

READ ME FIRST

What this file is. A study reference that shows how a project proposal (synopsis) for IGNOU's MA Economics (MAEC) project can be organised. The example is a Group D (Social Policy) proposal under **MECP-202 Project Work-II**, 4 credits, using a small household survey. It is not a proposal for submission, and it must not be submitted as your own work.

What it follows. The proposal guidelines of the MAEC Programme Guide (School of Social Sciences): 4 to 5 pages under five sections, namely Introduction, Objectives, Data Sources with variables identified and Methodology, Limitations, and Chapter Scheme, with objectives that open with a functional verb and a survey whose area, unit, sample size and random method are stated. Research questions, hypotheses and the expected outcome are added as the MECP-101 Project-Work Guide (2015) asks. Under MECP-201 (Groups B and C, 6 credits) the proposal follows the same guidelines.

How to use it. Everything in [square brackets] is for your own facts: block, district, year, sample size and the studies you have actually read. Choose your own topic with your supervisor and write every sentence in your own words.

What only you can do. Fill and sign the Annexure A proforma of the MECP-201 or MECP-202 guide with your supervisor, enclose the supervisor's signed bio-data, and post the set to the address in your guide.

Getting your own draft checked. ignouproject.com checks a learner-written proposal against the IGNOU guidance and returns corrections: ignouproject.com/ignou-project-synopsis-correction/. You remain the author; IGNOU's Faculty of Economics decides approval.

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

Women's Participation in MGNREGA Work and Household Consumption Spending: A Survey of [n] Households in [Block], [District]

Field	Entry
Programme	Master of Arts (Economics), MAEC
Course code	MECP-202 Project Work-II (4 credits)
Semester 4 group	Group D, Specialisation in Social Policy
Enrolment number	[]
Study Centre code / Regional Centre	[]/[]
Name of the learner	[]
Name and designation of the supervisor	[]
Enclosures	Annexure A proforma signed and dated; supervisor's signed bio-data

Proposal length target: 4 to 5 pages of text (MAEC Programme Guide).

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (now the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) provides at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act also gives priority to women, so that at least one-third of the beneficiaries are women. Earnings from this work can change what a household is able to spend on food and other needs. [Two sentences in your own words on why the question matters in your block, with a source.]

1.2 Review of relevant studies

Khera and Nayak (2009) study women workers' participation in the scheme and their perceptions of it. [In four to six sentences, summarise in author (year) form the recent studies you have actually read on women's work under MGNREGA or on household spending, and note what they did not cover for your area.]

1.3 Statement of the problem

[Two or three sentences stating the gap. Frame: Little is known about whether households in [Block] in which women take up MGNREGA work spend differently from households in which they do not. This study surveys [n] job-card households to examine that question.]

1.4 Research questions

RQ1. What share of MGNREGA person-days in the sample households is worked by women?

RQ2. Does monthly consumption spending per person differ between households with and without women's MGNREGA work?

RQ3. Which constraints do women report in taking up the work?

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2. Objectives and Hypotheses

Each objective opens with a functional verb, as the MAEC Programme Guide asks; not more than two to three objectives (MECP-101 guide).

O1. To **estimate** the share of women's person-days in MGNREGA work in the sample households during [financial year].

O2. To **examine** whether monthly consumption spending per person differs between households with and without women's MGNREGA work.

O3. To **identify** the constraints women workers report in taking up MGNREGA work.

H01: Mean monthly consumption spending per person is the same in households with and without women's MGNREGA work.

H02: Women's MGNREGA work is independent of the household's landholding category.

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3. Data Sources, Variables and Methodology

3.1 Survey design

Area: [Block], [District], [State]. Survey unit: a household holding an MGNREGA job card. Sample size: [n], within about 100 households (MECP-101 guide). Selection: [number] gram panchayats chosen at random from the block, and households drawn by simple random sampling from the job-card list of each selected panchayat. Reference periods: last financial year for person-days, last 30 days for spending. Tool: an interview schedule [attached as an annexure]. Respondents' consent will be taken and no names will be reported.

3.2 Variables and sources

Variable	Unit	Source
Person-days worked by women and by men	Days in the financial year	Survey, checked against the job card
Monthly consumption spending per person	Rs per month	Survey
Household size, land owned, education of the head	Number; acres; years	Survey
Constraints reported by women	Categories	Survey (open and listed responses)
Block-level person-days and women's share (context)	Days; per cent	MGNREGA public reports, Ministry of Rural Development [name the report]

3.3 Methods by objective

For O1. Share of women's person-days = (person-days worked by women / total person-days) x 100, for the sample and by panchayat.

For O2. Test of H01: two-sample t-test on mean spending per person, $t = (\text{mean}_1 - \text{mean}_2) / \text{square root of } (s_1^2/n_1 + s_2^2/n_2)$, in Welch's form, at the 5 per cent level. Then ordinary least squares: $\ln(\text{spending per person}) = a + b_1 D + b_2 \text{ household size} + b_3 \text{ land} + b_4 \text{ education} + u$, where $D = 1$ if a woman in the household did MGNREGA work.

For H02. Chi-square test of independence on a participation by landholding table: $\text{chi-square} = \text{sum of } (O - E)^2 / E$, with $(r - 1)(c - 1)$ degrees of freedom.

For O3. Frequencies and percentages of each reported constraint, ranked.

Software: [Excel / gretl / R / SPSS]. These methods are taught in MEC-109 Research Methods in Economics.

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4. Limitations

- (i) A sample of [n] households in one block cannot represent the district or state.
- (ii) Spending is recalled and self-reported.
- (iii) A difference in spending shows association, not that MGNREGA work caused it.
- (iv) Job-card records and survey answers may not match; [state how you will handle a mismatch].

5. Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1: Introduction, objectives, hypotheses and methodology

Chapter 2: MGNREGA and women's work: the policy setting

Chapter 3: Profile of the sample and women's share of work (O1)

Chapter 4: Spending and participation (O2, H01, H02)

Chapter 5: Constraints, objective-wise findings and suggestions (O3)

References and annexures (schedule, data tables)

6. Expected Outcome

The study is expected to give the women's share of MGNREGA work in the sample, a test of whether spending differs with that work, and a ranked list of constraints. [Do not write results here. Findings can come only from your own survey data.]

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References

Gujarati, D. N., & Porter, D. C. (2009). *Basic econometrics* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Indira Gandhi National Open University. (n.d.). *MEC-109 Research methods in economics*. New Delhi: IGNOU.

Indira Gandhi National Open University, School of Social Sciences.
(n.d.). *M.A. Economics (MAEC) programme guide*. New Delhi:
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Khera, R., & Nayak, N. (2009). Women workers and perceptions of the
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. *Economic and Political
Weekly*, 44(43), 49-57.

Government of India. (2005). *The National Rural Employment
Guarantee Act, 2005* (No. 42 of 2005). New Delhi: Ministry of Law
and Justice.

[Add every study you actually read and cite. List only sources you used.]

Before You Send Your Own Proposal

Check	Basis
4 to 5 pages under the five sections, in order	MAEC Programme Guide
Objectives open with functional verbs; not more than 2 to 3	Programme Guide; MECP-101 guide
Survey area, unit, sample size and random method written out	Programme Guide
Formulae and test statistics written out	Programme Guide
Studies cited in author (year) form	Programme Guide
Annexure A proforma signed and dated by you and your supervisor; supervisor's bio-data enclosed	MECP-201/202 guides; Programme Guide FAQ
You have opted for one project course only, MECP-201 or MECP-202, not both	MECP-202 guide; Prospectus July 2026
A copy kept with you	MECP-101 guide

Address in the MECP-201 and MECP-202 guides (2024): Programme Coordinator, MA (Economics) Programme, School of Social Sciences, Tagore Bhawan, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068. The MAEC Programme Guide names the Course Coordinator, MECP-202 Course, Block F, School of Social Sciences. Confirm the current addressee with your Regional Centre before posting. A returned proposal gets at most two chances to be revised (MECP-202 guide).

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