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Sample Synopsis for IGNOU MAANY Dissertation (MANP-101)

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What this file is	What it is not
A worked example of how a MANP-101 dissertation proposal can be organised, on a topic chosen for illustration only.	It is not an IGNOU form, not an approved synopsis and not text you may submit. IGNOU expects your own topic, your own field site and your own words.
Every place, population figure and local study is left as [brackets] for you to fill from your own fieldwork and reading.	No field data, no sample size and no findings are given, because those can only come from your own study.

What the official documents say (read 5 October 2026)

- **Course:** MANP-101 Dissertation, 8 credits (100 marks), compulsory, Semester IV, project only, no assignment and no term-end examination (MAANY Programme Guide 2026, pp. 9-10).
- **Synopsis route:** send the synopsis for approval to manp101@ignou.ac.in (Programme Guide, p. 10). For the MANE-106 Ethnographic Training project the address is mane106@ignou.ac.in.
- **Guide:** you need to choose a mentor, supervisor or guide; details are to be given in the course manual (Programme Guide, p. 10).
- **Structure:** the Programme Guide does not prescribe synopsis headings. This sample follows the learning outcomes listed for MANP-101 on p. 49: select a problem, explain aims and objectives, review literature, develop the proposal, show ethical understanding, then do fieldwork only after approval.
- **Manual not yet published:** no MANP-101 manual or proforma was found on any official IGNOU path on 5 October 2026. When IGNOU publishes it, its headings and forms override this sample.

Before you use this sample: replace every [bracket], cut sections your guide does not want, and write each paragraph again in your own words.

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SYNOPSIS (DISSERTATION PROPOSAL)

MANP-101: Dissertation

Master of Arts (Anthropology) (MAANY)

**Mobile Phones and Kinship Obligations: An Ethnographic Study of
Remittance Calls in Migrant Construction Workers' Households of [Village
or Block], [District], [State]**

Field	Fill in
Name of the learner	[Your full name]
Enrolment number	[Your enrolment number]
Regional Centre and Learner Support Centre	[RC name and code] / [LSC name and code]
E-mail and mobile	[E-mail] / [Mobile]
Name and designation of the guide	[Guide's name, designation, institution]
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1. Introduction and Background

Seasonal and long-distance labour migration from rural India into urban construction work is a familiar subject in the anthropology of work and the informal economy. What has changed in the last two decades is the channel through which a migrant stays inside his or her household's web of obligations. A daily or weekly phone call now carries news, instructions about money, requests from parents, and negotiations between spouses. The call is where a remittance is announced, demanded, delayed or explained.

This study proposes to look at those calls ethnographically: who calls whom, when, about what, and what the household expects as a result. The field site is [Village or Block], [District], where [describe in one or two sentences why construction migration is common here, from your own observation or a local source you will cite].

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2. Rationale and Significance of the Study

Classic anthropological writing on exchange treats gifts and payments as social relations that create obligations to give, to receive and to return (Mauss, 1925/1990). Studies of migrant labour in India have documented the circulation of workers between villages and work sites (Breman, 1996), and the anthropology of mobile communication has shown how phones reorganise everyday relationships (Horst and Miller, 2006; Madianou and Miller, 2012; Tenhunen, 2018).

Fewer studies bring these strands together at the level of one village and its construction migrants: how kinship obligations are spoken, bargained and kept over the phone. The study is expected to add a small, field-based account of this process in [District], useful for anthropologists of kinship and migration and for organisations working with migrant households.

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3. Statement of the Problem

The study asks how phone calls between migrant construction workers and their households in [Village or Block] shape, express and renegotiate kinship obligations connected with remittances.

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4. Review of Literature

4.1 Theoretical anchors

Exchange and obligation. Mauss (1925/1990) argues that gift exchange binds people through three obligations: to give, to receive and to reciprocate. This gives the study a way of reading a remittance as part of a relationship rather than a simple transfer.

Migrant labour in India. Breman (1996) describes the footloose, circulating labour that moves between villages and informal work sites in India. It frames the construction worker as part of a wider pattern of labour circulation.

Mobile phones and relationships. Horst and Miller (2006) offer an ethnography of mobile phone use in Jamaica and show how calls maintain wide personal networks. Madianou and Miller (2012) develop the idea of polymedia through the study of transnational families separated by migration. Tenhunen (2018) follows the arrival of mobile telephony in a village in rural West Bengal and its effects on social relations.

4.2 Studies from your own region (to be added by the learner)

- [Study 1: author, year, place, what it found, how your study differs]
- [Study 2: an Indian study on migrant households or remittances]
- [Study 3: a study on mobile phone use in rural India or among workers]
- [Study 4, optional: a district or state report that describes migration from your area]

Research gap. [In two or three sentences, state what the studies above leave out that your village-level, call-focused study will look at.]

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5. Research Questions

- Who in the household speaks with the migrant member, how often, and who decides the timing of calls?
- How are requests for money, and replies to them, phrased and justified during calls?
- How do the obligations of a son, husband, brother or daughter differ in what is expected over the phone?
- What happens in the household when a promised remittance is delayed or reduced?

6. Objectives of the Study

Objectives are worded neutrally, with no assumption about what the fieldwork will find.

- To describe the composition of households in [Village or Block] that have at least one member in construction work outside the district.
- To examine the pattern of phone contact between migrant members and their households.
- To explore how kinship roles are referred to when remittances are requested, promised or explained.
- To understand how households respond when remittance expectations are not met.

7. Operational Definitions

Term	Meaning in this study
Migrant construction worker	A household member who has worked on construction sites outside [District] for at least [period you fix] in the past [period].
Household	People who share a common kitchen in [Village], following the household census definition you adopt and cite.
Remittance call	Any phone or video call in which money sent, to be sent or not sent is discussed.
Kinship obligation	A duty that people describe as owed because of a kin relation, for example a son's duty to parents.

8. Study Area and Population

[Name the village or block, district and state. Describe its location, main occupations, social composition and why it suits the study. Use figures only from a source you cite, such as the Census of India 2011 village directory or a block office record.]

9. Research Methodology

9.1 Research design

The study is ethnographic and mainly qualitative, supported by a short household census so that the studied households can be described accurately. It follows the fieldwork tradition taught in MAN-108 and MAN-109 (Research Methods in Anthropology I and II) and, where taken, MANE-105 Ethnography.

9.2 Universe and selection of households

A household census of [hamlet or ward] will identify households with at least one member in construction work outside the district. From these, [number you decide with your guide] households will be selected purposively so that different kin positions of the migrant (son, husband, daughter, brother) are represented. Where migrants are reachable only by phone, further contacts may be traced through snowball referral. No minimum sample size is prescribed in the Programme Guide; the number is fixed with the guide according to depth and feasibility.

9.3 Methods and tools of data collection

Method or tool	Purpose	Linked objective
Household census schedule	Household size, members away, destination, type of work	1
Genealogical method (kinship charts)	Kin position of each migrant and caller	1, 3
Participant observation and field diary	Calls as they happen, talk before and after calls	2, 3, 4
In-depth interviews	How people explain requests, promises and delays	3, 4
Call diary kept by willing households	Who called, when, topic in a word (no recording)	2
Case studies	Two or three households followed through a remittance delay	4

9.4 Data analysis

Field notes and interview transcripts will be coded thematically against the four objectives. Kinship charts will be drawn for each studied household. Census data will be summarised in simple frequency tables only. Interpretation will be developed in dialogue with the literature in Section 4.

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10. Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent from every participant in [local language], recorded in writing or orally as the participant prefers.
- No recording of call content. The call diary notes only time, caller and topic in one word, and only with the household's agreement.
- Pseudonyms for persons and, if participants ask, for the village.
- Care with money matters: debts and family disputes heard during fieldwork are not repeated outside the household or written in identifiable form.
- Participants may withdraw at any time; their material is then removed.
- Field notes stored securely and used only for this dissertation.

11. Limitations

The study covers one locality and a small number of households, so it describes processes rather than measuring how common they are. Some conversations will be reported rather than observed.

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12. Tentative Chapterisation

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Review of Literature
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology and the Field
- Chapter 4: The Village and its Migrant Households
- Chapter 5: Calls, Kin and Money
- Chapter 6: When Remittances Fall Short
- Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusion
- References and Appendices

13. Work Plan

Planning aid only. IGNOU does not prescribe these durations; agree them with your guide.

Stage	Planned duration
Wait for approval from manp101@ignou.ac.in	[weeks]
Household census and rapport	[weeks]
Participant observation, interviews, call diaries	[weeks]
Coding, kinship charts and analysis	[weeks]
Writing, guide review and final revision	[weeks]

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References

Bernard, H. R. (2018). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6th ed.). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Breman, J. (1996). *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horst, H. A., and Miller, D. (2006). *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication*. Oxford: Berg.

IGNOU. (2026). *Programme Guide: Master of Arts (Anthropology) (MAANY)*. New Delhi: School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University.

IGNOU. ([year of your copy]). *MAN-108: Research Methods in Anthropology-I*. New Delhi: School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Madianou, M., and Miller, D. (2012). *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*. London: Routledge.

Mauss, M. (1990). *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (W. D. Halls, Trans.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 1925)

Tenhunen, S. (2018). *A Village Goes Mobile: Telephony, Mediation, and Social Change in Rural India*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[Add the regional studies from Section 4.2 in the same style.]

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