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# UNIT 3 CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS OF ETHICS IN PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY

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## Learning Objectives



After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the meaning of ethics;
- learn why ethics is required in anthropological research;
- know how ethics developed variedly due to different mishaps of anthropologists in the history of anthropological research;
- understand the issues of confidentiality, consent, utility and transmission of knowledge
- learn about more detailed ethical practices; and
- learn about the guidelines provided by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA).

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous chapters we have learnt about the development of practicing (or applied) anthropology. Now that we are equipped with enough knowledge to make ourselves comfortable with the subject, we are ready to learn about the vital concern an anthropologist should keep in mind when s/he applies or practices her/his skills. Among many concerns, an important concern is the issue of ethics. This unit thus will deal with what ethics is, how it came to be used, what its role in application and practice is, what its need is and how its use influences the final creation of an anthropologist.

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## 3.2 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ETHICS?

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Ethics may mean moral conduct, codes, beliefs, values, integrity, conscience, principles, etc. It is a system of moral principles that regulates the appropriate demeanour of an individual or a group. Now that we know what ethics mean, you must be thinking how this comes into the turf of anthropology.

We know from our readings of our earlier texts that anthropology is basically a field science. And this designation is what has led us to act as applied or practicing anthropologists in different organisations. Our main purpose for being in the field to investigate and research brings us in contact with many dealings. The place where we investigate, the people we study, their lives, relationships, equations, etc., are their own which we enter and somehow try to offer to the world with academic, intellectual or professional intentions. As practicing anthropologists we may even go to find solutions for the people whom we study and try to bring about change. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that we get in touch with people and populations and “use” what defines them for the immediate purpose of serving our intentions. The impact of such activities may be high. It is in such situations that ethics plays a big role. For example, we should keep certain questions in mind, like: How the findings of a population can be used without disclosing the identity of the informants? How do we know that the results of our findings will not eventually be a burden on the people studied? Or how much as an investigator, can we become involved with the population at a personal level?

In view of these questions, we may like to believe that ethics denotes a complete criterion of conduct. However it is important for applied and practicing anthropologists to understand the notion of ethics subjectively. This is because it is not easy to identify ethical norms precisely and it is also difficult to employ them steadily as the areas in which practitioners’ research may each have different and problematic ethical needs. Then again ethical concerns are also to be viewed in terms of the respondents, the funding agencies or co-workers, all put together so as to not hurt the sentiments of the involved parties. As there are different outlooks, most of the time there is tension among these associations. Hence ethics is not always as simple as it may sound in the beginning.

It is not as if ethical tenets are specific to practicing anthropologists. Concerns such as reverence for individuals or groups, kindness, and impartiality are all basic to any research, whether he is an anthropologist or otherwise. Any layout or execution of a study is determined by manifestation of the tenets which is influenced by the limitations prescribed by a particular research framework. As a result anthropologists might face more hurdles than other researchers, specifically anthropologists who are employed in research connected to policy formulation where ethnographic and qualitative methods are used. This is no less than a challenge for practicing anthropologists as they have to retain both “scientific and moral integrity in a research reality of competing social values and ambiguous social facts.” (Marshall, 1992: 4).

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### 3.3 ETHICAL CONCERNS IN ANTHROPOLOGY'S HISTORY

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With the growth of new ideas and notions anthropology has flourished immensely. Fields of investigation are increasing with great rapidity. Along with it the growth of applied actions has given birth to fresh challenges and confrontations. In turn this builds new concerns related to ethics.

To delve into history, we find that deliberations on ethical code always occurred with it becoming a major issue of concern during the Vietnam War. The anxiety was aggravated by research projects which were highly ill devised and were conducted without any moral ethos. These were “embarrassing disclosures that anthropologists had cooperated in government counter insurgency research in Latin America in the early 1960s and in Southeast Asia in the late 1960s.” (Fluehr-Lobban, 1991: 62).

In fact much before the Vietnam War or the debacles of the 1960s, in 1919, questions were raised by Franz Boas in a letter to *The Nation* where he openly alleged four anthropologists working as spies under the façade of their job as researchers. In Boas’ own words, he stated that, “a person, who uses science as a cover for political spying, who demeans himself to pose before a foreign government as an investigator and asks for assistance in his alleged researches in order to carry on, under this cloak, his political machinations, prostitutes science in an unpardonable way and forfeits the right to be classed as a scientist.” (Boas 1919, in Weaver 1973:51)

This incident cited by Boas is still a matter of debate among many anthropologists and the gravity of the act still finds mention in published papers, pledges taken at public meetings, and the ethics codes brought out by the *American Anthropological Association* and *The Society for Applied Anthropology*. The main concern, among many others which is always discussed in ethical deliberations, is the possible injury or damage that the actions of an anthropologist may do to a group of people or to an individual. An anthropologist, practicing or academic, has to be sensitive to this concern. As s/he gets intimately connected to the community s/he works with, it becomes inevitable that the relationships between the investigator and the studied community or person becomes complex. In such a situation the results of the research as to be carefully put forward or else there may be critical unforeseen consequences. This can be explained in a clearer manner with the following example.

Cora Du Bois, an anthropologist and advocate of the culture and personality school of thought, had done research in Indonesia in a place called Alor. This work was published as the *People of Alor*. Alor was conquered by the Japanese at the time of World War II. Once the war was over, Du Bois learnt from sources that due to an action of a few Alorese, resulting from their acquaintance with Du Bois, led to the untoward execution of them (publicly beheaded) by the Japanese during the war. The story goes that unwittingly these Alorese had mentioned that the Americans should achieve success in the War as they thought the Americans were “good” people. The Alorese prior to knowing Du Bois had no knowledge about America or its inhabitants. Du Bois writes with trepidation that “there is no end to the intricate chain of responsibility and guilt that the pursuit of even

the most arcane social research involves.” (Du Bois 1944 in Weaver 1973: 32). This incident may sound unreal in terms of simple conducting of research having such a horrific consequence. Nevertheless its reality highlights the fact that scientific efforts have the ability to produce astonishing damage.

In this part of the lesson, we try to look into more such incidences from the history of anthropology in connection with research ethics. Unethical conduct by anthropologists in the past has been aplenty but the most infamous and debated cases happened during the Vietnam War time. Here we will discuss the notorious Project Camelot introduced in Latin America and some monetarily aided research work conducted in Northern Thailand during the Vietnam War.

Before the Vietnam issues occurred, the research project which faced much ridicule was Project Camelot. It was started in 1964 under the management of the Special Operations Research Office (SORO) of the U.S. Army. This initiative was created to fund research in order to bring a stop to proliferation of communism in South America. This was to be done by the use of social research methods to contradict insurgency research. The scheme at a larger level was to include in its gamut of study, Asia, Africa and Europe besides Latin America. In this dubious venture, anthropologists too were taken in, to conduct research. However as luck would have it, the dealings of this undertaking was made known to the Latin American press slyly even before the project gained any momentum. The project and its model faced powerful local response and the project was aborted.

However the inclusion of anthropologists in it, left scars within the discipline’s ideologies. Anthropologists after this debacle of questioned virtues, tried to reaffirm their academic position of scholars refuting vices like wars. There were protestations by the locals and the academics as the project was considered to have a fundamentalist bias and research was said to have powerful political insinuations. In the presence of overtly subjugated classes in these areas, many people did not find the use of social sciences to sustain social tranquility as approving. To explain simply, the involvement of social scientist to conduct research which obviously meant encroaching on the undertakings of other countries was not acceptable (van Willigen, 2002).

But sadly in the late 1960s, a post for an anthropologist to conduct intelligence work in South Vietnam was advertised in the journal (*American Anthropologist*) of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The proposal was highly criticised by the anthropology fraternity with strict warning to the AAA not to entertain such promotions in the future. In the 1970s there were instances again of anthropologists assisting government on war related research in the Southeast of Asia, particularly in Thailand. In these circumstances, an important study took place which tried to look into the tricky issue of ethics. It was done by Ralph L. Beals and was called *Politics of Social Research* (1969). This work and deliberations between the major members of the AAA brought out a Committee on Ethics which drafted the first AAA professional code of ethics in 1971 (Fluehr-Lobban, 1991, Willigen, 2002).

Another project which had acute repercussions in the anthropological community was the “Thailand Project”. Without understanding the cultural makeup of the inhabitants of Thailand’s hill tribes and their relationship with the elite lowlanders, some anthropologists went ahead with their studies funded by government

supported agencies to offer their services to create social changes. To give a brief, the highland tribes lived in semi-isolation with their only means of contact with the rest of Thailand and the world being their production and selling of opium. Due to their trade, the Thailand government was coerced by international nations to stop the increasing opium transactions. Moreover, these tribes were looked down upon by the plain people of Thailand who deprecated them and their lifestyles. Needless to say the tribes hardly had any political or economic influence and were not in good terms with the government (Belshaw 1976). This region came in the spotlight, when the Vietnam War got bigger. In the 1960s social investigators from the western world proliferated in number in the name of research. The investigators, including anthropologists, did not take into consideration the existing facts into account and only concentrated on the good amount of money that was pouring in for such investigations. They completely ignored the valley's culture (Jones 1971). The Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) was one such funding agency of the American government from the Department of Defense, which provided monetary support to this scheme. Their main interest was to conduct research directed towards counterinsurgency intentions.

This entire process of conducting research was done without any regard towards the country's cultural set up and ethical responsibilities. This led to the ridicule of these researchers in 1970 by the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, who termed this as "counterinsurgency research." (ibid) This example of ethical violation worked as a lesson for anthropologists, subsequently generating awareness in ethical concerns. In a way it was through the discords experienced during the Vietnam episode, indirectly felicitated the understanding of our moral obligations. The process of discussing and finally accepting to respect ethical considerations was a painful and difficult one. However the attempt by the AAA to make changes in 1971 which were finally out in 1981, with renewed codes of conduct for anthropological investigators was commendable, though it too had its flaws.

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## **3.4 DISPUTES IN ETHICAL USAGES**

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When we deal with ethics and ethical concerns, there are some areas which clearly stand out and cannot be ignored. It is these concerns that we will discuss in the following paragraphs.

### **3.4.1 The Dispute of Confidentiality**

In anthropological research the investigator may in many societies have to live and work among people and societies, whom they are not familiar with. Even if there is familiarity of some sort between the researcher and the researched, there may be norms which the researcher would have to abide by. One cannot forget the fact that it is the investigator who is the "taker" and thus placed in a supposedly subordinate position. It is of utmost importance that great care must be taken as to how one must behave among a society studied and represent them later in their writings in a way that their lives are not compromised with in any way. Rapport building and creating a relationship of utmost trust is the base of a healthy relationship between both so as to be beneficial to the researcher and not harmful to the researched. The trust created in the minds of the respondents, allows them to divulge a lot about their own society, however it is the researcher's

responsibility to protect their identities and retain confidentiality if sought for. Rapport and friendship built may lead to the revealing of information which might be helpful to the researcher but may turn to be damaging for the respondent and her/his community. It is the task of the researcher to comprehend such information and either not use it or if it is of vital need for one's investigation, use them in such a way by not giving away the identity of the information giver. Mostly the informants give away information that might be damaging to them, without realising it due to their feeling of hospitality towards the researcher or also because they might be in awe of the "power" that the anthropologist might hold. They also reveal things unwittingly due to the need to flaunt their knowledge or because they seek recognition.

It should be borne in mind that though we try to provide the respondents enough privacy and secrecy, yet the use of important and at the same time harmful information, may not be completely possible. In most cases, the assurance of anonymity promised becomes difficult. Mostly the legal rights to any information collected by a researcher belong to the funding agency funding a project. Thus even when the researcher might want not to use any information or reveal a community's or person's name, s/he might not be in a position to do so. Thus it is to be noted that such situations must be tread cautiously. Though research findings are of immense help in myriad ways, they should not be utilised at the cost of the respondents' lives.

Researchers should try their best to respect and protect the confidentiality of our respondents. However difficult, they may try to take care in their own small ways whenever and wherever possible. If not invited, one must not infringe upon the subjects' personal space. Wherever possible, they should do away with the collection of sensitive information. If collected, proper ways of keeping them should be devised during and after fieldwork. Sometimes if names are to be used, pseudonyms can be used during the time of writing or documenting data. The researchers should always be truthful to the respondents and should let them be aware of all pros or cons, like the revealing of identities of families or groups or administrative officials unintentionally. They should from the beginning let the respondents be aware of any legal obligations and proceed accordingly. Lastly it is always best to learn from the earlier experiences and mishaps of other researchers and the methods they used to cope with the issues of confidentiality.

### **3.4.2 The Dispute of Consent**

The issue of confidentiality is in sync with the issue of consent. This is a major concern in the arguments of ethics. Before resorting to anonymity of respondents when needed, the bigger task at hand for the anthropological researcher is to seek permission to probe into their lives and culture. It is highly important that the researcher while taking consent also makes the prospective respondents aware of the fact that they will be getting involved in. The respondents should be aware of the necessity of the research work, the knowledge of the research funders, their objectives, the ultimate use of the findings and the effect that only these might have on them. Only when they are aware of these and give their consent to the researcher to proceed, can the investigation be called ethically sound.

The respondent should always be told that her/his participation is voluntary. This is termed informed consent. In informed consent, lies the basis of ethical enquiry. This term and use of it has been borrowed from research in medical

arenas, as it mostly uses human subjects to investigate. Cases of human abuse during experiments have also been heard from the medical world. All these connected with the administration's concern about the ethical aspects of hugely funded research projects, have made the concept of informed consent imperative. To explain informed consent clearly, a definition given by the Board of Regents of the State of New York in 1966 is presented (van Willigen, 2001). It was made for medical professionals but is now applicable for other researchers, including practicing anthropologists. The definition says, "No consent is valid unless it is made by a person with legal and mental capacity to make it, and is based on a disclosure of all material facts. The federal government defines some populations as vulnerable and not able to give informed consent. These include the under-aged, mentally handicapped, institutionalized or incarcerated, persons under risk because of the illegal status or activities, people who can't read, and people who are ill or physically handicapped. Any facts which might influence the giving and withholding of consent are material. A patient has the right to know he is being asked to volunteer and to refuse to participate in an experiment for any reason, intelligent or otherwise, well-informed or prejudiced. A physician has no right to withhold from a prospective volunteer any fact which he knows may influence the decision. It is the volunteer's decision to make, and the physician may not take it away from him by the manner in which he asks the question or explains or fails to explain the circumstances" (Langer 1966:664).

The definition above may seem simple and easy to practice, however it is not so. The job of the researcher to create the situation for informed consent would also include explaining to the prospective respondents about the consequences their information may create later. However, at the stage of explaining this to the respondents, the researcher is himself or herself not sure, if these would be the real consequences which s/he predicts. In fact in anthropological research such are the cases where future implications of the research work cannot be forecasted.

It is noticed in research of anthropological nature, there is change in the way research is conducted due to new or different or unexpected data found in the process of investigation. Thus at the beginning when consent was taken from the respondents for a particular kind of knowledge, the problem of new permission from the same people with the rise of a new condition, occurs. Consent allowed for a particular kind of enquiry may not work for another kind. There are authors like Jorgensen who says that "consent should be requested for the research ends that are anticipated" (1971: 328). But it is not necessary that this would make things easier. The only thing that may help the researcher in all this is to believe and remember that the aim of informed consent is to conduct research enquiry without trickery and distortion.

### **3.4.3 The Dispute of Utility**

Once the informants start giving data about themselves and their community, they might do so leisurely and abundantly. They would do so if they are assured of confidentiality. However the information gathered from the respondents may be used to dominate them. Once the research information gets into the hands of the sponsors it cannot be predicted they will always be put to use so as to benefit the communities studied. The knowledge may be used as a power to exploit them. Thus practicing anthropologists should create terms or ways by which the respondents would not have to suffer the "potential" harm later.

But it is difficult to bring this to reality. First the fact needs to be accepted that most of the times it is the researcher who accumulates profits from the findings while the same does not have any significance to the respondents. Many societies studied are not aware of what to do with the required data of the researcher or the topic of relevance to the researcher has no meaning to the community. In most cases the researcher herself/himself does not provide the society with enough detail about their own work which they should do. It helps if the researcher before beginning investigation can take meticulously into regard the prosperity of the people studied in the research design stage itself. A solution may be a deal between the researcher and the community for the research matter and objectives of the research design. This may lead to some changes in the process of research and also parts which the society is not comfortable with may be removed in the design stage itself. The project can be restructured to be designed in such a way that the information provided by the respondents would be helpful to the respondents' society. The way the final output would also come out should be accessible to the respondents' community. Or the researcher's entire project should be designed in such a way that everything should be created for the advantage or utilisation of the community studied. This way the moral obligations towards a community remain. In fields where research is done for application or practice, this process of building utility is not difficult as the main interest of the researcher should be a betterment of the community. However one must be careful to note that the clients who hire anthropologists to work for a community might not be related to it, and thus might not be completely aware of the intricacies of the community's life. In such a situation the ethical scenario should be taken care of more carefully. The researchers should think about the effects or consequences their work might have on the communities, as they would represent the clients who usually are the government, social service institutions, development organisations, etc. All in all the benefit of the community should always be at the back of the mind of the researcher.

#### **3.4.4 The Dispute of Knowledge and its Transmission**

Transmission of knowledge means how findings are disseminated, that is usually through publication in the form of books, articles or reports. This is one of the important ethical issues that is connected to the practicing anthropologist. Practicing anthropologists are always confronted with how to distribute the knowledge they gather. It is their duty to circulate their findings so that it may be added to the already available knowledge for better productivity. It is but obvious that research only comes to an end when its results are learnt by all. Mostly practicing anthropologists need to publicise their work not just to provide help to the communities they work with, but also so that their work gets known both in the academic and non-academic worlds. In doing so, the anthropologist must be careful as what to reveal and what not to. Their publications may also help them work better and convincingly in the applied field. The published work will give ideas to the other prospective practicing anthropologists in their area of work. However even when all this may sound easy, the issue of how much can be published, and how much needs to be kept from the public, is still a concern. One cannot ignore the fact that the practicing anthropologist's knowledge is more often than not, owned by their clients. In all this, researchers are believers of the ethical use of the distribution of data. The anonymity of the subjects is maintained if need be during such distribution of knowledge and is not to be compromised with in any circumstances.

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### 3.5 PRACTICE OF ETHICS BY PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGISTS

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Let us now discuss how ethics is to be really practiced. Two vital aspects that practicing anthropologists need to look into are 1. accountability and responsibility and 2. quality (Gardner and Lewis, 1996). It is really necessary that the practicing anthropologist knows whom to be accountable. It should never be the clients but the informants whose lives s/he intrudes by extracting valuable information. Quality of work is equally vital as during the time period the anthropologist spends with the informants, it should be assured that the material collected should be of worth. Behaviour is also an important factor. Overbearing and bossy attitude will not go down well with informants and might slow the process of rapport building in the beginning. It is imperative that the practitioner listens intently to the views shared by the respondents and show ample respect to the inhabitants, especially to women, lower classes, lower castes, aged people, etc. When people offer their time to share their thoughts and knowledge, it is equally important that the researcher should return the favour by helping them in day to day work or wherever possibility of helping them occurs. Promises made in return of information should always be kept. The complete sincerity of the practicing anthropologist is depicted by the good deeds, conduct and manners s/he exhibits. The respect should be mutual between the researcher and the researched.

Hence if ethical dictates are followed and recognised then the sought after results would also follow. The position and status of the practicing anthropologist will also get acknowledged as an implementer, investigator and promoter of applied practices which enhances betterment and development of societies studied.

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### 3.6 ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS CITED BY A PROFESSIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL BODY

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In this section we provide the learners with the statements on ethical practices for application as listed by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA). The statements were written so as to act as guidelines for the practicing and applied anthropologists.

#### **Background**

The preparation of the ethics statement involved a unique partnership between the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) and the Southern California Applied Anthropology Network (SCAAN). Jean Gilbert, a SCAAN member and Chair of the NAPA Ethics Committee, worked with a local committee composed of several of her fellow SCAAN members (Claudia Fishman, Neil Tashima and Barbara Pillsbury) to create the first draft, which appeared in the December 1987 Anthropology Newsletter, pp 7 -8. Membership comments were solicited at that time. The Guidelines were also sent to all of the local practitioner organizations (LPOs) for comment, and in addition were the topic of discussion in a regular SCAAN monthly meeting. The final version of the NAPA Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners was published in the November 1988 Anthropology Newsletter, pp 8-9. Gilbert thanked the membership of SCAAN and the following individuals who reviewed and commented on the draft: Fred Hess, Elvin Hatch, Barbara Frankel and Gene Anderson. The final version incorporated many of their comments.

## NAPA Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners

These guidelines have been developed by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology as a guide to the professional and ethical responsibilities that practicing anthropologists should uphold. A practicing anthropologist is a professionally trained anthropologist who is employed or retained to apply his or her specialized knowledge problem solving related to human welfare and human activities. The designation “practicing anthropologist” includes full-time practitioners who work for clients such as social service organizations, government agencies and business and industrial firms. This term also includes part-time practitioners, usually academically based anthropologists, who accept occasional assignments with such clients. The substantive work of practicing anthropologists may include applied research, program design and implementation, client advocacy and advisory roles and activities related to the communication of anthropological perspectives. These guidelines are provided with the recognition that practicing anthropologists are involved in many types of policy-related research, frequently affecting individuals and groups with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. No code or set of guidelines can anticipate unique circumstances or direct practitioner actions in specific situations. The individual practitioner must be willing to make carefully considered ethical choices and be prepared to make clear the assumptions, facts and issues on which those choices are based.

These guidelines therefore address general contexts, priorities and relationships which should be considered in ethical decision making in anthropological practice.

- 1) Our primary responsibility is to respect and consider the welfare and human rights of all categories of people affected by decisions, programs or research in which we take part. However, we recognize that many research and practice settings involve conflicts between benefits accruing to different parties affected by our research. It is our ethical responsibility, to the extent feasible, to bring to bear on decision making, our own or that of others, information concerning the actual or potential impacts of such activities on all whom they might affect. It is also our responsibility to assure, to the extent possible, that the views of groups so affected are made clear and given full and serious consideration by decision makers and planners, in order to preserve options and choices for affected groups.
- 2) To our resource persons or research subjects we owe full and timely disclosure of the objectives, methods and sponsorship of our activities. We should recognize the rights of resource persons, whether individuals or groups, to receive recognition for their contributions or to remain anonymous if they so desire or to decline participation altogether. These persons should be informed of our commitment to the principle of confidentiality throughout the design of research or other activities involving resource persons and should thoroughly investigate and understand all of the limitations on our claims of confidentiality and disclosure.
- 3) To our employers we owe competent, efficient, fully professional skills and techniques, timely performance of our work and communication of our findings and recommendations in understandable, nonjargonistic language. As practicing anthropologists, we are frequently involved with employers or clients in legally contracted arrangements. It is our responsibility to carefully review contracts prior to signing and be willing to execute the terms and conditions stipulated in the contract once it has been signed. At the outset of a relationship or contract with an employer or client, we have an obligation to determine whether or not the work we are requested to

perform is consistent with our commitment to deal fairly with the rights and welfare of persons affected by our work, recognizing that different constituencies may be affected in different ways. At this time, we should also discuss with our employer or client the intended use of the data or materials to be generated by our work and clarify the extent to which information developed during our activities can be made available to the public. Issues surrounding the protection of subject confidentiality and disclosure of information or findings should be thoroughly reviewed with the potential employer or client. We will not undertake activities which compromise our ethical responsibilities. We will carry out our work in such a manner that the employer fully understands our ethical priorities, commitments and responsibilities. When, at any time during the course of work performance, the demands of the employer require or appear to require us to violate the ethical standards of our profession, we have the responsibility to clarify the nature of the conflict between the request and our standards and to propose alternatives that are consistent with our standards. If such a conflict cannot be resolved, we should terminate the relationship.

- 4) In our relations with students and trainees, we will be candid, fair, nonexploitative, nondiscriminatory and committed to the student's or trainee's welfare. We recognize that such mentoring does involve an exchange in which practitioners share their knowledge and experience in return for the significant effort and contribution of the students/trainees. We should be honest and thorough in our presentation of material and should strive to improve our teaching and training techniques and our methods of evaluating the effectiveness of our instruction. As practicing anthropologists we are frequently called upon to instruct, train or teach individuals, anthropologists and others in nonacademic settings (workshop participants, in-service trainees, continuation or certification program trainees and research teams). To such persons, we owe training that is informed, timely and relevant to their needs. Our instruction should inform both students and trainees of the ethical responsibilities involved in the collection and use of data. To our students and trainees we owe respect for and openness to nonanthropological methods and perspectives. Student and trainee contributions to our work, including publications, should be accurately and completely attributed.
- 5) To our colleagues, anthropologists and others, we have a responsibility to conduct our work in a manner that facilitates their activities or that does not unjustly compromise their ability to carry out professional work. The cross-disciplinary nature of the work of practicing anthropologists requires us to be informed and respectful of the disciplinary and professional perspectives, methodologies and ethical requirements of nonanthropological colleagues with whom we work. We will accurately report the contribution of our colleagues to our research, practice-related activities and publications.
- 6) To the discipline of anthropology we have a responsibility to act in a manner that presents the discipline to the public and to other professional colleagues in a favorable light. We will point out the value of anthropological contributions to the understanding of human problems and humankind. Where appropriate in the context of our work, we will encourage the use of anthropological approaches and recommend the participation of other anthropologists. We will contribute to the growth of our discipline through communicating and publishing scientific and practical information about the work in which we are engaged, including, as appropriate, theory, processes, outcomes and professional techniques and methods.

**Source:** NAPA (<http://practicinganthropology.org/about/ethical-guidelines/>)

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## 3.7 SUMMARY

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To sum up, this unit discussed a major concern in the practice of anthropological knowledge, i.e. ethics. In today's world ethics and ethical concerns cannot be avoided. And the very fact that anthropology deals with human beings, its need is most vital. The unit begins with the description of what ethics is and what it involves. It then gives a detailed description of the history of anthropology where the use or misuse of ethics in studying communities led to the creation of various anthropological bodies coming up with guidelines for ethical practice. The unit progresses with the various kind of pertinent debates that is involved in the practice of ethics, the major ones being the issues of confidentiality, consent, utility and dissemination of knowledge. The unit further looks into some more ethical concerns that a practicing anthropologist can deploy while conducting research and lastly the unit provides the guidelines stated by NAPA for the learner to have a better knowledge of the ethical scenario and its need in anthropological research.

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### Suggested Reading

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### Sample Questions

- 1) Define ethics. Why is it important to be ethical in our practice?
- 2) The issues of ethics begin with the investigator. Discuss.
- 3) Give a critical account of the ethical concerns in the history of anthropology.
- 4) Discuss the importance of confidentiality and anonymity in anthropological research.