions as well as remove the sense of mistrust that the community currently fosters.

With regard to the complexities experienced by the community in the preparation of proper development proposals, the challenges again seem to be connected to the levels of education and training in the area, as well as the unfamiliarity with the procedures required by the institution that administers the levy funds. Officials at the Sodwana Bay branch of the KZN Wildlife authority state that the authority is already involved in the assistance of the community in the preparation of proper business plans. It would seem therefore that the challenge most probably again lies in the maximization of the communication between the Mbila community and the KZN Wildlife authorities.



#### 4.9 CONCLUSION

The Problem Statement in Chapter 1 of the study identified three issues that stood at the centre of the question regarding equitable participation of the Mbila community in the tourism-based developments of Sodwana Bay. These issues consisted of the relevant level of control that the Mbilas hold over their resources and the developments that happens there, as well as the issues of opportunity and responsibility.

Chapter 4 served as the analysis of the findings that were made in the previous chapters regarding these issues and came to the following estimation. Regarding the issue of control it was found that the Mbila community was sufficiently empowered by law and also had legal ownership of their resources but is still unable to implement this control due to certain forms of supplementary restrictive legislation as well as arrangements with local institutional actors.

Regarding the issue of opportunity it was found that although general socio economic developmental Opportunities are scarce in the Sodwana Bay region. Opportunity in the form of tourism-based developments does exist but that these opportunities are under-developed and that the Mbila community does not participate in these at a satisfactory level.

Lastly it was found that all of the key stakeholders have considerable responsibility towards the tourism-based development in the Sodwana Bay area and that equitable participation in these developments are only possible if these responsibilities are met. Chapter 5 will now continue in discussing these findings in more detail.