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## Blue economy potentials for indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago: Turning a political adage into coastal communities' realities and practices

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### Abstract

This paper was sought to reveal and document the current state of the art on the utilization of blue economy potentials among indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago following the current Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's widely advocated blue economy political adage. This study took place in the context of selected economic sectors in Zanzibar archipelago as they are reflected in the blue economy policy of 2020. The study applied explanatory descriptive research design. Triangulation of various data collection methods including observation, interviews and literature survey were used to collect information towards attempting study's subject matter. Data analysis was done through content analysis. Based on the analyzed data, the findings revealed blue economy being highly integrated in all key strategic sectors in The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. The findings further revealed blue economy potentials for indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago, the quest of the recent reported early achievements such that the widely advocated political adage was vividly seen in the coastal communities' realities and practices. Being widely practiced by various coastal communities in Zanzibar archipelago, various economic sectors in Zanzibar have embraced blue economy potentials in their action plans. The study finally concludes the highly adopted blue economy related activities by the wide range of coastal communities in Zanzibar archipelago. The revealed findings confirmed high usefulness of blue economy in the instrumental economic sectors, hence being a practical strategy towards transforming the livelihoods of indigenous coastal communities in Zanzibar. Finally, the study urges government authorities to enhance the use of public-private partnership model in the course of implementing blue economy related development projects so that their outcomes reach the wider community.

**Keywords:** Blue economy potentials, indigenous livelihoods, political adage, coastal communities' realities and practices

### 1. Introduction

Apart from being the world's biggest carbon sink, ocean provides us with goods and services for free including water cycle, food security, and routes for shipping, recreational areas, mining opportunities and myriad economic related activities (Mary, 2018, UNFCC, 2020). Countries with high dependency on maritime activities; mostly islands, have already put in practice strategies aiming for blue growth while sustainably preserving the marine life (MPA, 2016; CGTN, 2018; UNFCC, 2020). Some other countries, however, especially developing countries alongside the East African coast (Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar in particular) are privileged as the area which is reported less damaged in terms of ecosystems and habitats (Karen, 2016; UNECA, 2016; Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021) <sup>[3]</sup>. According to UNCTAD, (2014), many activities related to the maritime sector are increasingly developed in the countries of the said Eastern African coast such as fishery, tourism, seaweed farming, energy and shipping which are referred to blue economy.

The 'Blue Economy' has emerged as a concept over the past two decades from a diversity of fora, but most notably within environment or development policy and practice (Hoegh-Guldberg *et al.*, 2015; Patil *et al.*, 2016; UNECA, 2016). However, 'Blue Economy' ideas have a longer history, building on the green economy and closely aligned with sustainable development (UN, 2012). Proponents of the blue economy make bold promises to improve human wellbeing and equity, reduce environmental risks and scarcity as well as fostering national and regional cooperation (Pauli, 2010; UNECA, 2016). Within government departments globally, but here focused on Zanzibar archipelago like any other parts of the world, 'Blue Economy' perspectives engender a view of the oceans as a source of 'wealth and

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prosperity' of the nations as well as communities (Gov Seychelles and Commonwealth, 2018; OECD, 2017), whose 'economic potential needs unlocking' (RSA, 2015; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen, 2017; Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021) <sup>[3]</sup>.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) defines BE as the economic and trade activities that focus on the ocean-based marine environment, associated biodiversity, ecosystems, species and genetic resources whilst ensuring conservation (UNCTAD, 2014). While multiple players acknowledge the role of BE in socio-economic development and environmental sustainability, inherent complexities exist in its interpretation despite the urgent need to transition to a more sustainable blue growth pathway which addresses threats to the environment and economic and human security (Voyer *et al.*, 2018; Okafor-Yarwood *et al.*, 2020). BE is mostly divided into economic, environmental and social components with the aim of bringing the three categories together to influence community livelihoods entailing consideration for the benefits to local communities or environmental conservation (Masie and Bond, 2018; Childs and Hicks, 2019; Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021) <sup>[3]</sup>.

According to World Bank, (2017) <sup>[11]</sup>, the "blue economy" concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. At its core it refers to the decoupling of socioeconomic development through oceans-related sectors and activities from environmental and ecosystems degradation. It draws from scientific findings from (UNECA, 2016; RGoZ, 2020; Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021) <sup>[8-9, 3]</sup>, that ocean resources are limited and that the health of the oceans has drastically declined due to anthropogenic activities. These changes are already being profoundly felt, affecting human well-being and societies and the impacts are likely to be amplified in the future, especially in view of projected population growth. This is due to the fact that, the blue economy has diverse components, including established traditional ocean industries such as fisheries, tourism and maritime transport, but also new and emerging activities, such as offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed extractive activities, and marine biotechnology and bioprospecting. A number of services provided by ocean ecosystems and for which markets do not exist, also contribute significantly to economic and other human activity such as carbon sequestration, coastal protection, waste disposal and the existence of biodiversity (Mary, 2018; UNFCCC, 2020).

Consequently, blue economy potentials towards enriching the indigenous livelihoods entails the mix of oceanic activities varies in each country, depending on their unique national circumstances and the national vision adopted to reflect its own conception of a blue economy. On the other hand, World Bank, (2017) <sup>[11]</sup> and UNFCCC, (2020) posits that in order to qualify as components of a blue economy, as it is understood here, activities need to firstly to provide social and economic benefits for current and future generations, secondly to restore, protect, and maintain the diversity, productivity, resilience, core functions and intrinsic value of marine ecosystems and thirdly the activities need to base on clean technologies, renewable energy and circular material flows that will reduce waste and promote recycling of materials. This among other things

raised its imperative to incorporate the needs and concerns of local communities in the conception and implementation of current and future blue economy related activities as their contributions will be central to sustainably achieving social equity and reducing environmental risks.

In the course of underscoring various perspectives under blue economy related diverse range of activities as well as qualifying blue economy components, blue economy practices in the Zanzibar archipelago have recently shown a strong interconnectedness of economic mainstream framework. Zanzibar archipelago consists of the Islands of Unguja and Pemba and numerous small Islands surrounding them and includes the territorial waters that before the Union formed the then People's Republic of Zanzibar (The Constitution of Zanzibar, 1984). More remarkably, Zanzibar archipelago as part of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is located in the Indian Ocean Rim with a long coastline and vast ocean resources. The archipelago is surrounded by numerous small islands and low lying, and have no access to fresh water. The Islands are also the sites of extensive coral reefs, which surround the shoreline of both islands and many islets (RGoZ, 2020, Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021) <sup>[8-9, 3]</sup>. The islands have important forests, including mangroves. Zanzibar marine and terrestrial areas support many livelihoods and provide critical ecosystem services, being the location for key endemic island flora and fauna. They provide breeding, nursery and feeding habitat for fish and shellfish, including prawns, lobsters and mud-crabs (O'Sullivan, 2005).

For the sake of enabling the economy of the Zanzibar archipelago to thrive, it was sought imperative for Zanzibar to develop appropriate plans, policies, strategies and practical initiatives for mainstreaming the "blue economy concept" by viewing oceans as "development spaces". In the past decade, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGoZ) has started to embed the blue economy concept among top national agendas and regards it as an effective way for achieving sustainable development through rapid and inclusive economic growth. Drawing facts from Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy of 2020, it is very clear that the issues related to the blue economy are among the important areas which attract national, regional and international attention. This among other things posed a need for identification, description, as well as creation of monitoring and evaluating frameworks towards attaining key aspects towards achieving blue economy related outcomes. Since this was instrumental in the course of ensuring that marine resources play an expected significant role in contributing towards raising socio-economic welfare of the coastal communities in Zanzibar archipelago, the current Zanzibar political leadership under H.E President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi has branded its change-making ideology as Blue Economy for True Socio-economic development which poses a rationale for unravelling the less known blue economy potentials for indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago to-date. The current widely reported milestones in the Blue Economy related economic sectors in Zanzibar, (World Bank, 2017; RGoZ, 2020; Hafidh and Mkuya, 2021; Semboja, 2021) <sup>[11, 9, 3]</sup> leaves the unraveled dynamics and perspectives to be brought in knowledge in the course of quickly turning a political adage into Coastal Communities' Realities and Practices. The recent coordinated plans that have integrated key strategic sectors in terms of boldly realizing blue economy potentials among

indigenous livelihoods in various areas of the Zanzibar archipelago, the following synthesized lessons are documented from selected sectors which vividly show how the current Zanzibar President H.E. Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage can be turned into Realities and Practices of the Coastal Communities dwelling in the Zanzibar archipelago.

The fact that the Chama Cha Mapinduzi manifesto for 2020-2025 gears raising standard of living of the communities, the above-described Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage was one of the instrumental gears towards changing the livelihoods of the people through sustainable and affordable means. This among other things was due to the fact that, since the livelihoods of a typical Zanzibari has relied mainly on coastal and maritime services, as the economy of Zanzibar has been dominated by tourism (including beach), small-scale fishing and maritime trade. However, in spite of the growth potential of coastal and marine resources, pressure from human and natural developments has posed significant challenges to development and the well-being of Zanzibar's people. Recognizing this potential (World Bank 2019; RGoZ, 2021; Semboja, 2021), the RGoZ has embraced the blue economy as the framework for achieving Zanzibar's sustainable development. Despite being a widely advocated political utterance in the 2020 Zanzibar General election, one year down the lane the tangible outcomes have started emerging in various economic sectors. This can be argued from Hafidh and Mkuya, (2021) <sup>[3]</sup> assertion that, the blue economy is currently integrated in almost all key strategic sectors in Zanzibar hence making it possible to be realized in a given time. In the course of identifying blue economy potentials for indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago, the quest of the recent reported early achievements in turning a political adage into coastal communities' realities and practices presenting the synthesis of the current blue economy potentials for indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago.

All the sectors of blue economy are important to the socio-economic development of Zanzibar and Tanzania in general. However, there are certain sectors which are vital and instrumental due to the fact that they widely enrich and trigger other economic sectors. Following current Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's blue economy political adage, five (5) major economic sectors were widely advocated including tourism, seaweed farming, fishing, shipping and maritime infrastructure as well as oil and gas sector. The earmarked five sectors in Zanzibar stand as instrumental gear towards changing the livelihoods of the people through sustainable and affordable means (RGoZ, 2020; UNFCC, 2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup>. This paper was sought to reveal and document the current state of the art on the utilization of blue economy potentials among indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago. The documentation of the current state of the art of coastal communities' realities and practices in relation to their engagement in extracting blue economy opportunities in their natural environment, with their reflection towards holistically improving the livelihoods of indigenous coastal communities.

## 2. Research Methodology and Approach

In the course of undertaking this study, explanatory research design was adopted. The study context and area entailed the whole of Zanzibar archipelago. Zanzibar is the ocean-based economy which explained the best-fit for blue economy

practices, hence the suitable area for undertaking this study. Data related to this study were collected through the process of reviewing the documents related to blue economy from Zanzibar and ever around the world constituted the study methodology towards attaining the instrumental findings. Literature review which is mainly useful approach in capturing secondary data from both print and electronic resources such as books, dissertations and electronic records from websites, online databases, search engines and major points was applied. Survey on the literatures resulted to updated information related to subject matter including enabling the documentation of the current state of the art of coastal communities' realities and practices in relation to their engagement in extracting blue economy opportunities in their natural environment, with their reflection towards holistically improving the livelihoods of indigenous coastal communities. A wide range of literatures were gathered from various libraries both physical and online, hence being the major sources of relevant information for this study.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This study was sought to unravel the existing dynamics in the course of reflecting blue economy realities and practices in the indigenous livelihoods of coastal communities in Zanzibar. The envisaged study findings among other things, sought to be useful in turning the said political adage namely blue economy into coastal communities' realities and practices in Zanzibar archipelago as discussed in subsequent result sections below.

### 3.1 Blue Economy realities and the Indigenous Livelihoods in Zanzibar

The current state of art in the designated blue economy economic sectors namely tourism, seaweed farming, fishing, shipping and port as well as oil and gas sector as they have widely advocated by the current Zanzibar President H.E Dr. Hussein Mwinyi. The fact that the earmarked five sectors in Zanzibar stand as instrumental gear towards changing the livelihoods of the people through sustainable and affordable means. The reflection of the blue economy political adage based on the political promises relying on the five (5) major economic sectors were widely advocated, this section unravels the current state of art of the designated five (5) blue economy economic sectors:

#### 3.1.1 Fisheries and Aquaculture

According to RGoZ, (2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup>, fisheries and aquaculture sectors are widely domestically and locally practiced economic sectors among Zanzibar coastal communities. The sectors contribute to national economy of the country both in terms of income and employment. The fisheries sector has proved crucial among small island economies and coastal communities in alleviating poverty and supporting livelihoods through the creation of hundreds of thousands of direct jobs, and many indirect jobs for those working further up the value chain. As well as providing an income stream, the fisheries sector provides a nutrient-rich source of food that alleviates hunger and malnutrition. According to (OCGS, 2019) <sup>[6]</sup>, fisheries in Zanzibar are mostly artisanal with a small semi-industrial component. Most of the fishing activities are currently taking place within internal and territorial waters (12 nautical miles). The estimated size of fishing grounds for Zanzibar artisanal fishermen is about 6,720 square kilometers of which 4,000 square kilometers

(59 per cent) are around Unguja and 2,720 square kilometers (40.5 per cent) are around Pemba. Official estimates of per capita fish consumption in Zanzibar are around 17 kilograms which is slightly higher than the world per capita supply of 16.2 kilograms. Zanzibar exports fish averaging 1,806 metric tons per year. Moreover, fishery is a very promising sector with high returns. However, increasing sea-level, sea temperature, ocean acidification and other sources of marine pollution are affecting fisheries and ecosystem services, including fisheries in terms of biological stock and spatial distribution.

With high potential for the development of the fishing industry, most of the fishing activities in Zanzibar are small-scale (artisanal), taking place along coastal reefs using traditional methods and crafts. Demand for fish is increasing as tourist hotels and restaurants seek high-value species such as swordfish, squid, octopus, crab, marlin, snappers and prawns. In 2019, the share of the fishing sector to overall economic output for Zanzibar was 4.8%. This rate has been gradually declining since its peak of 6.6% in 2012. Zanzibar has been shifting away from an agricultural-based economy to a greater emphasis on services, notably the tourism industry, and recorded a positive average growth of 3.4% for the past ten years (OCGS, 2019) <sup>[6]</sup>. The increasingly booming fishing industry in Zanzibar recently, envisage the practical role of fisheries and aquaculture sectors towards practically realizing blue economy. This among other factors, the sector is meant also to have a large potential to grow blue economy economic opportunities and potentials besides increasingly furthering employment, food security and ultimately realize sustainable economic growth and development in Zanzibar.

Despite its modest growth rate and contribution to GDP, the importance of the fisheries sector in Zanzibar cannot be understated, both as a means of feeding the population and through supporting jobs and creating linkages with the tourism industry. The sector is envisaged to generate an estimate of 13,925 jobs in boat building, the processing of marine products, exportation and importation, the selling of fishing gear and boat building and repair (Feidi, 2005; <sup>[1]</sup> SWIO Fish, 2018). It is estimated that the entire value chain of the fisheries sector supports about 20% of Zanzibar's population (Feidi, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>, generating USD 50 million in demand from both the tourism and local channels. The quantity of fish catch in 2019 was estimated to be 36,728 tonnes worth TZS 196.65 billion or US\$ 83.7 million. In 2019, the sector contributed 4.8% to GDP, representing a 0.4% decrease from 2018 (OCGS, 2019) <sup>[6]</sup>. Marine fishes provide over 90% of the animal protein needed in Zanzibar. Based on a population of nearly 1.6 million people, the annual per capita consumption of fish is about 22 kg per year (OCGS, 2019) <sup>[6]</sup> compared with per capita red meat consumption of only 3-4 kg per year (Feidi, 2005; ZATI, 2010; SWIOFish, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Following the fact that the Government enacted The Fisheries Policy in (2014) which stresses the beauty and productivity of marine and coastal resources must be sustained through environmental conservation, the policy stands as instrumental strategy towards attaining blue economy. The policy highlights integrated coastal zone management as an objective by establishing harmony between institutions involved in using coastal zone areas. The need for coordination is clear because a large part of Zanzibar's coastal zone is used for both fisheries and

forestry, with the country's mangrove forests serving as important fishing and breeding grounds for various fish species. The existence of the policy enables supportive environment for the blue economy to fear smoothly, hence the supporting the realization of the said Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage.

On the other side of aquaculture, seaweed production is highly dominating the industry, meanwhile, aquaculture is dominated by seaweed production, which is one of Zanzibar's major industries that supports the livelihoods and employment of thousands. It is one of Zanzibar's largest cash crops, with the economy exporting 9,663.2 tons of seaweed at a value of TZS 10,382.5 million in 2019, representing approximately 21.3% of Zanzibar's total exports value and 34.3% of total cash crop export value. Despite accounting for less than 1% of total agricultural production (ZPC, 2019), seaweed exports have averaged 11.7% of Zanzibar's merchandise exports over the past five years, representing a significant source of foreign exchange earnings (OCGS, 2019) <sup>[6]</sup>.

According to RGoZ, (2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup>, seaweed farming is a well-established industry in Zanzibar. It has created more than 25,000 jobs for the indigenous people especially women. Zanzibar is the third largest exporter of seaweed in the world, after the Philippines and Indonesia. There are two main seaweed species cultured in Zanzibar. *Eucaema spinosum* is dominant specie as it grows throughout the year and in almost all areas of Zanzibar. Another specie *Eucaema cotton* available in Zanzibar which grows in some areas of the Zanzibar oceans and in some months of a year (usually during the cool periods). However, this industry is now facing the threat of climate change due to increasing sea temperature and higher peak temperature events affecting yield and quality.

Accounting for 21.3% of Zanzibar's total exports in 2019, seaweed potential in the course of improving the livelihoods of coastal communities' calls for more investment in the sector. In 2019, seaweed was farmed in over 56 villages in Zanzibar and employed 12,903 farmers. About 80% of all seaweed farmers are women and 90% of seaweed production takes place in Pemba. Seaweed farming has become an alternative source of income for coastal communities and often acts as a supplement to fishing or agriculture-based households.

In line with Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage, seaweed production stands an instrumental position in realizing blue economy. This among others, its potential in the countries' economy including standing 21.3% of Zanzibar's total exports since 2019, makes it useful sector towards transforming the Zanzibar economy. This can be strengthened despite other aquaculture activities in Zanzibar, such as mariculture, being practiced in small-scale and in their infancy (FAO, 2018; IUCN, 2020) <sup>[2, 4]</sup>. However, the country has recognised the necessity of diversifying the aquaculture sector beyond seaweed production, hence seaweed farming being an instrumental strategy towards realizing Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage.

### 3.1.2 Coastal Tourism

According to RGoZ, (2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup>, tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Zanzibar and has attracted more than 68 per cent of investment projects approved by Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA). Tourism is one of

the key pillars of the Zanzibar economy, supporting tens of thousands of jobs in the service sector, representing an important source of government revenue and GDP growth. As a coastal destination, Zanzibar's tourism sector is directly linked to the blue economy, particularly marine tourism and beach holidays (ZATI, 2010; OCGS, 2019; RGoZ, 2020) <sup>[6, 8-9]</sup>. Zanzibar has seen a significant increase in tourist arrivals, with an average annual growth rate of nearly 18.7% between 2011 and 2019. In 2019 specifically, the number of tourist arrival was 583,264. It is estimated that there are about 22,000 direct jobs in the tourism sector, of which 76% are employed at one of the 473 hotels in Zanzibar (ZCT, 2017; Ministry of Information, Tourism and Heritage, 2017).

The sector boasts a wide variety of tourism options ranging from the historical and cultural sites of Old Stone Town, to beach and leisure activities in Zanzibar. It is a very promising sector with high returns. With more emphasis on eco-tourism, opportunities exist in hotels/resorts specifically chain hotels, sports tourism, conference tourism. Some other potential fields of tourist attraction that are directly or indirectly linked to coastal tourism are health tourism, heritage tourism, marinas, special cuisine restaurants, sports activities, amusement and recreation activities. The recent coordinated plans that have integrated key strategic sectors in terms of boldly realizing blue economy potentials among indigenous livelihoods in various areas of the Zanzibar archipelago, the following synthesized lessons are documented from selected sectors which vividly show how Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage is instrumental towards transforming Zanzibar economy.

However, various environmental issues, including pollution, waste, overpopulation and unsustainable use of natural resources, such as freshwater and firewood, threaten the sector. With the tourism sector mainly focusing on marine tourism ('sun and sea' holidays, diving, snorkelling, boat trips, etc.), a lack of proper growth management may lead to the degradation of marine habitats, loss of ocean biodiversity, sea pollution and over-exploitation of marine resources; the 8<sup>th</sup> phase has stand out to combat the general hinderances and stumbling blocks of tourism sector in serving the instrumental role in the making tourism practices sustainable in Zanzibar.

It is on that due that the sustainable management of the tourism sector would enable the economic benefits generated from tourism to support the utilisation, rehabilitation and restoration of Zanzibar's marine natural resources. Indeed, tourist choices are increasingly influenced by sustainability considerations. Following a 2007 Trip Advisor survey findings that 38% of travellers took environmental friendliness into consideration when booking accommodation, with 34% willing to pay more to stay in eco-friendly hotels (Pollock, 2007), the government has taken measures to ensure social and environmental issues related to the Zanzibar's touristic destinations are kept clean in favour of the majority of international tourists including upholding the role of hotels commitment in protecting the local environment, hence managing the instrumental problem in sustaining tourism sector in Zanzibar. Therefore, the need for sustainable tourism has to be emphasised in the country's blue economy framework.

### 3.1.3 Maritime Trade and Infrastructure

The maritime sector plays a key role in facilitating international trade in Zanzibar and the neighboring towns

including Dar es Salaam and Tanga. The global movement of goods relies heavily on the existence and effective management of ports and shipping. Today, 80% of global trade by volume and more than 70% of global trade by value are transported by sea. This figure is expected to rise, with worldwide container traffic in particular projected to triple from 2011 to 2030 (UNCTAD, 2018), hence an instrumental sector for realizing blue economy.

According to RGoZ, (2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup>, the call for the importance of adequate maritime infrastructure in Zanzibar is highly pronounced, given its strategic location in the Indian Ocean as a coastal nation. Zanzibar Port at Malindi in Unguja alone handles around 90% of Zanzibar's trade while the remaining 10% is split among the airports and four smaller seaports across Unguja and Pemba (Nordic Development Fund, 2014). This among others, has made the government to respond to Maritime Trade and Infrastructure by constructing the new ports which will deliberately serve the purpose including Mpigaduri and Mangapwani ports which will respond to the call for enhancing Maritime Trade and Infrastructure towards mainstreaming blue economy key instrumental sectors. According to WTO (2015) in every 10 years the sum of exports and imports in the world increases by 20% given favourable trading environment; both physically and legally. The ongoing improvement in Maritime Trade and Infrastructure in Zanzibar is a total reflection of Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's political adage towards realizing blue economy instrumental economic potentials, hence become increasingly a crucial component of economic growth in Zanzibar. This will strategically avail Zanzibar's ability to translate its advantageous geographical position into a competitive trading advantage in East African countries.

### 3.1.4 Indigenous Livelihoods in Zanzibar

Conceptually, livelihoods mean activities, entitlements and assets through which people make a living with (Chambers and Conway, 1992). Assets, in this particular context, are defined as not only natural/biological (land, water, common-property resources, flora fauna), but also social (community, family, social networks), human (knowledge, creation by skills), and physical (roads, markets, clinics, schools, bridges and all sorts of infrastructures). In another context, de Haan and Zoomers (2003), considers livelihood as about individuals, households, or group making a living by attempting to meet various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties and responding to new opportunities (Omar, 2018) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Basing on the Zanzibar socio-economic potentials, both definitions above emphasize making a living as major components of any livelihood among coastal communities and mainland communities. However, in order to make a living through assets available in a given urban area, communities have been constructing diverse portfolios of strategies including in the formal and informal trade. As an island state, Zanzibar greatly depends on the sea, coast and marine resources hence being the carrier of blue activities for socio-economic development. According to RGoZ, (2020) <sup>[8-9]</sup> about 98% of Zanzibar's international trade by volume is seaborne. These blue activities contribute to about 29% of the Zanzibar Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ about one-third of the population. The sea-based economy, or blue economy as it is currently known, is not a new economic phenomenon to Zanzibar. Zanzibar has been

engaging in domestic and international ocean-based economic activities for centuries. Evidence shows that by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Zanzibar was already a regional commercial hub due to the abundance of spices and fishery products exchanged internationally through long-haul seaborne trading routes along the Swahili coast and the Indian Ocean, especially with the Arab world and within East Africa.

This among other historical arguments envisage the room for rapid growth of economic sectors. The fast-emerging blue economy paradigm primarily seeks to harness the ocean resources for sustainable development without living behind the livelihoods of indigenous communities who are practicing blue economy opportunities to eke their living in various areas including North Unguja, South Unguja and Pemba beaches. The major blue economy resources include fish, other living organisms, genetic resources, minerals and other non-living substances, offshore energy and a host of marine services, namely, transport, tourism and communications across Zanzibar and her small islands all over are currently practiced by the majority of communities in Zanzibar. Oceans have historically supported humanity for meeting their many essential livelihoods needs and if harnessed in keeping with their carrying capacity, they would continue to do so forever.

#### 4. Conclusion

Although Zanzibar has made good progress in the reduction of basic needs poverty by approximately 5% in the last five years, the changes have mainly been reflected in urban areas, all of which border the sea. Extreme poverty, however, remains a challenge in rural areas, where a majority of people depend on agriculture as the main source of employment and food security. It was in this regard that the 8<sup>th</sup> phase government regime has put forward the blue economy as a strategic solution towards escalating poverty alleviation initiatives and efforts among their local communities. Since the study findings revealed blue economy's key economic sectors have a potential to reduce the vulnerability of the Zanzibar economy, if wisely considered and invested it can strategically be used to lift Zanzibaris out of extreme poverty so as to attain upper-middle income status by 2050 or even earlier than that. This new approach essentially sought to transform the traditional ocean economy into an ecosystem-driven harnessing of oceanic resources for better conservation of the marine environment hence attaining sustainable economic development. The fact that blue economy concept is still evolving and different stakeholders have adopted its varying definitions based on their own visions and priorities, the study conclude it being the backbone of the Zanzibar economy as one of the small island economies. This study concludes the blue economy potentials and opportunities being widely adopted among indigenous livelihoods in Zanzibar archipelago hence vividly turning a political adage into coastal communities' realities and practices.

#### 5. Recommendations

Basing on the study findings in the above-described sections, the following recommendation are put forward:

**To policy makers:** Deliberate effort must be embraced to enable the RGoZ and her operational mechanisms to undertake several initiatives for diversifying Zanzibar's

economy through blue economy opportunities. This includes undertaking capacity building for various economic sectors towards extending their participation in harnessing economic potentials by taking advantages of the booming blue economy opportunities in Zanzibar. This includes embracing public-private partnership model in practicing blue economy related interventions in Zanzibar.

**To blue economy opportunities practitioners:** Intensive capacity building interventions are urged to all actors from all instrumental sectors in the blue economy agenda in order to elevate their technical capabilities towards effective pursuing blue economy related interventions in Zanzibar.

**Local communities:** Apart from capacity building and awareness creation programs, it is further urged to be exposed simple technologies for harnessing blue economy opportunities in Zanzibar.

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