Researchers Position in Ethnographic Research: Experiences from Researching the Marginalised Pastoral Community in Tanzania

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Abstract:
This article examines the position of a researcher when conducting qualitative research in a rural village. It is a reflection from the ethnographic study with rural Maasai village in Monduli district in Tanzania. It examines the insider/outsider status and positions of the researcher when conducting a research with a rural marginalised Maasai community. The paper explores how my position as an (insider/outsider) researcher facilitated or hindered some activities and issues related to the research process. It further discusses the power positions and relations at various stages of research and the way such influenced data collection and analysis and the ethical dilemmas experienced during field work. It then discusses the implication of the researcher's positions, power relations and ethical dilemma in researching the marginalised communities. The paper argues that researchers are important component of a research in qualitative research and therefore should examine their position and power relation as may influence the amount and quality of data collected and the general research process. It is important to not only be aware of the ones research position and the power dynamics in the research process but also understand the participants' context socially, politically, economically and the way these determine such position and power relations and their resulting influence in the research process.

Keywords: Qualitative research, ethnography, insider/outsider, power dynamics, Positionality, Marginalised community

1. Introduction

The central tenet of qualitative research is to understand people's behaviours perceptions and/or experience (Hennink, 2011, p. 17). This understanding can be through *'emic'* and/or *'etic'* positions in the research process. In this approach researchers are involved in the world of a subculture to understand it from inside and from its own logic (Flick, 2009). In such a situation, researchers are interested in creating knowledge by taking the insider's perspectives to understand the individual's view point from their own perspectives. Qualitative researchers recognise that distance between the researcher and the participants have implication of the quantity and quality of data being collected in the research process (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). Therefore, examination of researcher's position in the research process has recently been a concern for most qualitative researchers. Although in ethnography the researcher is the principle instrument for data collection, interpretations, analysis and in representation of ethnographic data (Pole and Morrison, 2003), there is a contribution of both researchers and participant at various levels of the research in such that they become inseparable part of the final product of research. That is why (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane & Muhamad, 2001, p. 413) propose that "positionality of a researcher in the research process is something one needs to not only be aware of but negotiate throughout the research process". This negotiation enables the researcher to be able to optimally utilise both emic and etic positions in the process for the better representation of the participants' voices. Normally positionality determines where one stands in relation to 'the other'.

Researcher's insider/ outsider positions within the qualitative research process are not static. Ritchie et al (2009) argues that it can be viewed as a continuum where an individual can change in the course of the research process. These changes or dynamisms are the outcome of various issues and factors including ethnicity, gender race, age academic status, academic or professional experience (Merriam et al, 2001; McNess, Arthur & Crossley, 2015). Qualitative researchers ought to learn to draw on the strengths of insider and outsider position and minimize the shortcomings of those positions in the research process. It is in these grounds that, I found it imperative to scholarly share my experience especially on researching rural marginalised communities. This paper examines my position within qualitative research with marginalised pastoralists groups in Tanzania. It reflects on an ethnographic study I conducted with rural Maasai society, to explore pastoral community's perspectives of girls' education and the way formal education creates capabilities for girls (Raymond, 2015). The

main objective is to share how dynamics of research position and power relations can hinder or facilitate the research process and the way it either include or further marginalise the rural marginalised societies in the research process.

2. Research Context

This study was conducted in Monduli district Tanzania in one of the rural villages which is predominantly pastoralists. The study aimed at exploring pastoralists' perspectives of girls' education and the way formal education creates capability for girls. The study was motivated by the fact that attainment of EFA, UPE and gender equality in education is at the heart of international conversions and conferences and that marginalisation of indigenous groups and the pastoral community in particular is the global concern (UNESCO, 2010). In these agendas reaching the marginalised minority communities is at its core focus (ibid, 2010). Pastoralist groups in East Africa and Tanzania in particular are among the minority groups that experience marginalization, discrimination and disempowerment (Legget, 2005; Aikman, 2011). Such marginalisation is a result historical process of unequal development favouring agriculture over hunting and gathering and nomadic herding (Aikman, 2011; Gray, 1997). Pastoralists are marginalised in service provision including education (Carr-Hill & Peart, 2005, Oxfam, 2005). This affected pastoral communities' children, causing their enrolment, attendance, academic performance and transition to higher levels of education to remain below average compared with other ethnic groups (Dyer & Kratli, 2006) and gender disparity predominated.

Pastoralist women and girls are the most educationally disadvantaged group (Carr-Hill, 2005). On the one hand, women and girls are generally marginalized like other women in mainstream society. On the other hand, women and girls are marginalized as members of marginalized pastoral communities. Essentially, this situation further discriminates against women and girls within and outside pastoral communities (Carr-Hill, 2005; Kratli, 2001). Consequently, girls have limited chances of acquiring formal education, have higher illiteracy rates, lower enrolment rates and lower retention and completion rates at all levels of education than boys. Similarly, most women and girls are out of school and some of them have no hope of receiving a basic education (Dyer, 2006, 2010b; Sharma, 2011). In the research process pastoralists communities need to be understood in terms of the process they go through, the kind and level of involvement offered to them in relation to girls' education, and the kind of education they value. The study was concerned with understanding of how power and processes operate in societies, and how the interplay of power and identities in the social processes of institutions (in this case pastoral communities) give rise to gender and other disparities (Dunne, 2009). Such an approach to the problem compelled me to examine my position and the power relation during the research process for better representation of their views and voices. I believed that this problem could be better understood from the perspective of people's lived experiences and the experience of the community as a whole.

3. Research Methodology

This was a qualitative study situated in interpretive epistemology aiming at developing an understanding of pastoral community perspectives of girls' education from their own context (Denscombe, 2010). The study adopted ethnographic approach in order to be able to study the Maasai cultural group in depth in their natural context (Delamont, 2012). Based on this approach I participated in the life of the Maasai in one rural village in Monduli district in order to observe social interactions or the process of creating ideas and meanings as they occur (Creswell, 2013; Delamont, 2004, 2012; Hammersley, 2006; Geertz, 1973;). I went inside the social world of the community, observing, recording and analysing social structures in their setting, paying particular attention to their social, cultural, familial, political and economic lives (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998; Delamont, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). I was involved in their day-to-day lives through observing and participating in various activities such as collecting firewood and water and other domestic chores that women do. I went to the bush to take care of livestock with the boys, I went to the market (for both men and women) and I attended church services, meetings, ceremonies and other events. I used participant observation, conversations and ethnographic interviews as the main data collection methods. I studied the meaning, behaviour and interactions between members of the community and how they had an influence on girls' participation in primary education. The study used various categories of participant including elders, parents, school and out-of-school children and traditional leaders with the total of thirty participants. These were selected and accessed differently. Due to the sparse distribution of *'bomas' (*Maasai homesteads) participants were selected based on the proximity of the '*boma'* to where I was hosted and their availability and willingness to participate in the study (Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Patton, 1990). I research assistants (a man and a woman) to translate the 'maa' language to Kiswahili since most participants could not speak Kiswahili. It is from this close relationship and interaction with the participants and the community members that I examine my position, the power relation experienced and the way such influenced the research process and the data collected. I share my experience and the way this enabled my study to succeed; also, the way I handled various circumstances in order not to interrupt the research process.

4. Positionality in Qualitative Research

Researcher's positionality in the research process is reflected at all levels/stages of research. This is from planning stage to the writing of the reports. In the following sections of this article I discuss my position in research and the way it influenced the process of data collection, analysis and the writing of the report.

4.1. Researcher's Identity

Humanly it is not possible to be two beings at the same time. When I went to the field therefore I went with my background as a woman, formally educated in the education system that marginalizes the community being researched. From being born a girl in rural Tanzania, I had become a university lecturer, oriented to town life and mainstream society and now researching on girls' education among indigenous marginalized communities in a highly patriarchal society and in a rural village deprived of most services. This life trajectory and my outside appearance made me different from other members of the community and I was seen as 'an outsider'. In the early days of my research (first week or two) I was viewed and treated as 'honorary' in the village because of my status, my work and my freedom to interact with various groups of people including men. This freedom contrasted with other women lives. These dynamics influenced some areas of this study. Likewise, my outward appearance influenced my interaction with the people. Most people were suspicious; some thought I was a police officer and others thought I came to force the girls to go to school. Others thought I was working with an anti-corruption organization bureau in Tanzania. They were skeptical, avoided me, hid the out-of-school girls and required detailed explanation for what I was doing in the village. This made me to remain an outsider for some time until the majority of community members understood the purpose of my coming to the village and the purpose of my study.

In the same way during the entire fieldwork I was among the Maasai, to some extent I lived a somewhat different life from other people in the village. Although I was accepted as a researcher, and despite the close relationship I established with people it was not easy to avoid some differences. Some characteristics like the cultural and socio-economic difference remained undeniably apparent throughout the fieldwork. However, being a Tanzanian researching in Tanzania brought some advantage in gaining acceptance and the establishing rapport. Being aware of such differences, I tried as much to develop trust and ensure that this did not separate me from the participants. As a woman I observed some of their traditions, norms and customs. My identity sometimes determined my position. Feminist researchers caution of the danger of some researchers' identifying themselves as insider or outsider prior to entering the research setting (Racine, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). In this case although some of the issues were obvious like my appearance amongst the Maasai, I did not clearly understand my position before getting to the field and starting to interact with the people. This concurs with the argument that the researcher can only come to understand themselves as subjects or objects, insider or outsider by reflexively examining the continually shifting nature of their roles in the field (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). Postcolonial feminist theory stresses the importance of examining our identity and positionality within the research process (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). That is why Meriam et al (2001) put forward that insider/outsider status in the course of the research are integral part of qualitative research and that researcher will not only experience moments of being insiders or outsiders but that "these positions are relative to the cultural values and norms of both researcher and participants". These cultural values determine the researcher and participant power relations and positions they occupy both of which have implication in the research process. Researchers' position in the field is always fluid and dynamic.

4.2. Accessing the Research Site

In an ethnographic study gaining access to the community is critical for determining the kind of data the researcher will be able to collect and how difficult or easy the process will be (Hesse-Bibber & Leavy, 2006). Negotiation to the site and the participants also involves issues of power and positionality of a researcher (Merriam, et al, 2001). To access the rural village where the study was conducted a number of gatekeepers were involved from the region, district, ward and village levels. The initial stages of accessing research site were straight forward because it was official and involved submitting official letters. Although I was new (an outsider) in the region and the district, the officials understood my purpose and offered me official introduction letter from to lower level. Because of the rural nature and the location of the research village accessing this community and the participants' involved number issues. Thus various gatekeepers facilitated my access to the study site, the people and the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The village leader as the first gatekeeper in the village was key in connecting me with the people in the community. The village leader introduced me to the head teacher of the only primary school the village where I stayed for some days before I moved to the village. At this stage of the study I was a total outsider, I did not know the people or anything about the village. I looked quite different from other people, a total outsider. Everybody was surprised. Women stayed at a distance and only men were around me. Males talk with authority over women. One of them said ... "we are really surprised; will you really be able to live in our place...will you be able to live with us...live our life? "When your fellows (researchers or visitors) come they stay in *'Kanjiro'* (a tourist camp that is in the village) as they are not able to stay with us". I told them I would stay with them as they were human beings and I was a normal citizen also born in the village and so I knew about village life. I was welcome into a hut which I shared with a woman and her children. Women still were afraid of me because in their culture they are not allowed to talk to or interact with a visitor without their husband permission. in this case I remained an outsider until I was used to the people around and the home environment and when most women had received permission to interact with me.

4.3. Accessing Research Participants

Negotiation to access participants involved a number of negations and was compounded with a lot of power dynamics between the researchers, members of the community and those requested to participate in the study. This was largely done in collaboration with the research assistants and participants.

In doing this I first considered that the sensitivity of the research topic within the Maasai community. 'Researching on Girls education'. This to a greater extent determined researcher's acceptance and the negotiation of his/her position and power relation in the research process. On my part, researching on 'girls' education' among the Maasai influenced the way people looked at me in the beginning of the research until they understood about what I wanted from girl's education. When I first introduced that I was researching about 'girls' education'; some men became furious and refused even to talk to me. One of them said to me "...*there is no problem with girls in our place...by the way who told you that I have a girl who is not going to school...I don't have any problem so you better leave...*" Such kind of remarks pushed me further to an outsider position. This man did not only refuse to continue talking to me but also did not allow his wife or his out-of-school girl to participate in the study. Some men understood my purpose and cooperated.

Accessing male participants was done through male research assistant. This was for fathers, older men and boys. As a woman researching in a highly patriarchal community I was an outsider most of the time when I was accessing and interacting with men. Accessing female participants was assisted by female research assistant. for those married women it was determined by their husband and the fathers for the girls. Mothers only participated in the study after I had negotiated with their husbands. Girls were allowed to participate on condition that their mothers should be present whenever I interact with girls.

Access to out-of-school girls was more challenging because most parents were unwilling to allow their daughters to interact with me and participate in the study. It took me more than a month to get permission to talk to them. After continually explaining the intention of the study two fathers allowed their daughters to interact with me on condition that their mothers would be present. I agreed and managed (though with difficulty) to interact with and talk to the girls several times over a period of four weeks. The mothers' presence however limited the girls' freedom to share their experience; nonetheless, the conversation with them did provide important insights. However, the girls were restricted from speaking for themselves. This is opposed to Spivak's (1988) consideration that the marginalised should speak for themselves concerning their situation.

4.4. Positionality during Ethnographic Interviews

Positionality and power dynamics during the interactions, observations, conversations and the in-depth interviews was diverse. Interactions, observations and interviews in this rural village was gendered. My position also kept changing as I was interacting with different participants. As Merriam, et al, (2001) observed that gender in a highly patriarchal society like this affect researchers position. My positions changed at various occasions depending on the situation and the kind of participants I was interacting or having conversations with. In various events I observed that power dynamics in the research process are negotiated by interviewer, the interviewee and the culturally embedded interview context (Merriam, et al, 2001, p. 413). According to people's social arrangement under the umbrella of traditions and customs, men do not interact with women in their activities. Men hold all the power and are the sole decision maker. Women have no power and are not allowed to talk straight to men. I therefore found that in order to be able to have free interaction and able to obtain women views I had to have separate interactions and interviews between men and women. In fact, I had to negotiate varied positions to enable me to interact freely with the participants and other members of the community. Sometimes situations forced me to agree to a position in order not to destruct the research atmosphere. For example, when I had a little grasp of 'maa' language hence I was an outsider when long conversations were in this language.

Being a woman in my conversation with women, I, to some extent managed to gain an insider's position, although I looked different on the outside. After developing enough rapport, they accepted me and able to share their stories. I was though an outsider at the same time because I could not speak 'maa' which most women used. Some women also were afraid of me as an outsider (visitor). Most interviews were intervened by people who were not selected to participate; they had not given the consent to participate in the study. I had no power to let them go because I would interrupt the environment and at the same time I was held back to abide to the ethical principal of ensuring that those who participate are those who have given their consent. In this regard my position as educated, university affiliated carried little weight with the rural marginalised men and women. I had to draw on personal skills and understanding of Maasai women and men and the community at large to be able to establish rapport with women. Conflicting interests characterised some of the interviews. My doing research was sometimes not important for women, sometimes their interest was centred on sharing their oppression and violence they experience and how I will make sure the voices about their oppression be heard outside their community. Also, how I would tell my stories of 'a good life' they think I live, and how these stories would help empower them and the girls in the community. This gave me an advantage of an insider position.

My conversation and interaction with fathers, older men and boys generally in the community I was of an outsider, because they regarded me just like other women in the community. Sometimes they disregarded what I was doing in the community, most especially researching about girls' education. Some despised me and refused to share their views. They thought I had nothing new to tell them. I had to be docile like other women in order to maintain a relationship with participants and other community members and learn women's position in the community.

Age was another factor that determined my position in the interaction and conversation with people. Older men especially those who had not been exposed to the world outside their village talk with authority especially to younger women like me. Although they did not reject me, they inquired again and again of what I was doing. Such inquiry pushed me to an outsider position most of the time. They wondered how a woman like me would be able to study this far. They did not give me

their full trust so every time I went to see/stay with them I had to explain myself. This had implication on the type and depth of the stories they shared regarding girl's education.

4.5. Positionality in Participant Observations

It is important make it clear that participant observation was conducted alongside ethnographic interviews. (Merriam, et al, 2001, p. 413) put forward that participants are colleagues in the research process, equally in control of the research. During the study I observed that women had so many responsibilities. Thus, the best environment for me to interact with them was in their daily activities. In the beginning they were not sure if I could be able do some of the chores. They did not give me chance to participate. Later on, however I was able to interact freely with women. I participated in all their activities like milking, fetching water and firewood, cooking, washing dishes, taking care of their children and other. Based on the harsh nature of the environment and the weight of their activities I was not able to perform all their activities at their level. I however tried to my level best to represent their voices during report writing. Merriam et al, (2001) contends that feminist researchers struggle to represent the truth of their finding by allowing the voices of their participant's to be head. For the marginalised society like this, women need to speak for themselves (Spivak, 1988) to avoid the danger of marginalising them further.

Moreover, being a woman, researching in a patriarchy community also kept me an outsider since I was not allowed to attend various events or visit some places without special permission from the elders. This was especially to the events which were attended by men only. For example, I was not able attend esoto (a night dance between the Moran and young girls). Although "feminist scholars are concerned with foregrounding women experiences with participants having an equal relationship with the researcher, with research experience being empowering and a more interactive relationship with the reader/consumer of the research" (Lather, 1991; Cotterill, 1992, p. 413). I was made an outsider and had no power over such events. Similarly, my research assistants also prevented me to attend to some events like girl's circumcision on grounds that that I was not permitted, but I later discovered that they just prevented me because the circumcised girl was going to marry one of the village leaders. My research assistants were more powerful here and made me remain an outsider so missed some lessons from the event which could have added more insights to the study.

4.6. Power Dynamics during Research Process

Researchers need to be aware of power relations in the entire research process; during planning, field work, transcription, analysis and writing of the report (Karniel-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). In interpretive and feminist research, the researcher and the participants are inseparable parts of the final product of the research. Both parties have significant level of involvement in the research process. Participants are involved because of the examination of their personal experiences while researchers are involved because of their in-depth study of others' experiences (Karniel-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). This relationship is complex and sometimes conflicting. In this study, I was required to negotiate and recognise the shifting nature of power relations from site to site and at various stages of research. At different times, I was opposite sides of power imbalances. In the planning stage of the study I dominated the choice of the problem, the methodologies and methods. During field work I made choice of who should be involved in the study, but their actual involvement depended on people's acceptance. I had control of what I asked the participants and how but they had the freedom to respond or not. They were also free to choose what to share with me. Sometimes being a woman, some men and boys thought I had nothing important to share with them just like other women. In this case participants had considerable capacity for exerting power over me (Hammersley, 1992; Muppy & Dingwall, 2001). Thus, although researchers are said to have the power to determine what is recorded and what is not as well as how things are interpreted (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012), the participants dominate and choose what, how and to what extent to share with researchers. On various occasions, women were not willing to share their views about girls' circumcision and its impact on their participation in primary education. Likewise, some men were not willing to share their experiences of 'esoto' and observations of how it impacted on girls' physical, emotional, social and academic lives. I bridged some of these differences by postponing some questions, encouraging closer interaction and maintaining a good relationship with participants, while biding my time until participants seemed more willing to open up (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012).

On the other hand, I determined what to note in an observation or interview session. I also dominated the transcription, translation, analysis and the writing of the report. However, my own understanding, limitations and biases may have led to the omission of some important issues. Although I represented participants' voices in various quotations as a way of bridging the power difference, I was still the one who selected the quotes based on the focus of the study and the interpretation of the findings I was constructing. This shows that researchers dominate most parts of the study and hold power over the representation of participants in the research process. Self-reflection is not enough to eliminate power difference (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). Therefore, power relations in qualitative research are not balanced and there is no optimal relationship. It changes according to the researcher's personality, world view, ethics, social background, perceptions derived from the researcher's professional discipline, qualitative paradigm, the theoretical base of the research and its goals, (Karniel-Miller, et al, 2009). Nonetheless, it is important that the researcher strive to balance the power between the researcher and the participants in order to gain insights into the views and experiences of the marginalized.

5. Ethical Dilemmas in the Field

Observation of ethical principles in research is a necessity for all researchers. Some of these principles include informed consent, minimization of harm, anonymity and confidentiality (Delamont, 2012; Hennink, Inge, & Ajay, 2011). The application of some of these principles depends on the nature of the study, the context and the participants involved. Ethics in the Maasai pastoral community as among the Maori (Smith, 1999), extends beyond consent, confidentiality and other principles. The process of seeking for consent, maintenance of confidentiality and other principles were difficult or not possible to apply in the same way that are prescribed. It has been observed earlier that some of these ethical principles are not applicable to some circumstances (Merriam, et al., 2001) and in some research in Tanzania in particular (Makoke, 2005). Apart from the fact that Tanzanians would agree to participate in research just to support their colleague (Makoke, 2005), to a community where people have had no formal education it was difficult for them to understand and sign the consent form.

My field experience shows that while researching on the marginalised community like Maasai, ethical procedures negotiation need to be understood in terms of rapport and relationship developed between the researcher, participants and the community. I had to develop may own sense of whether certain issues were ethical or not by using my personal judgement instead of rigidly following the prescribed principles (Hennink, et al, 2011). To be accepted among the Maasai I had to be able to develop close relationship with people. I was required to respect the Maasai culture and people, to listen to people, be generous and not criticize them, as well as not assuming that I had more knowledge than them. I assured them that I was able to live in their '*boma*' (the Maasai homestead) showed them love and that I care for them, listened to them, valued and appreciated what they shared and that I was comfortable being among them and able to cope with their way of life (Edward and Mauthner, 2012). Feminist researchers remind us of the need to consider the context, personal experiences and nurturing relationships when conceptualizing ethical issues in research with the marginalised (Edward & Mauthner, 2012). Hence most ethical issues depended on my ability to build and nurture my relationship with the gatekeepers, participants and community members.

As stated earlier most people in the research village cannot read, write or speak Kiswahili, hence understanding the consent form was not possible. Therefore, negotiation for permission and the consent for all participants was done verbally. While male participants gave their own consent to participate; mothers' consent was sought through their husbands, and girls consent through their fathers and mothers. Fathers were to grant permission for girls to participate and mothers were to agree to be available during the interaction with girls. I had no one way to negotiate consent and it was challenging especially on the part of mothers because some would be granted permission but refuse to participate and others would wish to participate but not granted permission. Therefore, even after I had obtained permission from the husband and fathers, I could not force women and girls to participate unwillingly. This was in line with the ethical principle that participation should always be voluntary and non-participation should have no negative consequences (Hennink, et al., 2011). I therefore made sure that only those who were both permitted by their husbands and who indicated that they were willing participated in the study (Walford, 2008). This was a long procedure but I was aware that using force or other means would destroy my relationship with the men as I would be perceived as a threat to the community. It would also make women and girls more vulnerable to men's retribution after the study. The out-of-school boys were permitted by their fathers and were free to interact with me. School children's permission was sought from both the head teacher and their parents, except boys who were in boarding school and their parents in '*ronjo*' (a place where cattle are taken for pasture during dry season).

Consent for taking photos, or recording the conversations or interviews was negotiated throughout the study. However, some challenges emerged as some participants agreed to be tape recorded and for me to take and use their photographs. Others did not allow me to take pictures while others agreed only to be interviewed. As a researcher, I was aware of such issues and using common sense and as the context permitted all these were well handled and the relationship maintained (Hennink, et al., 2011). Although people's names and places were concealed using pseudonyms (Walford, 2008), it was not possible to do it all. The area of study for instance is known to a number of gatekeepers like the RAS and some officials in the district and so cannot remain completely concealed. It is also possible that some people may be able to identify the place after publication (ibid, 2001). Thus, privacy and confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain level.

On top of that understanding and fairly representing participants' perspectives is more challenging when or more complicated when language translations is involved (all field interactions involved the use of maa language. I did not speak maa and only few participants in the village were conversant in Kiswahili. All interactions, conversations, and ethnographic interviews were conducted using native language of the Maasai. All were then translated to Kiswahili before I translated the whole research material to English, the language that I used to write the report). I was worried whether assistant's translations of my questions or any inquiry in the conversation captured the meaning. Similarly, I was worried of whether the translation from maa to Kiswahili was captured. But as for most research, the reality of data collection and analysis involves compromise and negotiation (p 414). The most important thing in the field, along asking similar question in various ways or at a different day, I trusted my research assistant (Merriam, et al, 2001). More on that after field work I cross-checked the translations with one educated Maasai to make sure that translations made brought on board the intended meaning.

6. Implication for Studying Marginalised Community

In my experience as part of ethnographic research in a rural village with a marginalised community is the shifting social identity of outsider and insider positions as a study progressed beyond its initial stages. From the discussion of the

preceding parts of the paper I have shown that all research comprises both emic and ethic perspectives at different stages of the research process. It is therefore worth agreeing that researchers are never fully insiders or outsiders in the research process. A researcher can be an insider at one time, place and event and can be an outsider at another (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). This is to say that a researcher's position in the field is always fluid and dynamic. Each of the position however has a role/contribution in the research process. Likewise, in whichever position or level of power relation one may be at various stages of the research process has influence on the research process itself and in the kind and quality of data that are collected. Hence while researching among the indigenous marginalised community like the Maasai especially about a sensitive topic/issue that is not accepted by the majority like 'girl's education'; one needs to be sensitive to first research topic and the nature of the community you are researching and the kind of rapport and relationship established thereafter.

Researcher need to be sensitive to his/her shifting social identity in order to position himself/herself in a way that will not interrupt the research process. The way one is positioned in the research has implication in understanding the views and way of representing those views. If I would not have learned to position myself I would not been able to get the views of the marginalised and silenced girls and women. At the same time, I could not be able to gain and represent fathers and older men views. My position therefore determined my ability to interact and collect the necessary information according to the focus of the study. It also determined the quality of data I collected. Hence researchers need to be reflective and develop critical awareness of their position in research in order not to further marginalise the participants. Pole and Morrison (2003) put forward that reflexivity is having critical reflection of the research process and on one's own role as a researcher including our various insider and outsider positions. Thus, as ethnographic researchers we need to reflect on the shifting nature of our identity in the research process; to be reflexive about one's social identification and critically reflect of the power within the group. Being reflexive is key because some issues still remain hidden from the researcher (Flick, 2009). Hence it will depend of how much the researcher will be reflexive and be able unpack those issues. Scholars further put forward that it is important that one undertakes the study using multiple perspectives because each of this, is determined or influenced by various contextual issues (Merriam et al, 2001).

The analysis of my field experience has shown that these shifts may be advantageous or disadvantageous. Hence researchers need to focus on developing trust and interactions; share some reflections with some community members or the participants and make sure that the voices of all participants are heard and valued. Researcher need to make the best use of the advantageous part of the interaction and ensure that she/he minimises the disadvantages that would arise from any of the position. Such experiences have shown power shifts is an integral part of qualitative research and that is why Merriam et al (2003.p. 413) suggest that "power is something to not only be aware of but to negotiate in the research process.

7. Conclusion

From my experience of researching the marginalised societies that I have shared throughout the papers I can argue that researchers' position and the power relation he/she has with the society and the community is crucial in the kind and quality of data collected. It is also important in representing participants' voices and avoiding further marginalizing them in research process. Both insider and outsider position in the research are important in reaping the information one want from the community under the research. From the outside position you observe issues that sometimes are taken for granted. While when you occupy the insider position you are able to question such issues. In ethnographic research each of the position help the researcher building rapport and gathering information that could be difficult without occupying such positions. Since qualitative researchers are not able to determine the position they will take in the research process before getting to the field (study site). Doing so would jeopardise the process. One has to be reflexive enough in such that is able to occasionally change according to the way situation changes in the field.

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