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Sample synopsis for IGNOU MSDP-018 (Project Work), MA Sustainability Science
(MASS)

This file is a study reference made by ignouproject.com in October 2026. It shows how one proposal can be laid out against the seven components that IGNOU's MSDP-018 project material asks for. It is not an IGNOU document, it carries no IGNOU logo, and it must not be submitted, copied or presented as your own work. IGNOU requires an original proposal signed by you and your supervisor.

What the official material asks the proposal to state

- Title
- Introduction
- Objectives
- Problem Statement
- Research Methodology (with locale, sampling, instruments and statistical tools to be used)
- Limitations, if any
- References

Source: MSDP-018 Handbook on Project Work (IGNOU, May 2016), pages 17 and 20; the same list appears in the Project Proposal Format on IGNOU's MASS site (read October 2026).

How to use this sample

- Every **[square bracket]** is a fact only you can supply: your district, gram panchayats, pond records, member counts and the studies you actually read. Leave nothing invented.
- Change the topic to one you can complete. This topic is only an illustration.
- Choose your own objectives and tools with your supervisor, then keep the title identical on the proforma, the proposal and, later, the report.

What goes in the envelope (check the current version on IGNOU's MASS site)

- Proforma for Approval of Project Proposal (MSDP-018), filled and signed and dated by you and your supervisor. The current SOITS version asks for a scanned copy of your IGNOU I-card as page 2.
- Supervisor bio-data, signed, with date of birth, full office and residential addresses, telephone numbers, academic qualifications with year of passing, and work experience with designation and organisation. Without a complete signed bio-data the proposal "will not be entertained".
- One copy of the proposal. Keep a copy for yourself. Write "MSDP-018" prominently on the envelope.
- Address printed on IGNOU's MASS site (October 2026): Coordinator (MASS), School of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies, Swami Vivekanand Bhawan, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068. Confirm with mass@ignou.ac.in before posting.

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PROJECT PROPOSAL (SYNOPSIS)

MSDP-018: Project Work

Master of Arts (Sustainability Science), MASS

Role of User Groups in the Upkeep of Amrit Sarovar Ponds: A Case Study of [two] Gram Panchayats in [District], [State]

Field	Your entry
Name of the student	[Your name]
Enrolment number	[Enrolment number]
Programme and course	MASS, MSDP-018 (Project Work)
Name of the supervisor	[Supervisor's name, designation, institution]
Year	[Year]

Study reference only. The cover fields above follow the details the official proforma asks for; your proposal must be your own work.

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1. Title

Role of User Groups in the Upkeep of Amrit Sarovar Ponds: A Case Study of [two] Gram Panchayats in [District], [State]

Why this wording: the title names the unit of study (user groups), the activity (upkeep after construction or rejuvenation), the design (case study) and the locale. It makes no claim about the result.

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2. Introduction

Mission Amrit Sarovar was announced by the Prime Minister on 24 April 2022, National Panchayati Raj Day, with the aim of constructing or rejuvenating at least 75 Amrit Sarovars (ponds) in every district. Each Sarovar is expected to have a pond area of at least 1 acre (0.4 hectare) and a water-holding capacity of about 10,000 cubic metres. The Ministry of Rural Development anchors the mission (Ministry of Rural Development, 2025).

The mission places upkeep in community hands. According to the same Ministry backgrounder, a user group is formed for each Amrit Sarovar to manage and maintain it, including plantation work and removal of silt from the catchment after every monsoon, and its membership should include women and weaker sections. The backgrounder, dated April 2025, reports more than 68,000 completed Sarovars (as of March 2025) and 65,285 user groups formed (Ministry of Rural Development, 2025).

A pond is a common-pool resource: many households benefit, and no single household bears the full cost of maintaining it. Ostrom (1990) showed that local user organisations can sustain such resources when they set and enforce their own rules, which makes the working of Amrit Sarovar user groups a question for sustainability science rather than only for engineering. Agarwal and Narain (1997) documented how India's traditional water-harvesting structures depended on community institutions for their upkeep.

[In your own words, add two or three sentences on the ponds in your district: how many Amrit Sarovars the district or block records show, when the two selected ponds were completed, and why you chose them. Cite the record you used.]

Rationale. The study links Year II courses MSD 022 (Aquatic Ecosystem) and MEDS 044 (Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects and Programmes) to a programme now in its maintenance phase. [State in one sentence why the upkeep stage matters in your locale.]

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3. Objectives

The objectives are worded neutrally, so that none of them assumes what the findings will be.

- To study the composition and formation of the user groups of the Amrit Sarovars in the selected gram panchayats.
- To examine the upkeep activities (desilting, plantation, care of inlet and outlet) carried out by the user groups after construction or rejuvenation.
- To assess the participation of women and members of weaker sections in user-group meetings and decisions.
- To identify the constraints that user-group members report in maintaining the ponds.
- To explore the uses of the pond that member households report.

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4. Problem Statement

The mission's guidance assigns upkeep to user groups, but whether and how these groups function once construction work ends can only be known locale by locale. [Summarise, in two or three sentences, what the studies you reviewed report about community upkeep of village ponds, with author and year for each.] This study therefore asks: **how are the user groups of the Amrit Sarovars in [Gram Panchayat A] and [Gram Panchayat B]**

organised, what upkeep do they carry out, who takes part in their decisions, and what constraints do they report?

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5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research design

A descriptive case study (MSDP-018 Handbook, section 4.1) of the Amrit Sarovar user groups in two gram panchayats, combined with a survey of user-group members. The case study gives depth on how each group works; the survey gives comparable answers from members.

5.2 Locale

[Gram Panchayat A] and [Gram Panchayat B], [Block], [District], [State]. Selection: purposive, taking panchayats whose Amrit Sarovar was completed by [year] according to [district or block record], and which the investigator can visit through [months]. [Add one line on why these two differ in a way that matters, for example size of the user group or distance from the village.]

5.3 Population and sample

Population: members of the two user groups, [N] in total as per the groups' membership registers. If N is small, all members will be interviewed (a census survey, Handbook section 5.4). If N is large, [n] members will be selected by simple random sampling from each register. Key informants: [for example, the panchayat secretary and one office-bearer of each group], selected purposively.

5.4 Instruments

- Structured interview schedule for user-group members (objectives 1 to 5), pre-tested in a pilot with [number] members of a user group outside the sample.
- Observation checklist for each pond: water spread, silt in the bed and inlet, condition of the outlet, survival of plantation (objective 2).

- Review of user-group records such as meeting minutes and registers, where the group permits (objectives 1 and 3).
- Interview guide for key informants (objectives 2 and 4).

5.5 Data collection

Personal interviews by the investigator in [language], after explaining the purpose of the study, stating that participation is voluntary and that answers will be kept confidential, as the Handbook's survey guidance requires. An authorisation letter for data collection will be sought from the supervisor, study centre or regional centre (Handbook, page 18).

5.6 Statistical tools

Objective	Data	Analysis
1. Composition and formation	Schedule, registers	Frequencies and percentages
2. Upkeep activities	Schedule, observation checklist	Frequencies; cross-tabulation by panchayat
3. Participation of women and weaker sections	Schedule, minutes	Cross-tabulation; chi-square test of association where expected cell counts allow
4. Constraints	Schedule, key informants	Frequencies; ranking; qualitative content analysis
5. Uses of the pond	Schedule	Frequencies and percentages

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6. Limitations

- Two gram panchayats cannot represent the district; findings describe these cases only.
- Upkeep is partly reported by members themselves and may be over-stated; the observation checklist is used as a cross-check.
- Pond condition is observed in one season ([month]); conditions after the monsoon may differ.
- [Add any limitation specific to your access, language or records.]

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7. References

APA style, listed alphabetically, as the Handbook asks. Add the empirical studies you actually read; do not cite anything you have not seen.

Agarwal, A., & Narain, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Dying wisdom: Rise, fall and potential of India's traditional water harvesting systems*. Centre for Science and Environment.

Indira Gandhi National Open University. (2016). *Handbook on project work for Post Graduate Diploma in Sustainability Science (PGDSS), MSDP-018*. IGNOU.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd rev. ed.). New Age International.

Ministry of Rural Development. (2025, April 17). *Mission Amrit Sarovar: Reviving India's water heritage through community-led conservation* [Backgrounder]. Press Information Bureau, Government of India.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge University Press.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.

[Author, A. A. (Year). Title of the empirical study you read. *Journal*, volume(issue), pages.]

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SAMPLE FOR STUDY REFERENCE,
NOT FOR SUBMISSION

Before you post your proposal

- Title on the proforma, the proposal and the supervisor's bio-data page is identical.
- Both signatures and both dates are on the proforma.
- Supervisor bio-data has all six details and is signed.
- If your supervisor is a PGDSS academic counsellor, the courses counselled, since when, and the study centre name and code are stated.
- I-card scan is page 2 of the proforma (current SOITS version).
- "MSDP-018" is written on the envelope; you keep a copy of everything.

IGNOU states that written communication of approval or non-approval is sent within six weeks of receipt (MSDP-018 Handbook, 2016). If the proposal is not approved, resubmit the revised proposal with a revised proforma, a copy of the rejected proposal, the proforma bearing the evaluator's comments and the P.P. number.

Want your own draft checked against these MSDP-018 requirements before you post it?

See the synopsis correction page on ignouproject.com. You remain the author; IGNOU decides approval.

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