Steps in Sampling – Example:

Let's take an interesting case study and apply these steps to perform sampling. This is about the past General Elections in India. You must have seen the public opinion polls every news channel was running at the time:

Were these results concluded by considering the views of all 900 million voters of the country or a fraction of these voters? Let us see how it was done.

Step 1

Identfy the target population:

To carry out opinion polls, polling agencies consider only the people who are above 18 years of age and are eligible to vote in the population.

Step 2

Sampling Frame – It is a list of items or people forming a population from which the sample is taken.

So, the sampling frame would be the list of all the people whose names appear on the voter list of a constituency.

Step 3

Generally, **probability sampling methods** are used because every vote has equal value and any person can be included in the sample irrespective of his caste, community, or religion. Different samples are taken from different regions all over the country.

Step 4

Sample Size – It is the number of individuals or items to be taken in a sample that would be enough to make inferences about the population with the desired level of accuracy and precision.

Larger the sample size, more accurate our inference about the population would be.

For the polls, agencies try to get as many people as possible of diverse backgrounds to be included in the sample as it would help in predicting the number of seats a political party can win.

Step 5

Once the target population, sampling frame, sampling technique, and sample size have been established, the next step is to **collect data from the sample**.

In opinion polls, agencies generally put questions to the people, like which political party are they going to vote for or has the previous party done any work, etc.

Based on the answers, agencies try to interpret who the people of a constituency are going to vote for and approximately how many seats is a political party going to win.

This illustrates the methods in sampling.