



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2023; 8(1): 476-481
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 05-11-2022
Accepted: 13-12-2022

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Emerging woman leadership in district Sonipat in 2022 Panchayats election

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2023.v9.i1f.11380>

Abstract

The success of every institution depends upon the quality of leader who governs it. Leadership plays an important role in leading the masses, Nation and Social building. Women consist of half the population of our country, so there should be nearly half of women as well in the political sector. That is why we must encourage women as India is the largest democracy in the world, and we must act like it. Women are supposed to be given their status in society, in which NGOs and universities play a massive role in it. This gives women the opportunity to have more control over the management and other women can benefit from it. As India has a population consisting of 50% women, they have to be competing equally well in the local politics to forward the gender equality agendas. Every time different and new type of leadership emerges in Haryana Panchayati Raj elections, this time also many types of leadership are emerged in Haryana Panchayati Raj elections-2022. The emerging form of woman leadership has been analyzed in this research paper. On the basis of the data obtained, an attempt has been made to conclude that what kind of Woman leadership has emerged in district Sonipat, Haryana. In this study, an attempt has been made to know the socio-economic, political and personal background of woman Sarpanchs and awareness about the Panchayati Raj and their views regarding the National and Social issues.

Keywords: Haryana Panchayati raj Institutions, Panchayati raj, woman, Reservation, Sarpanch, Haryana Panchayati raj amendment act-2015 and 2020, district Sonipat, representatives

Introduction

Panchayati Raj Institutions are the nursery of leadership in our democratic setup and through these nurseries our national leadership is taking place now a day. Election is the basis of modern democracy and its success is based on elections held at certain times. After independence, democratic decentralization ^[1] was implemented in India, in which the power of decision making in India was handed over to the local level. Panchayati Raj was given constitutional status in India after 1993. All the states in India tried to establish Panchayati Raj on the basis of 1993 constitutional amendment. The Haryana Panchayati Raj system was organized in Haryana under the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994. So far 6 general elections of Panchayati Raj have been held in Haryana. Through these elections, Panchayati Raj representatives at the village level have deepened the foundation of Indian democracy by giving a practical form to their participation in decision-making.

Before the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act 1993 by Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994, there was no system of reservation for woman ^[2] in Gram Panchayats of Haryana State, due to which they were not elected as Sarpanch and Panch. There for to ensure their participation in the Gram Panchayats, one woman member was co-opted by the elected members. And in such a way, they used to work according to the then sarpanches of the upper class. But after the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994 came into existence, woman were provided 1/3 reservation in Haryana Panchayati Raj Institutions ^[3] and this reservation was given on all posts, that is, reservation was arranged from Panch to Zilla Parishad President. As of now, 20 states in India have made the reservations for women to 50%.

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In 2015, the Haryana Government amended the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994 and added one of the conditions of educational qualification, according to which the male representatives of Scheduled Castes should have completed eighth class and fifth class for scheduled caste females to contest elections for the post of panch and 8th Class for Woman Sarpanches [4] for all category. Compulsory to have this condition was also challenged in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. But the petition was rejected and after that an appeal was made in the Supreme Court against this decision, but there also the petition was rejected, and in Haryana Panchayati Raj Election-2016, the qualification of the condition of education was made mandatory. Another amendment was made in the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act in 2020, under which Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala introduced the bill, according to which 50% reservation for women in Haryana Panchayati Raj and 8% reservation for OBC backward classes and the law was passed. Under this arrangement, now women will be able to contest elections accordingly 50 percent reservation from the every post of Haryana Panchayati Raj Institutions. They have contested the election from even posts in 2022 and women will be elected from odd posts in 2027 panchayats elections. Not only this, but along with giving 8% reservation to the backward class in Haryana, it was also ensured that minimum one member panch would be elected from the Back ward Classes. A new principle of Recall also implemented through this amendment that Voters will have the right to recall their representative of panchayti raj institutions [5], if they don't act as per their (voter) wishes. This new system has started a new era in Haryana Panchayati Raj which will affect the national level representatives as well.

Materials and Methods

In the presented research paper, primary and secondary data have been used and selection the sample area, purposeful sampling method has been used & general random method for the selection of representatives has been used to obtain the facts in this presented research paper. Facts have been obtained through a simple questionnaire from elected woman representative sarpanches of District Sonipat, who were elected in Haryana Panchayati Raj Ections-2022.

Scope of the Study

The present study is limited to only Woman Sarpanches of two blocks (Ganauor and Gohana) of district Sonipat. In Haryana Panchayati Raj Election-2022, total 318 Panchayat sarpanchs have been elected in Sonipat district, out of which 151 Sarpanch posts were reserved for woman. Sample for this present research is limited to only 22 woman sarpanches.

Findings of the study

Age groups of the Respondents.

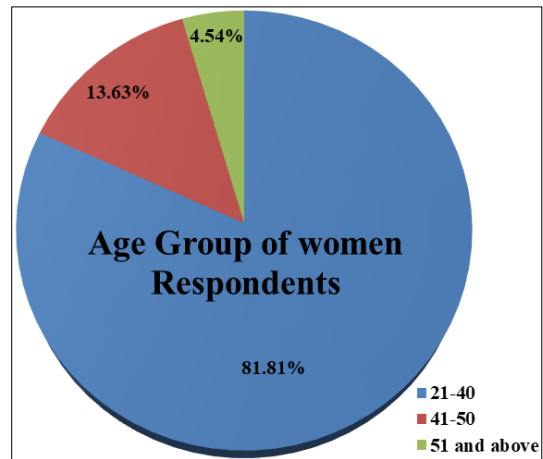


Fig 1: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

Age is a vital indicator not only for societies but also for groups and individuals. It has been concluded in many studies that the upper age group dominate rural power structure and elder in a predominant traditional society mostly acquire elite status. A.K. Majumdar and Bhanwar Singh in their study revealed that young leaders are taking ever from aged rural leaders [6].

Youth leader plays a vital role at grassroots level and national politics. It has a great impact on the behavior patterns of the members of society. Since the Sarpanch are required to play role in the exercise of the regulatory powers and functions that has been assigned to the sarpanch or Gram Panchayat by the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994. The data given in the Figure-1 clearly reveals that as we saw in above figure-1, that at present time that mostly 81.81 percent (18) of young woman Sarpanches were elected between the age group of 21-40 and dominated the local level leadership. Only 13.63% (03) percent of the total found between the ages of 41-50 (Middle Age). More than 1/3 was very young between the age group of 21-30. The old age about the skip from representation so, it can be conclude that present leadership of the local self government in the hand of youth woman.

Qualifications of the Respondents

A large number of studies done on leadership have proved that education is an important variable of modernization. It has a great impact on the behavioural pattern of the members of society. Since the Sarpanches are required to play role in the exercise of the regulatory powers and functions that has been assigned to the Sarpanches or Gram Panchayats by the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994 [7].

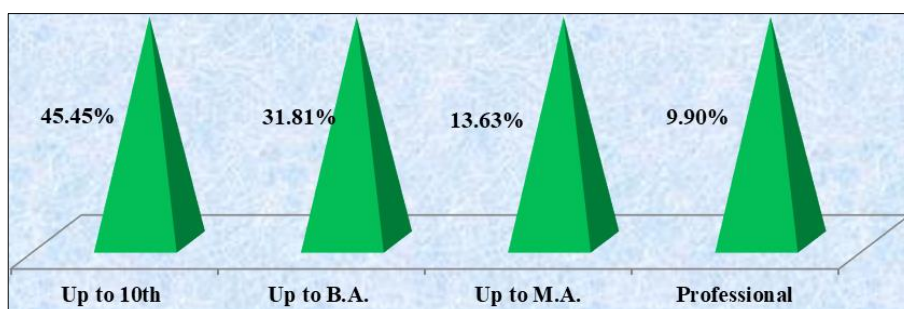


Fig 2: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

Education plays a vital role in decision making and educated person think rational the problems. Educational qualification make mandatory for everyone who want to contest the Panchayat Election since 2015. About majority of the sarpanches are 10th pass and about 1/3 are B.A. pass, while 13.63 percent respondent are Posr Graduate and 1/10 have professional degree. It is the sign of that, woman leadership also highly educated at local level. Education enrich the knowledge of a person and capable him/her to handle the obstacle in her/his pathway of development works at

grassroots level.

Occupation, Ownership of Agriculture land and Income of the Respondents: Economic background of a leader has have been linked with the probability to getting political status and influences the attitude of a leader towards various economic stratum. Occupation is an important factor for influencing the local leadership D.C. Miglani in his study concluded that agriculture as an occupation has an impact on the rural power structure [8].

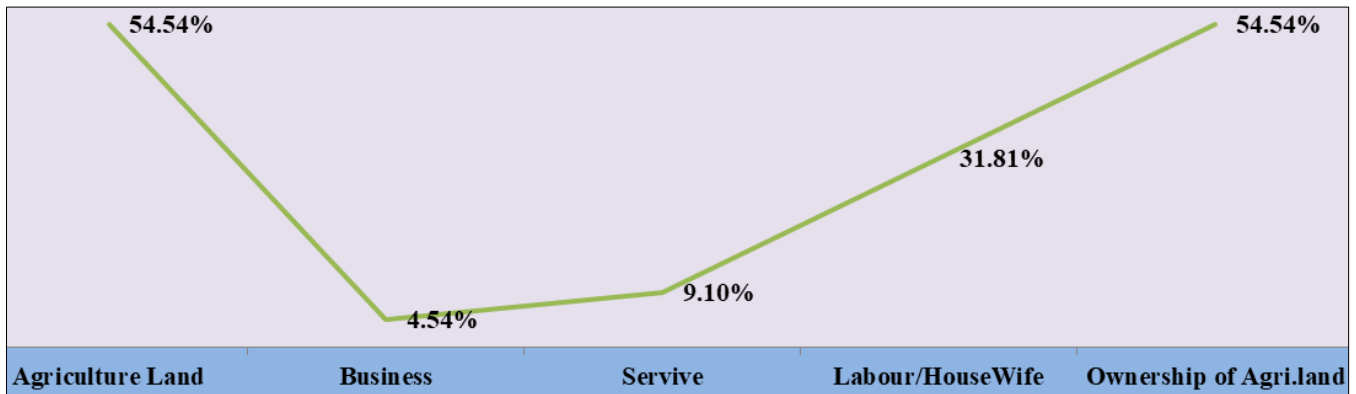


Fig 3: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

In present agriculture is the main occupation of the rural society. The Fiure-4 indicates that that 54.54% (12) women Sarpanches have occupation of Agriculture and it is a very good indication that thea same percentage of women respondent have agriculture land ownership of their own name. Data shows that about 1/3 (07) women Sarpanches were fund frm the labour category or houswife. Only 4. 54% were running their own interpenourship while a few 9.81 were in private or government service. It can be concluded that in present time also agriculturaist classs is dominated at grassroots level.

Political Background and Personal Political Affiliation

Political background of candidates affects her/his attitude, orientation and performance of his/her role as a leader. As a matter of fact, local politics awards political parties an opportunity to strengthen their foothold and open new possibility to satisfy the political ambition of their local leadership at grassroots level. As a matter of fact, local politics endows political parties an opportunity to strengthen their foothold at the local level and open new possibility to satisfy the political ambition of their rural leadership [10].

Annual Income of the Respondents

Since financial resources are required for contesting elections, the candidates from high income and the average income groups have better probability to be elected as Sarpanches than the candidates from the lesser income groups. The review of the studies of power structure in the country leads us to conclude that income of power seeker is a significant determinant in the panchayat elections [9].



Fig 5: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

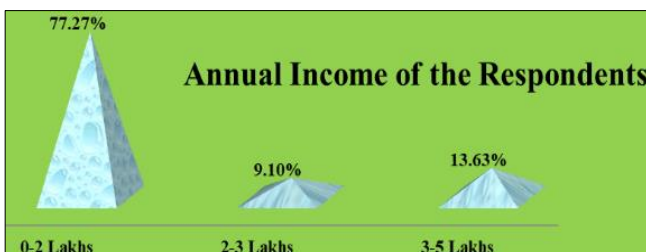


Fig 4: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

The data colected for present study in Figure-4, clearly indicates that above Three /Fourth (17) sarpanches have less then 2 Lakh income per annum while they have their own agriculture land. But more than 10% (3) women Sarpanche have 5 lakhs income per year. It means that women Leadership have becoming socially and economialy sound and play active role in Gram Panchayat.

As can be seen from Figure -5, that maximum (90.90 percent) of them accepted that they have no membership of any National or Local Parties. This indicates that women at grassroots level have no political awareness, so they should be sensitize regarding the impotence of the Political Party. It may be the results of patriarchal environment at the local level.

Participation in Gram Sabha Meetings

Gram Panchayat meeting shall be held at least twice in a month and Minimum five meetings of Gram Sabha may be hold in a one year at a public place by the Sarpanch, but mostly meetings are not called and only formalities are fulfilled [11]. In the panchayat elections-2022, researcher found that 100 percent woman Sarpanches called the 1st meeting for taking the oath of their post in the presence of

the Gazetted officer appointed by the Haryana Government. These officer opt the village for overall development because present government has been directed to do same at the first time.

Knowledge about 1993 Constitutional Amendment Act, Haryana Panchayati Raj Act- 1994 and amended in 2015 & 2020: The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is the

edifice of the new system of Panchayati Raj which is supposed to be giving new lease of life to the Panchayats. It was, therefore, considered essential to know whether the Sarpanches of Sonipat district under study are aware about various provision of the new Act and amendments by Government of Haryana in Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994 in 2015 & 2020.

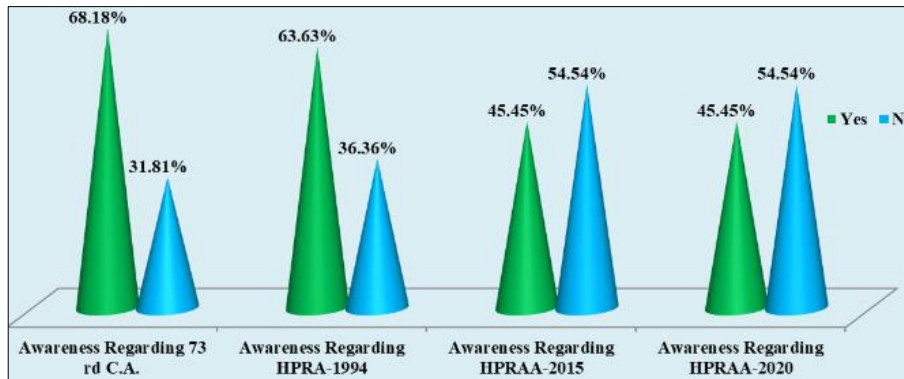


Fig 6: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

Although better educated person should be part of the political system, education gives the power to the human being to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad. Regarding the other eligibility of clearance of electricity bill and agriculture loans conditions were similar to bankruptcy that rendered people to contest any election [12]. Analyzing the data in Figure-6, reveals that that more than two-third of the woman Sarpanches claimed knowledge on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act-1993, data about the awareness of Haryana Panchayati Raj Act-1994, indicates that about 2/3 (14) woman sarpanches know about this Act. The data made us disappointed because majority of the respondents were not aware regarding the Haryana Panchayati Raj Amendment Act-2015 and the same responses regarding the new amendment act-2020, while these educational qualifications conditions and 50 percent women reservation given by these amendments acts. It may

be assumed that these newly elected Sarpanches may be improved their knowledge after some practical experience in Panchayati raj.

Views about national and social issues: In 17th Lok Sabha the highest, 78 [13] women representatives elected as Member Parliament and this has lead to demand for the one-third reservation for women in State Legislature and Lok Sabha. This is also assumed by foreign affairs experts that after the BJP lead government was formed at center in 2014, Indian foreign policy become strong at international level. The Constitution of India provides equal rights to all the citizen of India. So women must also be provided equal opportunities at all the level of representation, so it was pertinent that to ask the question on this issue to the elected representatives in Panchayat bodies.

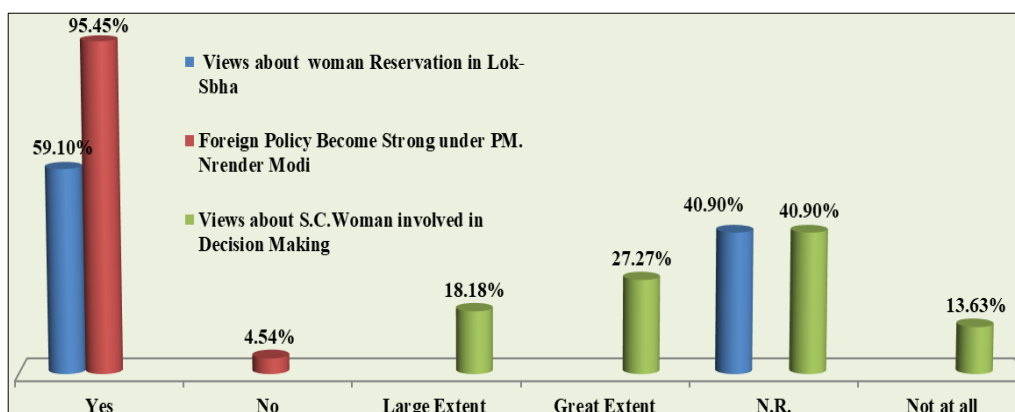


Fig 7: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

As is evident from Figure-7, it can noticed that, three/fifth (59.10%) of the respondents wishes the reservation for women in Lok- Sabha and State Legislature Assemblies, while two/ fifth respondents not gives their respond. Researcher asked them about their role in decision making, only 27.27% women sarpanche accepted that women role in decision making at PRIs is great extent level while, nearer to

the majority of respondent denied to respond. 13.13% representatives accepted that there is no role of women in decision making at Panchayats level. They seemed to very active on the question of foreign policy, maximum 95.45 percent accepted that after the PM Narendra Modhi. India's foreign Policy become very strong and India stands with the world power countries.

Awareness about Central Sponsored and State Welfare Schemes

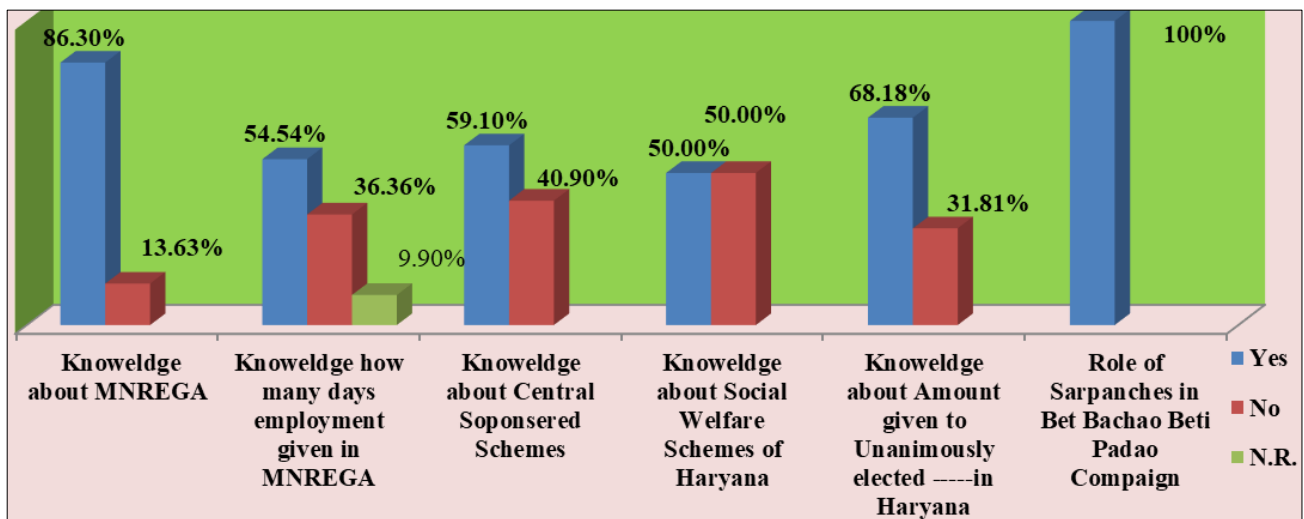


Fig 8: Data Sources: Interview Schedule

Above figure-8 contained 6 responses, the analysis of the data given in Figure-8, indicates that the maximum 86.30 percent respondents have knowledge about the MANREGA and in second question majority of the respondents have knowledge about the 100 days employment given under this scheme to a family in a years. This scheme is base of economic development for the rural society but 1/3 respondents have accepted that they have no knowledge about this central sponsored. In the next response about the others central sponsored scheme, 59.10% (13) have accepted that they have knew some central scheme, which is implemented by the Panchayats at local level. Regarding the Social Schemes implemented by Haryana government, data shows that 50% respondents have knew about the schemes but also same have not knew about these schemes. More than 68.18 percent (15) have knowledge that how many incentives in cash for development program at village level, given by the Haryana government after elected unanimously. In the last question 100% respondents accepted that there is a big role of women sarpanches at local level in “Beti Bachao and Beti Pado” campaign of Government of India.

Election

Data collected from the respondents indicates that, hundred percent women sarpanch elected 1st time in 2022 panchayats election and they have no experiences regarding the panchayati raj. In the election of panchayats in 2022 all representatives are married and elected from the reserved seats for women, no single women respondent elected from the open seats. The results indicate that rural population thinks that the 50% reservation is sufficient and why we choose them from open seats. This is the thinking of the researcher on the basis of observation.

Conclusion

On the basis of primary data received by questionnaire may be concluded that, All Woman sarpanches are elected in first time and have no past experiences of leadership and also no family members are elected in Panchayati Raj System before 2022 panchayat elections. No one elected from the open seats it means that the social system is continuously dominated by the patriarchal society in the rural power

structure. But strong part of this analysis is that all are educated beyond the essential educational qualifications. Total four percent sarpanches of Haryana elected unanimously but data cleared that not a single woman Sarpanch elected unanimously in district Sonipat. There is no doubt that woman sarpanches want to work properly and they have lust to get more and more knowledge regarding Panchayati raj this scene was observed by the researcher in two days training programme for woman Sarpanches of district Sonipat organized by Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalay in Jan-2023. But the dark part is that women sarpanches is that they have been used as a tool of local power by their counterpart.

Woman are now included in these decision-making bodies (more than 660,000 elected members, i.e. about 50%, in the rural and urban local bodies are woman in Haryana. The patriarchal society see Panchayats as one of the tools for the woman sarpanches to assert their rights. The prevailing trend is to weaken and destroy these instruments. It is evident that the upper castes that have been controlling the affairs of the village and the local community are yet to reconcile to the empowerment of Woman. Even after coming to positions of power, elected educated woman representatives are restricted in effective exercise of their leadership; they do not get the power and status they deserve.

The mass media, communication technology and spatial educated leadership in Haryana have broken the isolation of villages. Incidents even in remote village Panchayats are grabbing the national limelight. It is rightly said by George Mathew that, “In states and regions which have witnessed strong social movements, Woman Panchayat leaders have begun to assert their constitutional rights and though grudgingly the patriarchal society have accepted these changes. It holds out hope for the future ^[14].”

Suggestions

Respondents suggested that to enhance Woman leadership, providing the special training in digital and communication skill to the members especially to gram Panchayat sarpanches. Strong campaigns should be made by the Haryana Institute of Rural Development and Progressive Panchayats should be rewarded by the government.

Initiation of training program started by the Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Khanpur Kalan may be mile stone in this regarding and play a role to shaping the good and vibrant woman leadership. Government also motivated the active women sarpanches with cash and development grants awards. Media and society also help the women sarpanches in development works. It may very better if a certificate course should be mandatory for elected Sarpanch within one year after achieved her /his post.

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