

LEVELS OF EDUCATION OF THE MARGINALISED PEOPLE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Marginalization is a process that denies opportunities and outcomes to those 'living on the margins', while enhancing the opportunities and outcomes for those who are 'at the centre'. Caste and class prejudice, in many societies across the globe, exclude many communities, and hinder their effective participation in economic and social development. It directly affects attainment of effective endowments in the spheres of education, occupation and livelihood. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation.

This paper shows that the male education level is greater than that of female educational level in the same region, while urban segment is better than that of their rural counterparts. However, rural males' level of literacy is less than not only that of urban males, but also that of urban females. On the basis of social groups, the educational levels of the males among the marginalised section is worse than that of the females belonging to the 'others' category. Similar differences can be seen within urban males and urban females, wherein the educational levels of the ST and SC population lagging behind that of the OBC and others.

KEYWORDS: Marginalisation, education, rural, urban.

I INTRODUCTION

Marginality is a living condition that affects millions of people throughout the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in earning their share from the society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has a tremendous impact on development of human beings, as well as on society at large. As the objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy, and creative life, it is important to address the issue of marginalization.

II RURAL-URBAN EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN INDIA

This section presents the analysis pertaining to the educational levels of rural males, rural females, urban males and urban females during the period 1993-94 to 2009-10. Table – 1 presents the data regarding the area and sex-wise general educational levels in India.

It is noted from the table that the percentage of 'not literate' persons among the rural males has declined from 45.5 per cent in 1993-94 to 29.4 per cent in 2009-10; the proportion of those who are literate upto the primary level has moved up from 33.7 per cent to 35.7 per cent; that of middle school too has increased from 10.9 per cent to 16 per cent, while the percentage of those who are

literate upto the secondary level or above has gone up from 9.8 per cent to 18.8 per cent between 1993-94 to 2009-10.

In the case of rural female, illiteracy rate has declined from 67.9 per cent in 1993-94 to 46.7 per cent in 2009-10, while their levels of literacy upto the primary level has moved up from 23 per cent to 31.8 per cent; that of upto middle school has increased from 5.6 per cent to 11.1 per cent and that of upto secondary level or above too has increased from 3.4 per cent to 10.3 per cent in the same period.

The educational level of urban males suggests that the illiteracy level has decreased from 24.1 per cent to 16.4 per cent between 1993-94 and 2009-10, while the percentage of primary level literacy has come down from 33.2 per cent to 27.4 per cent, while that of upto middle school level has gone up only marginally from 14.5 per cent to 15 per cent and upto secondary or above level of literacy has moved up from 28.1 per cent to 41.1 per cent in that period.

In the case of urban females, level of illiteracy has moved down from 38.4 per cent in 1993-94 to 26.4 per cent in 2009-10 and that of upto primary level literacy too has declined from 31 per cent to 27 per cent, while that of middle school literacy has gone up from 11.8 per cent to 13.6 per cent and literacy level upto secondary level or above has increased from 18.7 per cent to 33 per cent between 1993-94 to 2009-10.

Table – 1 Area and Sex-wise General Educational Levels in India, 1993-94 to 2009-10

Year	Levels of Education			
	Not Literate	Literate upto Primary	Middle	Secondary and above
Rural Male				
1993-94	45.5	33.7	10.9	9.8
1999-00	41.2	34.2	12.6	12.0
2004-05	36.4	36.1	14.0	13.4
2009-10	29.4	35.7	16.0	18.8
Rural Female				
1993-94	67.9	23.0	5.6	3.4
1999-00	61.5	26.0	7.5	5.0
2004-05	55.0	29.3	8.9	6.7
2009-10	46.7	31.8	11.1	10.3
Urban Male				
1993-94	24.1	33.2	14.5	28.1
1999-00	21.6	30.9	15.6	31.9
2004-05	19.5	30.0	16.0	34.5
2009-10	16.4	27.4	15.0	41.1
Urban Female				
1993-94	38.4	31.0	11.8	18.7
1999-00	34.3	29.9	13.2	22.5
2004-05	30.7	29.4	14.4	25.5
2009-10	26.4	27.0	13.6	33.0

Note: Figures in percentage.

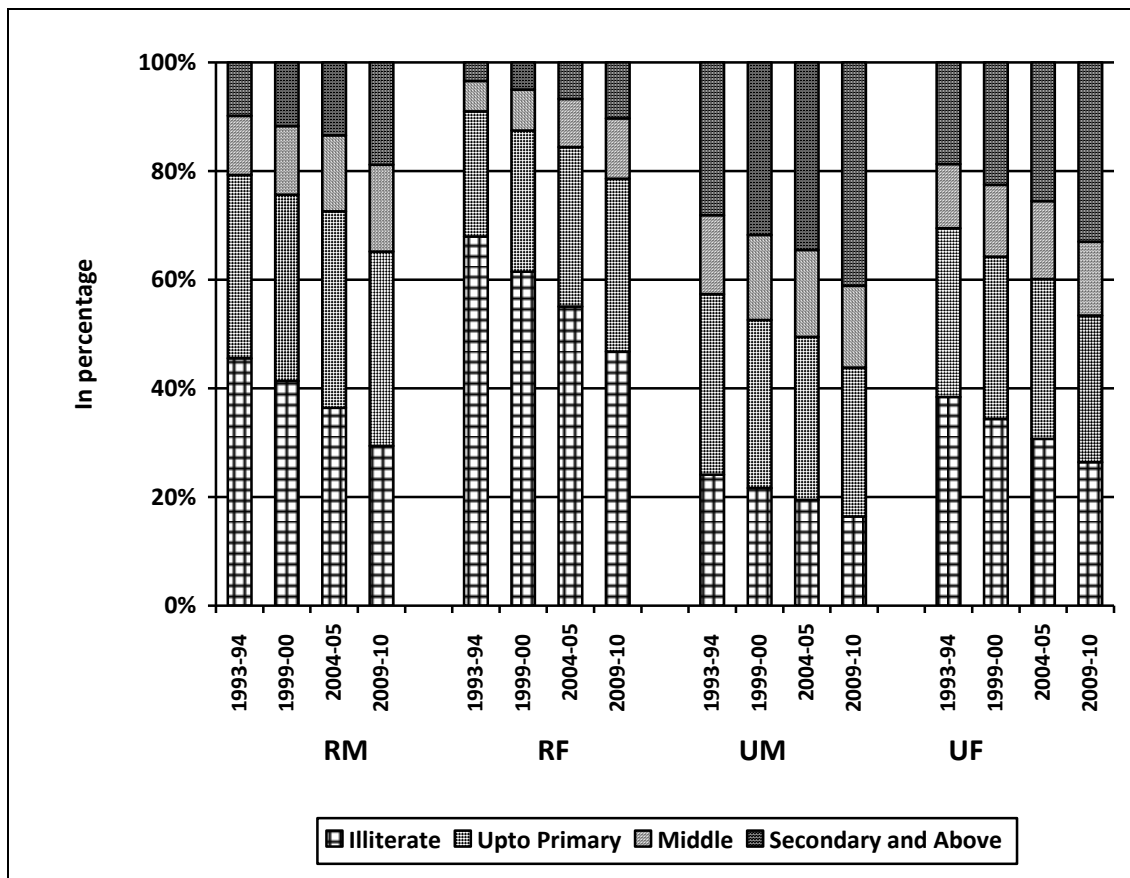
Source: Government of India, (2012), "Employment and Unemployment Situation in India – 2009-10", NSS 66th Round, National Sample Survey Organization, New Delhi, p. 36.

This indicates that general educational levels have gone up among all sub-groups, though there are intra and inter-gender variations. For instance, educational levels

differ between males and females in both rural and urban areas, while gender-wise, there are differences between the rural males and urban males and between the rural females and urban females. Though the illiteracy rate of the rural and urban females has declined over the years, it is still not only higher than that of their male counterparts, but the female illiteracy rate in 2009-10 is higher than that the males' illiteracy rate that existed in 1993-94. Hence, educational attainment among the females, whether in the rural or urban areas, lags behind that of male population by two decades. Moreover, rural males' level of literacy is less than not only that of urban males, but also that of urban females. For instance, in 2009-10, 29.4 per cent of the rural males are illiterate, which is only 26.4 per cent among the urban females, while the proportion of rural males who are literate upto secondary level or above is 18.8 per cent, which is 33 per cent among the urban females. Chart – 1 presents the graphical view of the area and sex-wise educational level in India.

Chart – 1 Area and Sex-wise General Educational Levels in India,

1993-94 to 2009-10



Note: RM – Rural Male; RF – Rural Female; UM – Urban Male; UF – Urban Female.

Source: Based on Table – 1.

III EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AMONG SOCIAL GROUPS

The differences in the levels of education among the different social groups are examined on the basis of the data shown in Table – 2. It presents the area-wise and sex-wise educational levels among the social groups in India during 2009-10.

It is observed from the table that among the rural males, the rate of illiteracy ranges from 35.8 per cent among the ST, 33.1 per cent in the case of SC, 25.3 per cent for the Other Backward Class (OBC) and 17.4 per cent in the case of others. This indicates that the proportion of illiterate population is considerably higher among the ST and SC communities than among the OBC and others. Among the literates, the proportion of those with primary level of education is higher among the ST (26.4 per cent) and SC (27.6 per cent) than among the OBC (25.2 per cent) and others (23.1 per cent), which underlines the fact that among the marginalised section (ST and SC), educational level is mostly centred at the primary level. This is underscored more so by the fact that at higher levels of education, the rate is less among the marginalised section than among the OBC and others.

Table – 2 Area and Sex-wise Levels of Education among the Social Groups in India, 2009-10

Social Group	Levels of Education							All
	Not Literate	Upto Primary	Middle	Secondary	Hr. Sec	Diploma/ Certificate	Graduate & Above	
Rural Male								
ST	35.8	26.4	18.3	11.1	5.7	0.6	2.2	100.0
SC	33.1	27.6	19.7	10.9	5.4	0.5	2.7	100.0
OBC	25.3	25.2	21.3	15.0	8.0	1.1	4.1	100.0
Others	17.4	23.1	20.9	18.6	11.2	1.3	7.2	100.0
All	26.0	25.3	20.5	14.7	8.0	1.0	4.5	100.0
Rural Female								
ST	58.3	21.7	10.3	5.7	2.7	0.3	0.9	100.0
SC	58.1	20.2	11.6	6.3	2.6	0.2	1.1	100.0
OBC	51.4	20.8	13.5	8.1	4.0	0.4	1.8	100.0
Others	36.6	25.2	16.3	11.2	6.7	0.5	3.5	100.0
All	49.8	22.0	13.5	8.2	4.2	0.4	2.0	100.0
Urban Male								
ST	12.7	17.6	19.3	18.2	14.3	2.6	15.3	100.0
SC	18.4	22.4	20.1	15.9	11.0	1.8	10.3	100.0
OBC	12.0	19.0	19.7	19.7	12.5	3.0	14.0	100.0
Others	6.3	11.3	14.6	20.5	16.0	3.1	28.1	100.0
All	10.4	15.9	17.5	19.5	13.9	2.9	19.8	100.0
Urban Female								
ST	31.3	16.7	15.3	14.7	11.1	1.0	9.8	100.0
SC	36.4	20.7	14.5	12.3	8.0	0.8	7.2	100.0
OBC	28.1	18.9	16.4	15.6	10.1	1.5	9.3	100.0
Others	15.2	14.5	14.6	17.3	15.2	1.3	21.9	100.0
All	23.6	17.2	15.3	15.9	12.1	1.3	14.7	100.0

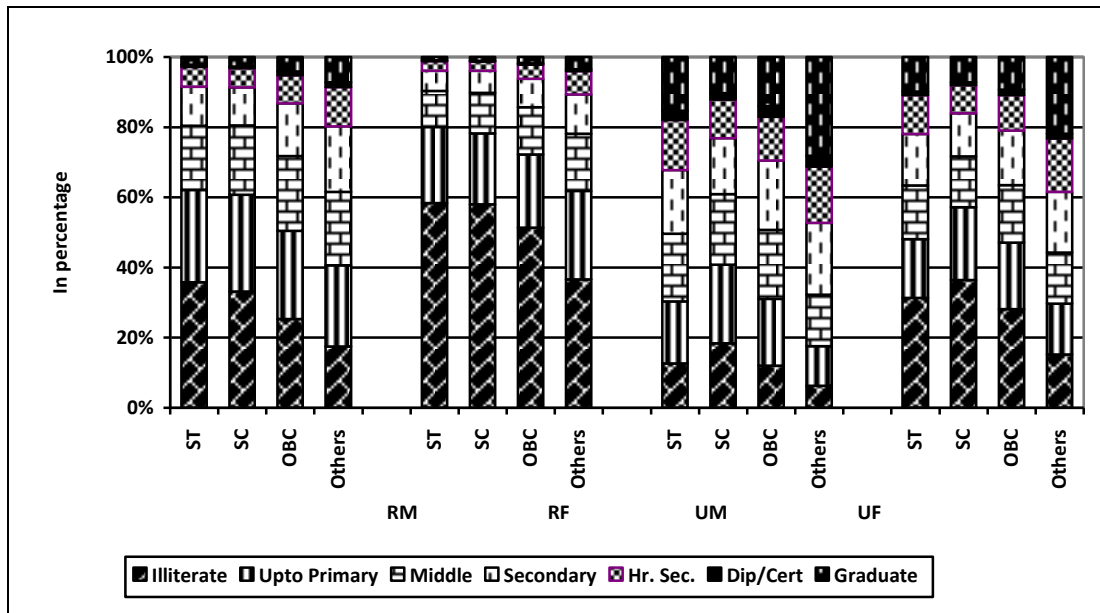
Note: Figures in percentage.

Source: Government of India, (2012), “Employment and Unemployment Situation among Social Groups in India”, NSS 66th Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, New Delhi, p. 29.

Moreover, such difference aggravates with the level of education. For instance, at the middle school level, the difference in rate between the marginalised section and others is only 1-2 per cent, which grows to 2-5 per cent at the level of graduation and above.

Among rural females too, there are inter-group variations, in which the marginalised section lose out to the others not only at the higher rungs of education, but even at the primary level of education and needless to say, the rate of illiteracy is higher among the ST (58.3 per cent) and SC (58.1 per cent) than among the OBC (51.4 per cent) and others (36.6 per cent). However, the degree of difference in the rates of education does not go up as in the case of males, but remains constant at around 2 per cent in favour of the OBC and others. This is not due to higher levels of education among the marginalised section, but because of the low educational levels among the OBC and others. For instance, the proportion of those who have graduation or above level of education among the SC and ST is around 1 per cent, which is 1.8 per cent among the OBC and 3.5 per cent in the case of others. Chart – 2 presents the area and sex-wise levels of education among the social groups in India.

Chart – 2 Area and Sex-wise Levels of Education among the Social Groups in India, 2009-10



Note: RM – Rural Male; RF – Rural Female; UM – Urban Male; UF – Urban Female.

Source: Based on Table – 2.

Apart from the differences among the social groups within both the rural males and rural females, there are inter-gender and intra-group differences as well. For instance, the rate of illiteracy among the rural ST males is 35.8 per cent, while it is 58.3 per cent in the case of the rural ST females and such differences can be seen across all groups and all levels of education. Thus, overall, 26 per cent of the rural males are illiterate during 2009-10, which is 49.8 per cent among the rural females; 25.3 per cent of the former are literate upto the primary level, which is 22 per cent in the case of the latter and 4.5 per cent of the males are graduates or educated more,

which is only 2 per cent in the case of the females. Thus, the ST and SC communities are the least educated, which is even much worse among their female folk. The data also indicates the fact that the rate of literacy is lower among the ST and SC males than among the females belonging to the ‘others’. Thus, those who are educated upto the higher secondary level among the rural ST males is 5.7 per cent, which is 6.7 per cent among the ‘other’ females, and it is 2.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively in the case of those who have graduation or above qualification. Hence, the educational levels of the males among the marginalised section is worse than that of the females belonging to the ‘others’ category. Similar differences can be seen within urban males and urban females, wherein the educational levels of the ST and SC population lagging behind that of the OBC and others and similarly, even within the same social group, there are gender differences. The only point of deviation is that the degree of difference in the level of education is greater between the marginalised and others, which is particularly true at the higher rung of education. Even in the urban areas, the males belonging to the marginalised group fails to outshine the females belonging to the ‘others’.

IV DISTANCE TO NEAREST SCHOOL IN INDIA

Differences in educational attainment among different groups of people take place chiefly due to their ability in accessing schools. This is particularly true in the case of rural population and also female population. Thus, the area-wise distance to the nearest school for various levels of education is examined here on the basis of the data presented in Table – 3.

Table - 3 Area-wise Distance to Nearest School in India, 2007-08

Area	Level	Distance					Total
		< 1 km	1-2 km	2-3 km	3-5 km	> 5 km	
Rural	Primary	91.7	6.5	1.2	0.2	0.1	100
	Middle	61.6	17.1	12.2	5.8	3.1	100
	Secondary	30.7	16.6	19.7	15.8	17.1	100
Urban	Primary	92.3	6.7	0.9	0.1	0.0	100
	Middle	82.5	14.1	2.5	0.7	0.2	100
	Secondary	68.6	22.1	5.6	2.5	1.0	100

Note: Figures in percentage.

Source: Government of India, (2010), “Education in India: 2007-08, Participation and

Expenditure”, NSS 64th Round, National Sample Survey Organization, New Delhi, p. 18.

The table shows that in the rural areas of the country, accessing a primary level school is quite easy, since 91.7 per cent of the population have such a school within 1 kilometre (km) distance, though rest of the population has to go beyond 1 km; in the case of a middle level school, 61.6 per cent could access it within 1 km radius, while more than 21 per cent have to travel more than 2 kms in the rural areas and as far as a secondary level school is concerned, the proportion of population who could access that still comes down to 30.7 per cent, while 16.6 per cent have to travel upto 2 kms, 19.7 per cent should travel upto 3 kms, 15.8 per cent have to go upto 5 kms and 17.1 per cent of the rural population need to travel beyond 5 kms to access a secondary level school. Thus, it underlines the fact that educational attainment is quite difficult in the rural areas, since children have to travel a long distance, if they want to get higher level of education. While

it might be relatively easy for boys, it is certainly not so in the case of girls, since parents will not be forthcoming in sending them to such a distance for education. This in itself acts as a barrier, especially for girls in attaining higher education.

The difficulty in accessing higher education in the rural areas is better understood by comparing the corresponding figures for the urban areas. It suggests that 90 per cent of the children in the urban areas need not go beyond 2 kms to access any level of education. A primary level school is available within 2 kms radius for 99 per cent of the urban children; a middle level school is available for 96 per cent of them within that distance, while 90 per cent of them could access a secondary level school within 2 kms in the urban areas. This explains the reason for the difference in the levels of education between the rural and urban population in the country. Though school education has been made not only free, but also compulsory in the country, the Government either at the Central level or at the State level, has not taken sufficient steps in enabling the people, especially the rural people, to access schools in an easier manner.

V LITERACY RATES IN MAJOR STATES OF INDIA

This section examines the literacy rates of the population in the major states of the country on the basis of their area and sex and Table – 4 presents the relevant data pertaining to 2011 Census.

Table – 4 Area and Sex-wise Literacy Rate in Major States of India, 2011

States	Rural			Urban		
	Female	Male	Person	Female	Male	Person
Andhra Pradesh	52.05	70.24	61.14	75.02	85.99	80.54
Assam	64.09	76.51	70.44	85.71	91.84	88.88
Bihar	50.82	71.90	61.83	72.36	84.42	78.75
Gujarat	62.41	83.10	73.00	82.08	92.44	87.58
Haryana	60.97	83.20	72.74	77.51	89.37	83.83
Himachal Pradesh	75.33	90.48	82.91	88.66	93.72	91.39
Jammu & Kashmir	53.36	75.51	64.97	70.19	84.90	78.19
Karnataka	59.60	77.92	68.86	81.71	90.54	86.21
Kerala	90.74	95.29	92.92	93.33	96.83	94.99
Madhya Pradesh	53.20	76.64	65.29	77.39	90.24	84.09
Maharashtra	67.38	86.39	77.09	85.44	93.79	89.84
Orissa	61.10	80.41	70.78	80.70	91.83	86.45
Punjab	66.47	77.92	72.45	79.62	87.28	83.70
Rajasthan	46.25	77.49	62.34	71.53	89.16	80.73
Tamil Nadu	65.52	82.08	73.80	82.67	91.82	87.24
Uttar Pradesh	55.61	78.48	67.55	71.68	81.75	77.01
West Bengal	66.08	79.51	72.97	81.70	89.15	85.54
All- India	58.75	78.57	68.91	79.92	89.67	84.98

Note: Figures in percentage.

Source: Government of India, (2012), “Census of India, 2011”, Provisional Population Tables, Census of India, New Delhi.

The table indicates that at the All-India level, total rural literacy rate in 2011 is 68.91 per cent, which is 84.98 per cent in the urban India and hence, there is a difference of 16 percentage points. Among the rural females, 58.75 per cent of them are literate, which is 79.92 per cent among their urban counterparts and thereby projecting a difference of more than 21 percentage points and among the rural males, the overall rate of literacy is 78.57 per cent *vis-a-vis* 89.67 per cent in the case of urban males and thus, the latter is higher by around 11 percentage points. This suggests that spatial variation exists among all three categories, viz., female, male and persons, which is the worst in the case of females. Moreover, there are also gender variations within the same region. Thus, within the rural area, the male literacy rate is higher than that of female rate by around 20 percentage points, while it is less than 10 percentage points in the case of urban India. Hence, gender difference exists within the rural and urban areas, which is especially higher in the rural areas.

Among the major states, in the case of rural females, the lowest rate of literacy is found in Rajasthan (46.25 per cent), followed by Bihar (50.82 per cent), while the highest rate is found in Kerala (90.74 per cent), and followed by Himachal Pradesh (75.33 per cent). This indicates the degree of difference between the lowest literacy rate and the highest literacy rate, as far as rural females are concerned, which diverges by more than 44 percentage points. Compared to the All-India average, out of the 17 major states, the performance of 6 states is worse, while that of 11 states are better.

In the case of rural males, the lowest rate of literacy is found in Andhra Pradesh (70.24 per cent), followed by Bihar (71.90 per cent). The highest rate of literacy is seen in Kerala (95.29 per cent), which is succeeded by Himachal Pradesh (90.48 per cent). Hence, in the case of rural males, the extent of divergence is only 25 per cent between the least and highest rate of literacy. Against the All-India average, 9 states perform worse out of the 17 major states, while only 8 states perform better.

Among the urban females, the lowest rate of literacy is seen in Jammu and Kashmir (70.19 per cent), which is followed by Rajasthan (71.53 per cent), while the highest rate of literacy is again found in Kerala (93.33 per cent) and it is succeeded again by Himachal Pradesh (88.66 per cent). Hence, the difference between the least and the highest rates of literacy is only around 23 per cent, while it is 44 per cent in the case of rural females. Against the All-India average, 8 out of the 17 states perform worse, while the remaining 9 states outperform the national average.

As far as the urban males' rate of literacy is concerned, the highest rate is found obviously in Kerala (96.83 per cent), which is followed by Maharashtra (93.79 per cent) and at the other extreme, Uttar Pradesh (81.75 per cent) performs very poorly, which is followed by Bihar (84.42 per cent) and thus, the least and the highest rates differ by 15 percentage points. Thus, against the national average of 89.67 per cent, 8 states' performance is worse, while 9 states outperform the national average. This indicates that the rural females perform the worst as far as their literacy is concerned, since it is not only the least, but also there is a huge difference among the major states of the country; the difference in the rate of literacy of the rural males is

higher than that of urban females and even at the All-India level, the urban females outperform rural males.

VI CONCLUSION

This paper examined the education, occupation, earnings, land holdings and also the extent of poverty among various segments of population on the basis of secondary data. This shows that male education level is greater than that of female educational level in the same region, while urban segment is better than that of their rural counterparts. However, rural males' level of literacy is less than not only that of urban males, but also that of urban females. On the basis of social groups, the educational levels of the males among the marginalised section is worse than that of the females belonging to the 'others' category. Similar differences can be seen within urban males and urban females, wherein the educational levels of the ST and SC population lagging behind that of the OBC and others.

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