

HOW TO USE THIS SAMPLE

WHAT THIS FILE IS

A model MRDP-001 project proposal for the MA (Rural Development). It shows the order, depth and wording of a field-based proposal. It is study reference only: do not submit it, retitle it or copy its paragraphs. IGNOU requires your own original work, and the dissertation you bind carries your own declaration of originality.

Everything in [square brackets] must come from your own study: your block, your gram panchayats, your figures, your supervisor. The studies in the review are left for you to find and read.

WHO APPROVES AN MRDP-001 PROPOSAL

Your supervisor, usually an M.A. (RD) academic counsellor at your study centre, approves the proposal. It is not sent to the Regional Centre or IGNOU Headquarters. Keep the signed original safe: it is bound into your dissertation (MRDP-001 handbook, Part I; IGNOU RC Chandigarh projects table).

Model your final layout on the worked example in Part IV of your own MRDP-001 handbook on eGyanKosh; where this sample differs from your handbook, the handbook wins.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Course: MRDP-001 Dissertation

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN GRAM SABHA MEETINGS IN [BLOCK NAME] BLOCK OF [DISTRICT] DISTRICT

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS (RURAL DEVELOPMENT)

Researcher	[Full name]
Enrolment No.	[Enrolment number]
Study Centre / Regional Centre	[Code and name] / [Regional Centre]
Supervisor	[Name, designation, study centre]

SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
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[Month, Year]

1. TITLE OF THE STUDY

Participation of Women in Gram Sabha Meetings in [Block Name] Block of [District] District

HANDBOOK NOTE

The MRDP-001 handbook asks for a title that states the type and nature of the study and is clear, brief and specific. This one names what is studied (participation in gram sabha meetings), among whom (women), where (one block) and, with the period in Section 5, when.

2. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 gave panchayats constitutional status and made the gram sabha, the body of all persons registered on the electoral rolls of a village within the area of a gram panchayat, the base of rural local self-government (Article 243(b)). Article 243D reserves not less than one-third of the seats in panchayats for women. Reservation brings women into elected office; it does not by itself bring women into the gram sabha, where every adult voter may speak on plans, beneficiaries and accounts.

Whether women attend gram sabha meetings, whether they speak when they attend, and what keeps others away are questions that can only be answered in the field, village by village. [Add two or three sentences on your block: number of gram panchayats, any State rule on gram sabha meetings, and the source for each figure.]

The problem is therefore stated as: to study the extent and nature of women's participation in gram sabha meetings in [Block Name] Block of [District] District, and the factors associated with it.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 Theoretical background

Arnstein (1969) distinguished levels of citizen participation, from non-participation and tokenism up to citizen power, and argued that attendance without influence is not real participation. This study therefore separates attending a meeting from speaking and from raising a demand. [Add the concepts from your MRD 203 course material on decentralised planning and panchayati raj that you will use, with unit references.]

3.2 Studies already conducted

[Summarise four to six studies, most recent first, on women and gram sabha or panchayat participation in India. For each: author (year), place and sample, method, main finding. Only studies you have read.]

Author (year)	Place and sample	Method	Main finding
[Study 1]	[]	[]	[]
[Study 2]	[]	[]	[]
[Study 3]	[]	[]	[]
[Study 4]	[]	[]	[]

[Close in four sentences: what the studies agree on, where they differ, and the gap this study fills in your block.]

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the extent of attendance of women in gram sabha meetings in the study area.
- To examine the nature of their participation: attending, speaking, and raising demands or complaints.
- To study the association of participation with education, age, social group and membership of a self-help group.

- To identify the reasons women give for attending or not attending gram sabha meetings.

WRITE OBJECTIVES NEUTRALLY

"To study", "to examine", "to identify": each objective names a measurable outcome and assumes nothing about the result.

5. STUDY AREA, SAMPLE AND PERIOD

Area: [Block Name] Block of [District] District, which has [number] gram panchayats (source: [block office or official list]).

Sampling: multistage. Stage 1: four gram panchayats selected by simple random sampling from the block list. Stage 2: in each gram panchayat, 30 women aged 18 and above selected by systematic sampling from the electoral roll (interval $k = N / n$, where N is the number of women on that roll and n is 30), with a random start. Total sample: 120 women. [Agree the sample size with your supervisor and justify it by time, travel and the analysis you plan.]

Gram panchayat	Women on electoral roll (N)	Interval k	Sample (n)
[GP 1]	[]	[]	30
[GP 2]	[]	[]	30
[GP 3]	[]	[]	30
[GP 4]	[]	[]	30
Total	[]		120

Period: field work from [month] to [month, year], after approval of this proposal.

6. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

- **Interview schedule** (administered by the investigator, suited to respondents who may not read): background, attendance in the last [four] gram sabha meetings, speaking and demands raised, reasons for attending or not.
- **Observation** of at least one gram sabha meeting in each sampled gram panchayat, recorded on an observation sheet (who attends, who speaks, agenda

items).

- **Records**, where the gram panchayat permits: attendance registers and minutes of recent gram sabha meetings.
- **Focus group discussion** with women of one self-help group per gram panchayat, to explain the survey findings.

The schedule will be pre-tested on ten women outside the sample and revised with the supervisor. Respondents will be told the purpose, their consent recorded, and no names published.

7. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Objective	Data	Analysis
1 Attendance	Schedule: attendance items	Frequency and percentage
2 Nature of participation	Schedule; observation sheets	Percentages; comparison of attending, speaking, raising demands
3 Associated factors	Schedule: background and participation	Cross-tabulation; chi-square test of association at the 0.05 level
4 Reasons	Open responses; focus groups	Content analysis into categories

8. PROPOSED CHAPTER PLAN AND TIME PLAN

Chapter	Content
I	Introduction: panchayati raj, gram sabha, the problem, objectives
II	Review of related literature
III	Research methodology: area, sample, tools, analysis
IV	Profile of the study area and respondents
V	Data analysis and interpretation
VI	Findings, conclusion and suggestions
	References and appendices (interview schedule, observation sheet)

Month after approval	Work
1	Schedule pre-test, revision, permissions from gram panchayats
2 and 3	Field work: interviews, observation, focus groups
4	Tabulation and analysis
5 and 6	Writing, supervisor review, corrections, hard binding (at least 100 A-4 pages)

PLANNING AID, NOT AN IGNOU RULE

The time plan is a suggestion. The project fee for each term-end examination is paid on the Samarth portal by the date in the Registrar (SED) notice for that cycle (30 November 2026 for December 2026).

9. REFERENCES

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.

Government of India. (1992). *The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992*. Ministry of Law and Justice.

Indira Gandhi National Open University. (n.d.). *MRD-203 Rural development planning and management* [Course material]. School of Continuing Education, IGNOU.

Indira Gandhi National Open University. (n.d.). *MRDP-001 Dissertation: Part I, Field work and dissertation*. School of Continuing Education, IGNOU.

[Add every study cited in Section 3.2, in the same style, in alphabetical order.]

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

Approved / Not approved	[]
Suggestions, if any	[]
Name and designation of the supervisor	[]
Signature and date	[]

KEEP THE ORIGINAL

After your supervisor signs, keep the signed original flat and safe. It is bound into the dissertation; it is not mailed anywhere.

SAMPLE FOR STUDY REFERENCE
NOT FOR SUBMISSION