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Ethical Issues of Research

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INTRODUCTION

Research is basically done to generate new knowledge and contribute to scholarship, policy, practice leading to well being of the people who participate in it. Ethical issues generally cut across the qualitative-quantitative divide. Sound research is based on moral and ethical endeavor and it should ensure that interests of all those participating in research process must not be harmed during research. Generally universities and research institutions in order to conduct research in an ethically appropriate manner not only lay down their own principles and guidelines but also make it mandatory for researcher to take approval from ethics committees or equivalent body. Ethical conduct of research faces numerous challenges from certain qualitative research approaches such as action research, biography, phenomenology and ethnographic methods. This demands closer scrutiny of all these mentioned ethical issues. Nuremberg Military trial was the first attempt to codify principals regarding ethical conduct of research. As a result six principles outlining the conduct of ethical research emerged. According to this guideline, human experimentation is justified only if its results benefit society and it is conducted in accordance with basic principles that satisfy moral, ethical, and legal concepts. Their original six points were expanded to ten and were included in the trial's verdict Known as the Nuremberg Code (1949), these principles became accepted throughout the world, despite the fact that the legal force of this document was never established. The Nuremberg Code consisted of ten basic ethical principles that the accused violated. These ten guidelines are- Research participants must voluntarily consent to research participation, Research aims should contribute to the good of society, Research must be based on sound theory and prior animal testing, Research must avoid unnecessary physical and mental suffering, No research projects can go forward where serious injury and/or death are potential outcomes, The degree of risk taken with research participants cannot exceed anticipated benefits of results, Proper environment and protection for participants is necessary, Experiments can be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons, Human subjects must be allowed to discontinue their participation at any time, Scientists must be prepared to terminate the experiment if there is cause to believe that continuation will be harmful or result in injury or death. Like many codes, Nuremberg did not detail specific procedures and processes to guide researchers regarding the operationalization and implementation of these principles (Nuremberg Code, 1949). The Nuremberg Guidelines paved the way for the next major initiative designed to promote responsible research with human subjects, the Helsinki Declaration. The Helsinki Declaration was developed by the World Medical Association and has been revised and updated periodically since 1964, with the last update occurring in 2000.The document lays out basic ethical principles for conducting biomedical research and specifies guidelines for research conducted either by a physician, in conjunction with medical care, or within a clinical setting. The Helsinki Declaration contains all the basic ethical elements specified in the Nuremberg Code following the Helsinki Declaration, the next set of research ethics guidelines came out in the Belmont Report of 1979 from the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The report outlines as- The ethical principles for research with human subjects, Boundaries between medical practice and research, The concepts of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, Applications of these principles are in informed consent (respect for persons), assessing risks and benefits (beneficence), and subject selection (justice). The first principle is related to respect for persons, it stresses that there should be autonomy for individuals in decision-making and additional protection should be given to persons with diminished autonomy. This principle is operationalised through actions such as careful adherence to the best practices in securing informed consent. The second principle of beneficence reflects that persons should not only be actively protected from any type of harm or negative outcomes but also positive outcomes or benefits must be supported and promoted. This principle is operationalised through actions such as timely, responsible, and objective risk benefit analyses. The third principle of justice highlights that people should be treated equally and they must share the benefits and burden associated with research in a equitable manner. This principle is operationalised through actions such as the implementation of procedures to equitably select subjects for inclusion in the research. Thus, Nuremberg, Helsinki, and Belmont guidelines provided the foundation of more ethically uniform research to which stringent rules and consequences for violation were attached. Since then, Governmental laws and regulations concerning the responsible conduct of research have since been developed for research that involves both human and animal subjects. Central to the standards of practice of research ethics are an individual’s voluntary participation, right to privacy, confidentiality, equitable selection of subjects, and informed consent as a result it is important to ensure that the practical aspect of research should be laid on sound ethical principles

DISCUSSION

The notion of ethics is a complex construct, imbued with particular values and beliefs that influence how we approach research (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010). Research ethics are, at their simplest principles of right and wrong conduct (Gallagher, 2009). They can be conceived of as a set of moral principles and rules of conduct (Morrow & Richards, 1996), with ethical questions woven through every aspect of research, shaping the methods and the findings (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). The subject matter of ethics is often said to be human welfare, but the bigger picture includes the flourishing of the whole ecosystem. The term research ethics can be used to refer ethical philosophies and also the mechanisms used to promote and enforce these, including the bureaucratic systems of regulation, management and governance (Gallagher, 2009). These mechanisms and systems include ethical codes and guidelines, which are generally endorsed by ethics review boards and committees who monitor compliance of research proposals. (Resnik, 2010) noted that when the majority of people hear the word ethics, they think of rules distinguishing right from wrong. Ethics can be defined as the norms for conduct that differentiate acceptable and unacceptable behavior. To many people, these norms are so obvious that they are considered simple commonsense. Fieser and Dowden, (2004) in their Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy points that the field of ethics also called moral philosophy, involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. (Marshall, 1998) In his Dictionary of Sociology highlights that Ethics is often defined as the concern with what ought to be, whereas science (including social science) is concerned with describing reality as it actually exists. He goes on to state that social science should be value free or value neutral. He acknowledges however, that the practice of social science investigation (both the means and goals) is intrinsically bound up with ethical considerations.

Research is identified in three basic structures. Formal Research, Informal Research and Independent Research. Formal Research is majorly conducted through institutions - Formal Research structure where one enrolls themselves in academic institutions to obtain a research degree. Informal type of research is conducted when and whenever need arises. This can be done by individuals, institutions, civil society and NGO'S. It also structures on loosely trained methodologies of research, no theory considerations and invalid sources of collected data. Independent research is the research conducted by individuals without any pre requisite requirement of any sources. Basically they are of temporary in nature, that doesn't have any impact on concerns of society or institutions. Research and ethics are intervened because of accountability, authenticity, genuine indulgance, usage of correct methodology, genuine resources, impact and effects of research on other arenas. In particular the ethical concerns are the foundations of right to choose your own topic of interest, the active acceptance of research subjects’, right to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent. It was during the twentieth century that ethical debate got enriched by various contributors. It was a period that witnessed the birth and growth of many social sciences, which later on emerged on their own as a autonomous bodies of knowledge. Initially it was the medical science research where the concerns regarding research ethics originated, later on this expanded to include all type of research related to human subjects.

Marshall (1998) points out that within industrialized societies there is adoption of formal codes of conduct and greater emphasis on ethical research procedures. Individual ethics can only be understood when they are juxtaposed with the society within which they are practised. Therefore by extraction we can deduce that individual ethical behaviour is far more likely to flourish within a just and equitable society. Research is basically carried out in a particular social, cultural and political climate which demonstrate that this inherent climate have tremendous impact both in terms of epistemologically and ontologically on the overall research process and resultant findings. Alderson (2005) states that ethics is about helping researchers to become aware of hidden problems and questions in research, and ways of dealing with these, though it does not provide simple answers. Ethics is about how to deal with conflict, disagreement and ambivalence rather than attempting to eliminate it (Hooper, Dyson and Cabral, 2008). May (2001) asserts that Values do not simply affect some aspects of research, but all aspects. Pring (2001) sees the researcher as a person that requires very special sorts of virtue, both moral and intellectual. Pring goes on to name some of these virtues: ‘the disposition to search for the truth’, ‘impartiality’,‘openness to criticism and co-operation’, ‘resistance to the blandishments or attractions which tempt one’, ‘courage’, ‘honesty’, ‘concern for the well-being of those who are being researched’, ‘modesty’, ‘humility’, ‘trust’, and the ‘ability to keep promises’. Pring fully accepts the difficulties in ensuring that all researchers possess these qualities but states that such qualities and dispositions would seem to be essential for any researcher or would be researcher. There are studies which indicate that it is impossible to ignore the positionality of the researcher cannot be ignored. As each researcher has a position by virtue of their race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on. As Nixon et al. (2003) exhort, that because of this positionality, researchers are required to exercise deep and vigilant reflexivity and ensure that they are attentive to the effects of their own peripheral vision. Interdisciplinary collaboration among the arts, humanities, health and social sciences is receiving much attention, characterized by enthusiasm for the creation of new knowledge and new forms of knowledge translation and exchange, this has made ethics more important in research (Rossiter, Kontos, Colantonio et al, 2008). While, different methodological perspectives on engaging with research have been advanced, questions of ethics have, in large part, been neglected (Sinding, Gray and Nisker, 2008). Fraser and al Sayah (2011) points that ethical issues is an important area for development, especially regarding data ownership, appropriate ways to analyze data, and participant anonymity. White and Belliveau (2010) examined ethical considerations that influence how we develop, present and respond to performed research. They cautioned that ethical implications should not be regarded as potential distractions or obstructions, nor as a responsibility solely addressed prior to research never again to be considered once the process is underway. They noted the need for researchers to maintain a critical awareness of emergent ethical dilemmas throughout the process. Research which take into account issues of power, rights and responsibilities and the roles of all stakeholders with more egalitarian and democratic process based on respect for and partnership with community members is said to be more ethically aware. For example CBPR (community building participatory research) reflects complex relationships of power and accountability and it raises distinctive ethical challenges related to developing and maintaining partnerships, difficulties in maintaining anonymity and blurred boundaries between researcher and researched (i.e. community researchers researching their own communities). Communities may have their own ethical codes/framings that differ from or conflict with those of external researchers (Sanderson and Kindon, 2004). According to (Quigley,2006) the most problematic areas of research ethics in communities are about data control, confidentiality, interpretation of results, ownership, publication of results and dissemination procedures. Hill (2005) maintains that the small number of well established and accepted principles underpinning an ethical approach (autonomy/respect for persons, beneficence and non- malificence, and justice/equity/non-discrimination), can be developed and expressed as a set of rights: to self determination, privacy, dignity, anonymity, confidentiality, fair treatment and protection from discomfort or harm . Bell (2008) identified values held in common by key human rights documents and various research ethics statements, namely: respect for human dignity; informed consent; individual autonomy; equality; privacy and confidentiality; freedom of expression; access to information and justice. Many community research partners may not anticipate these issues and it is particularly important to negotiate before research starts. To avoid the academic exploitation of community data, stigmatisation of communities and violation of privacy, some projects develop agreements relating to data ownership and publication. Many projects establish community-based agreements to ensure participants understand the research, that there is an awareness and explanation of community risks and benefits and issues of anonymity, coercion and voluntariness are discussed (Quigley, 2006). (Fundación Sabiduría Indígena and Kothari, 1997) argue that benefits for local people should be given as much weight as theoretical and methodological aspects. (Moore, 2004) points that universities need to adapt to alternative research methodologies. Researchers conducting research with children emphasise the ongoing nature of ethical considerations and that ethical issues need to be considered throughout the entire research process (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). Cultural and social context Ethical decisions are of course made in a cultural context, including whom consent is required from (Bogolub and Thomas, 2005). (Clacherty and Donald, 2007) consider unequivocally that the key ethical principles in research are universal. However, the interpretation and application of ethical principles with different groups of people in different social contexts must take varying factors into account. This requires flexibility and often complex decision-making. Inspite of wide recognition of interpreting and applying ethical principles, there exist wide gap in addressing these issues in terms of application. The ethical issue of consent has probably generated the most debate in regard to research with children (Cocks, 2006). informed consent rests on four core principles: consent involves an explicit act, for example, verbal or written agreement; consent can only be given if the participants are informed about and have an understanding of the research; consent must be given voluntarily without coercion; and consent must be renegotiable so that children may withdraw at any stage of the research process (Gallagher, 2009). There are common and universal ethical issues across world contexts, such as consent, protection from harm, confidentiality, payment, power disparities and authenticity in representation of views (Porter et al., 2010). However, cultural, social, political and economic factors interact to pose particular challenges with regard to these issues in different contexts. Ethical issues have different resonances in different world contexts. The issues around informed consent are entirely relevant in Majority world contexts, but they are further complicated by particular practical challenges (Clacherty and Donald, 2007). Research ethics is a complex construct, essentially concerned with the principles of right and wrong conduct (Gallagher, 2009), that reflect various epistemological paradigms and methodological practices within particular social and cultural contexts (Trussell, 2008). Increasingly, researchers question the assumptions that ethics can be reduced to codified sets of principles, and that following these systematically will make research more ethically sound (Gallagher, 2009). The major, well established and accepted principles of ethics in research include: autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice (King and Churchill, 2000). It is the respect for autonomy that gives potential research participants the freedom to choose and act without any fear. Important issues that are common in research are issues related to Anonymity, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, representation, anonymity and ownership of data. Along with this authorship/ownership of the work, truth, interpretation and representation, informed consent/anonymity/confidentiality dangerous emotional terrain is some other example of ethical issues in research.

ETHICAL PRINCIPALS IN RESEARCH

Given the importance of ethics for conduct of research, it should not be surprising that many professional associations, government agencies, and universities have adopted specific codes, rules, and policies relating to research ethics. These ethical principals are Honesty- Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data. Do not deceive colleagues, granting agencies, or the public. Objectivity-Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research. Integrity- Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action. Carefulness- Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals. Openness- share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas. Respect for Intellectual Property-Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give credit where credit is due. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize. Confidentiality-Protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records. Responsible Publication- Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication. Responsible Mentoring- Help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions. Social Responsibility- Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy. Non-Discrimination- Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity. Competence-Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole. Legality-Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies. Human Subjects Protection- When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly (Shamoo A and Resnik D, 2009)

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH ETHICS

The potential ethical issues which are raised by different research methods not only differ from one type of research method (i.e. surveys versus in-depth interviews), but also the way in which a research method is used (i.e. overt versus covert observation). Ethical requirements in research vary across countries, but there are some basic principles of research ethics. Among these there are five key ethical issues, these are influenced not only by the epistemological understanding of researcher but also by the context in which research is occurring. Methodological choices also contribute to ameliorate and moderate the effects of these issues, and it is evident that there are no 'one size fits all' methods to ensure ethical research practice. The ethical and moral dilemmas that arise during the research process are shaped by the context in which the research occurs and can be responded in a multitude of ways. The five key ethical principles that are common across the board are informed and voluntary consent; confidentiality of information shared; anonymity of research participants; Beneficence or no harm to participants; and reciprocity. Researchers are expected to obtain informed consent from all those who are directly involved in research or in the vicinity of research. This principle adheres to a larger issue of respect to the participants so that they are not coerced into participation and have access to relevant information prior to the consent. Usually consent is obtained through written consent forms, and necessary elements of consent are identified by the review committees. These usually include prior information on key elements of research such as purpose, procedures, time period, risks, benefits, and a clause stipulating that participation is voluntary and the participants have the right to withdraw from the study. Informed consent is a process of three interactions: provision of information by the researcher; the potential participant understanding the information; and then making a response to it (Cocks, 2006). The interactive nature of this process makes it a two way exchange of information, with the central feature present in all decision making of digesting information, weighing it up in light of personal values, and making and standing by a decision" (Alderson, 2002). Alderson and Morrow (2011) thus aptly describe informed consent as the invisible act of evaluating information and making a decision, and the visible act of signifying the decision. Gallagher (2009) considers that informed consent rests on four core principles: First consent involves an explicit act, for example, verbal or written agreement, second consent can only be given if the participants are informed about and have an understanding of the research, third consent must be given voluntarily without coercion and fourth consent must be renegotiable so that children may withdraw at any stage of the research process. However, Gallagher goes on to note that putting these principles into action is often challenging. Each of these principles will now be considered in turn, in light of the challenges involved. Hill (2005) identifies three elements to confidentiality in research. These are- Public confidentiality (not identifying research participants in research reports, presentations and so forth); Social network confidentiality (not passing on information to family members, friends or others known to the person); Third party breach of privacy (where a group or household member reveals something personal about another). Principle of anonymity essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study-even to the researchers themselves. As a result, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but sometimes it is also difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points (e.g., a pre-post study). Researchers are generally expected to provide the participants with an outline of risks and benefits involved to the participants in the study. Ethical standards also require that researchers do not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm due to their participation. Harm can be defined as both in terms of physical and psychological. The principle of reciprocity requires that researchers consider active ways through which participants could be compensated for their time and effort. Generally information about risks and benefits are expected to be provided in summary in the consent form or in a brief write up attached with the consent form. These principles and procedures for ethical engagement with a research study are laid out with the best of intentions to protect participants from malpractices and breach of ethics. These issues are important not only for ethical reasons, but also for practical ones as failure to meet these basic principles may lead research being.

Adherence to ethical principles in research is closely linked with assuring the quality and rigour of the study, in terms of its credibility and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Methodology and ethics are integrally linked; ethics has methodologies and methodologies have ethics (Jones, 2001). Ethically sound techniques are perceived as adding to the value of research and, conversely, methodological soundness can improve ethics (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). Researchers have suggested that 'bad science is bad ethics' with the implication being that ethical assessment needs to include consideration of whether the research questions are worth asking and if the methods used are an effective way of answering them (Alderson, 1995). Abebe (2009) highlights the importance of the researcher and the researched co-creating and managing ethical spaces within a given socio-cultural context. Thomson (2007) argues that participation is not inherent to the research methods themselves, but is embedded within the social-spatial interaction between participants, which includes the researcher and rests on how researchers invite participants into a research arena and facilitate their exploration and sharing of views on a topic. Inspite of existing clear ethical standards and principles there will be times when the need to do accurate research runs up against the rights of potential participants. No set of standards can possibly anticipate every ethical circumstance. A proper procedure has to be adopted that assures researchers that they will consider all relevant ethical issues in formulating research plans. In order to address such needs most institutions and organizations have formulated an Institutional Review Board (IRB) i.e. a panel of persons who reviews grant proposals with respect to ethical implications and decides whether additional actions need to be taken to assure the safety and rights of participants. By reviewing proposals for research, IRBs also help to protect both the organization and the researcher against potential legal implications of neglecting to address important ethical issues of participants.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN DATA USAGE

As the world become more digitized and electronic data being available everywhere, the owners and custodians of such data are increasingly concerned about how they should protect their data from inappropriate disclosure, and how they should determine use of data for research and other purposes. These concerns are generated not only from a professional ethics perspective (to protect the privacy of individuals whose information is contained in the data sets), but also from professional liability position. Recent nuances of approach to the method of data collection for research purposes have also added significantly to the growing debate regarding research ethics. From past few years we are witnessing tremendous increase in the availability and use of individual- level, large administrative databases for research purposes, due in part to the growth in computerized clinical records in conjunction with their ease of analysis associated with new advances in technology and software packages (Drake and McHugo, 2003). Administrative data have become readily available, inexpensive to acquire, computer readable, and often are amassed on a very large number of individuals (Iezzoni, 2004). In recent years there has been growing interest and trend to use administrative data as secondary source of research. Kass et al. (2003) noted that the use of medical records has become an important source of data for health services, epidemiologic, and clinical studies. A significant amount of serious debate has been generated in academic circle with regard to use of individual personal information for research with broader societal benefits. Issues related to individual which are stored in data base are rights, confidentiality, privacy, harm; issues related to the data owner are access, copyright and issues associated with the scientific merit of the research conducted using administrative data are data accuracy, appropriateness. Regarding issues of individuals whose information resides in databases, Mason (1986) noted that the ethical issues associated with the growth in electronic data were many among these two important one are privacy and property, which are related to the individuals whose data reside in these databases. Most important thing is that how ethical principles of research outlined in Belmont Report are practiced when administrative data are used for research purposes. Greenberg (2002) highlighted the need to find an appropriate balance between individuals' rights to privacy and protection of their personal records on the one hand and, on the other, providing professional's access to these data for education, research, and public health surveillance. Using administrative data for research purposes has raised a number of concerns for data owners. Mason (1986) discussed how data owners have an important responsibility for controlling data access. Mason (1986) discusses ethical concerns that arise as advancing technology allows for broader use of electronic information in research, especially concern about when and to whom data access ought to be offered, balancing the three initial concerns (privacy, accuracy and ownership) with our ethical imperative to improve society, including the use of such data to do so. Karp et al. (2008) convened a panel that explored the ethical and practical issues associated with use of secondary data-particularly when linking and aggregating data sets. There recommendations addressed concerns in three broad areas: legal and ethical permissions, data security and confidentiality and appropriate and effective use of data.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN INTERNET RESEARCH

Buchanan (2010) define Internet research ethics (IRE) as analysis of ethical issues and application of research ethics principles as they pertain to research conducted on and in the Internet. Internet-based research is a research which utilizes the Internet to collect information through an online tool, such as an online survey; studies about how people use the Internet, e.g., through collecting data or examining activities in or on any online environments; and uses of online datasets, databases, or repositories. In field of Internet research ethics there is a debate over Internet as a research tool versus a research venue. The distinction between tool and venue plays out across disciplinary and methodological orientations. As a tool, Internet research is enabled by search engines, data aggregators, databases, catalogs, and repositories, while venues include such places or locales as conversation applications (IM/chat rooms), MUDs, MOOs, MMORPGs (forms of role playing games, virtual worlds) newsgroups, home pages, blogs, micro-blogging (i.e., Twitter),crowd sourcing applications, or online course software.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Research misconduct is explained in terms of identifying and reporting unethical or unsound research. The United States' Office of Scientific and Technology Policy (OSTP) define misconduct, and its components, as follows: Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Fabrication is related to making up data that doesn't exist or results and recording or reporting them are deliberate acts of fraud. It also includes use of selective data to support a hypothesis. Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Researchers who manipulate their data violate both the basic values and widely accepted professional standards of research. They not only mislead their colleagues but also potentially impede progress in their research. They undermine their own authority and trustworthiness as researchers. Mislead data along improper manipulation also arise from poor experimental design or careless measurements as well as from improper manipulation. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit i.e. reusing text, results, or creative expression without explicitly acknowledging or referencing the original author or publication. It is the responsibility of the author to ensure that the submitted manuscript is original and shall not contain plagiarized material. Examples of plagiarism include verbatim copying of published articles; verbatim copying of elements of published articles (i.e. figures, illustrations, tables); verbatim copying of elements of published articles with crediting, but not clearly differentiating original work from previously published work; and self-plagiarism. It is the responsibility of the author to obtain proper permission and to appropriately cite (whether the material was written by another author or the author him or herself) or quote (as reusing other works with proper acknowledgement the material not original to the author). The most unethical practices involve substantial reproduction of another study (bringing no novelty to the scientific community) without proper acknowledgement. If such duplicates have different authors, then they may be guilty of plagiarism, whereas papers with overlapping authors may represent self-plagiarism. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion. Research misconduct which are due to result of mistaken, negligent, unintentional, lazy, or sloppy research practices are usually covered by institutional policies and are punishable at the institutional level. In these instances of research misconduct, the use of outside research evaluators (like the IRB) and the process of peer review helps to maintain and safeguard scientific integrity.

ETHICS MECHANISMS

Ethics mechanisms, including ethical codes and guidelines, and research ethics committees are means of trying to ensure that ethical standards are met and maintained in research. Ethical dilemmas are unavoidable in the research process and sometimes they can be pre-empted, sometimes they emerge spontaneously (Duncan et al., 2009). Research ethics committees play a vital role in raising awareness of ethical issues and monitoring research standards (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). However, some researchers argue that current guidelines and protocols within universities and institutions are problematic, as they evolved from medical, rather than social sciences perspectives (Skelton, 2008). There is a danger that after gaining approval from an ethics committee a project may be regarded as ethical in its entirety, and certain issues may given precedence by ethics committees, such as consent and protection (Powell and Smith, 2006), but less attention be given to ethics as an ongoing social practice (Christensen and Prout, 2002). As well as protecting research participants, ethics committees also exist to protect researchers and manage risks to their institutions and universities (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010). Research ethics committees play a vital role in raising awareness of ethical issues and monitoring research standards (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). They can help prevent poor research, safeguard research participants and be a protective barrier between potential participants and researchers (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). They play a pivotal role in scrutinizing research proposals and evaluating the adequacy of the research (Balen et al., 2006). The issues given precedence by ethics committees, such as consent and protection (Powell and Smith, 2006), and a focus on specific ethical issues such as gaining access to participants, recruitment, anonymity and confidentiality, may mean that these requirements are in order, but less attention is given to ethics as an ongoing social practice (Christensen and Prout, 2002).

CONCLUSION

It is quite evident that ethical issues are an integral part of research design and consideration for ethics should run throughout the course of the research process, including identification of research problem, engagement in the inquiry and dissemination of results. Ethical issues by their nature are complex; there are rarely easy right and wrong answers to challenging ethical issues. In research issues such as covert research, regulation, vulnerable group, letter of consent has become important. Among numerous concerns for researcher while conducting fieldwork lack of experience in dealing with bureaucratized ethics procedures, the need for cultural sensitivity, security concerns and the consequences of administrative and political practices are important one. Ethics provide researcher with the opportunity to come up with creative, attentive, and just responses to these challenges because failure to take the time to think them through could have devastating consequences.

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