

READ THIS FIRST

This file is a **study reference** prepared by ignouproject.com to show how a MANP-001 (Fieldwork and Dissertation) research proposal can be organised under the headings that the IGNOU MANP-001 Fieldwork Manual (School of Social Sciences, August 2012, section 1.3.2) asks for. It is **not** a proposal you can submit. The topic, the field site and every fact about the community are placeholders in [square brackets]. Your own proposal must come from your own reading, your own field area and your own discussion with your supervisor.

What the Fieldwork Manual says about the proposal

Rule	As printed in the MANP-001 Fieldwork Manual (2012)
Headings	Introduction/Background; Statement of the research problem, hypothesis, research question or research design; Review of Literature; Objectives; Methodology; Significance of the Study; Tentative Chapterisation; Bibliography/References (section 1.3.2)
Methodology parts	Study design; nature and sources of data; population and sample; data collection tools and techniques; method of analysis (section 1.3.2)
Length and layout	Approximately 2000 words; A-4 paper; pages numbered at bottom centre (section 1.3.3)
Packet	Proposal proforma (Appendix I), one copy of the synopsis and the supervisor's bio-data (Appendix III form) to the Programme Coordinator (MAAN); a copy at your Regional Centre (section 1.3.3)
Title lock	A change in the title, even its wording, is not allowed once the proposal is approved (section 1.3.3)
Route today	The MAAN Programme Guide (2023) asks learners to email synopses for approval to maan@ignou.ac.in . The 2012 manual describes registered or speed post. Follow the current Programme Guide and confirm with the Programme Coordinator.

Hypotheses are optional in the manual: experiment-based studies mostly have them, and a descriptive ethnographic study may work from research questions instead (section 1.3.2). This sample uses research questions for that reason.

The four classic and ethnographic works in the bibliography are real publications; the empirical studies about your own region are left as [placeholders] because you must read and cite them yourself. Never add a reference you have not read.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL (SYNOPSIS)

Ritual Specialists and the Commercialisation of Life-Cycle Ceremonies in [Town], [District]: An Ethnographic Study

Proposal submitted to Indira Gandhi National Open University for approval of the dissertation under Programme Code MAAN, Course Code MANP-001 (Fieldwork and Dissertation)

Field	Entry
Name of the learner	[Your name]
Enrolment number	[Your enrolment number]
Study Centre (name and code)	[Name and code]
Regional Centre (name and code)	[Name and code]
Address for correspondence	[Postal address, phone, e-mail]
Name and address of the supervisor	[Supervisor name, designation, institution]
Month and year	[Month Year]

The supervisor signs the cover page of the proposal (Fieldwork Manual, section 1.3.3). The approved proforma and this cover page are later bound with the dissertation.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

1. Introduction and Background

Life-cycle ceremonies such as naming, first feeding, thread ceremony, marriage and death rites have long been organised around a small set of ritual specialists: the household priest, the barber who carries invitations and assists at the ceremony, the musician, the flower seller and the cook. In [Town], as in many growing towns, several of these services are now offered as paid packages by [event organisers, tent houses, online booking platforms or temple trusts]. The investigator has observed [describe, in one or two sentences, what you have personally noticed in your locality, for example printed rate lists or priests advertising on social media].

Anthropology has studied rites of passage as moments that mark a change of status and that bind kin together. The question this study raises is what happens to the people who conduct these rites when the rite becomes a purchased service. The study will document who the ritual specialists of [Town] are today, how they are engaged and paid, and how households and specialists themselves describe the change.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

2. Statement of the Research Problem and Research Questions

The research problem is to understand how the commercialisation of life-cycle ceremonies in [Town] is changing the position, practice and livelihood of traditional ritual specialists, and how households negotiate between customary obligation and paid service.

The study is descriptive and exploratory. In line with the Fieldwork Manual, which treats hypotheses as optional for studies that are not experiment based, it will be guided by research questions:

- Who performs ritual roles in life-cycle ceremonies in [Town] today, and how are they recruited?

- How are ritual services priced, negotiated and paid for, and what has replaced customary gifts in kind, if anything?
- How do ritual specialists describe changes in their status, training and income?
- How do households explain their choice between a customary specialist and a packaged service?

Research design: an ethnographic case study of one town, using participant observation, key informant interviews, case studies of ceremonies and a household schedule.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

3. Review of Literature

The review will move from theory to Indian ethnography to studies of the specific region. Van Gennep (1960) described rites of passage as moving through separation, transition and incorporation, which gives the study a way to describe where in a ceremony each specialist acts. Turner (1969) developed the idea of the liminal phase and of *communitas*, useful for asking whether a packaged ceremony changes the shared experience of participants.

Srinivas (1952), in his study of the Coorgs, set out the concept of Sanskritisation, which helps place changing ritual styles within caste and status mobility. Fuller (1992) examined popular Hinduism and society in India, including ritual practice and the people who conduct it. Sokolova (2014) studied rural funeral ritual in Central Russia and showed how new organisations offering ritual services came to compete with folk ritual specialists, a comparative case for the present study.

[Here you add 5 to 8 empirical studies on ritual specialists, priests, service castes or wedding economies in your own state or region that you have actually read. For each, state the place, the method and what it found, then say what it does not cover.] The review will close by stating the gap: [for example, no study of [Town] or of the urban priestly and service households of [District]].

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the categories of ritual specialists engaged in life-cycle ceremonies in [Town].
- To describe the ways in which ritual services are arranged, priced and paid for.
- To examine how ritual specialists perceive changes in their status, practice and livelihood.
- To understand the reasons households give for choosing customary specialists or packaged services.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

5. Methodology

5.1 Study design

A descriptive and exploratory ethnographic design centred on [Town], with fieldwork planned over [number] weeks between [months].

5.2 Nature and sources of data

Primary data from fieldwork: observation of ceremonies, interviews with specialists and households, and case studies. Secondary data from [census handbook of the district, municipal records, published ethnographies, rate lists or advertisements collected in the field].

5.3 Universe, population and sample

The universe is [Town], [District], [State]. Two units of study are proposed: ritual specialists ([number] persons identified through snowball sampling, starting from [first

contact]) and households that conducted a life-cycle ceremony in the last [period] ([number] households selected by [purposive or simple random] sampling from [list or ward])). The investigator will justify these numbers with the supervisor; the Fieldwork Manual does not prescribe a sample size.

5.4 Tools and techniques of data collection

Research question	Tool or technique	Who or what
Who performs ritual roles	Participant observation; genealogy of specialist families	[Number] ceremonies; [number] families
Pricing and payment	Interview guide; collection of rate lists	Specialists and organisers
Perceived change	Life history interviews; case studies	[Number] senior specialists
Household choice	Household schedule (pre-tested)	[Number] households

All tools will be shown to the supervisor and pre-tested before use (Fieldwork Manual, section 1.4.1). Rapport will be built through [gatekeeper or community contact]. Informed consent will be sought before every interview and photograph, names of informants will be changed in the report, and no ceremony will be recorded without the family's permission.

5.5 Method of analysis

Qualitative material (field notes, interviews, case studies) will be coded by theme and analysed through content analysis. Household schedule data will be classified and tabulated, using simple percentages and cross-tables of [ceremony type] by [type of specialist engaged]. Every table in the dissertation will come only from the investigator's own field data.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

6. Significance of the Study

The study will add an Indian small-town case to the anthropology of ritual change and to the comparative literature on how markets enter ritual life. It will document the knowledge and livelihood of specialists whose roles are changing, and it may be useful to [community

bodies, temple trusts or local planners] who deal with ritual services.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

7. Tentative Chapterisation

Chapter	Title	Main contents
1	Introduction	Problem, research questions, objectives, significance
2	Literature Review	Rites of passage, ritual specialists in India, commercialisation of ritual, research gap
3	Study Area and People	[Town] and its communities, ceremonies observed, area map
4	Materials and Methods	Design, sampling, tools, fieldwork experience, ethics
5	Data Analysis and Results	Specialists, services and payment, perceived change, household choices
6	Discussion and Conclusion	Findings against objectives, limitations, further research

The order follows the structure recommended in the Fieldwork Manual, section 1.5.2, which ends with References.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

8. Bibliography

Format follows the Fieldwork Manual, section 1.5.3 (author, year, title, place, publisher).

The list in your proposal should contain only works you have read and cited.

Fuller C.J. 1992. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Indira Gandhi National Open University. 2012. *MANP-001 Fieldwork and Dissertation: Fieldwork Manual*. New Delhi: School of Social Sciences, IGNOU.

Sokolova A.D. 2014. The Commercialization of the Funeral Ritual and New Roles of Local Ritual Specialists. *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 2: 14-25.

Srinivas M.N. 1952. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Turner V. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine.

Van Gennep A. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[Add the regional empirical studies you have read, in alphabetical order.]

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.

Before you send your own proposal

Check	Source
Proforma (Appendix I) filled and signed and dated by you and the supervisor	Fieldwork Manual, Appendix I
Supervisor bio-data on the Appendix III form, signed with seal, if the supervisor is not a MAAN academic counsellor	Section 1.2.3; Appendix III
Supervisor guides no more than five candidates per session	Appendix I note; section 1.3.3
All eight headings present; about 2000 words; pages numbered bottom centre	Sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3
Cover page carries name, address, enrolment number, Study Centre and Regional Centre codes, tentative title, supervisor name and address, supervisor signature	Section 1.3.3
A resubmission includes the revised synopsis, a revised proforma and the rejected copy with the evaluator's comments	Section 1.3.3
Sent by the route in the current Programme Guide (email to maan@ignou.ac.in), copy kept	MAAN Programme Guide 2023

The approval decision belongs to the IGNOU faculty of Anthropology. ignouproject.com can review a learner-written draft against these rules; it does not write proposals for submission, supply data or sign any certificate.

ignouproject.com

Free study reference. Not for submission. The learner remains the author of every synopsis and report.