



THE PLIGHT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS

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Abstract:

Scavengers are poor people who are socially and economically backward. They live an affluent but unhealthy lifestyle and labour in unsanitary conditions. The absence of government assistance, insufficient education, underdeveloped technologies, and religious beliefs regarding scavengers are all incompatible. In this study the problems of the scavengers, its remedial measures and also need of changing beliefs and laws related to manual scavengers are analyzed through factor analysis and weighted. The study was conducted among 80 manual scavengers who are working in the study area. A well chalked out Interview Schedule has been prepared and administered among the sample respondents to gather their opinion.

Keywords: *Beliefs, Backward, Economically, Unhealthy, Unhygienic*

Introduction:

The terrible practise of hand-cleaning continues nearly a century after Mahatma Gandhi originally advocated its elimination. The Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment acknowledged the existence of 676,000 scavengers between 2002 and 2003. (Rajnarayan R. Tiwari, PMC). However, because scavenging is illegal, these figures may be underestimated. According to a survey conducted by Bezwada Wilson of the Safai Karma Chari Association, the country is home to an estimated 12 lakh (1.2 million) scavengers (Kothandaraman P, Vishwanathan V. Sulabh international: A movement to liberate scavengers by implementing a



low-cost, safe sanitation system, 2007).[Accessed on October 20, 2008] from <http://www.growinginclusivemarkets.org>. Sulabh estimates that four to five million individuals worked as scavengers in 2005, and that local civic authorities frequently hired them to clean faeces in public locations (Zaidi A. India's shame. Frontline 9-22 September 2006). Since 2014, India claims to have built nearly 1,000 lakh toilets under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, providing toilets to around 95 percent of households. The 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census indicated that manual cleaning was the principal occupation of 1,82,505 households, which was the lowest reported census (Downtoearth). SubhomaySaha and VikasUpadhayay's book, *The Missing Manual Scavengers in India*, was published on Monday, January 18, 2021. Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, India claims to have constructed approximately 1,000 lakh toilets since 2014, thereby providing approximately 95 per cent households with access to toilets. Despite a 2013 law prohibiting employment of manual scavengers, a government survey as of July 2019, 54,130 people were involved in the work. Because the poll was only conducted in locations where "there are reasons to infer the existence of manual scavengers," the figure is understated. The survey was done in 170 districts across 18 states [Data: Manual scavenging still continues in India despite being outlawed in 2013], according to The Hindu. The National SafaiKaramcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) performed a survey of manual scavengers in 2018 at the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's request. This investigation, which revealed 87,913 manual scavengers in India, was limited to 14 Indian state statutory cities.[SubhomaySaha, VikasUpadhayay Published: Monday 18 January 2021].

Manual Scavenging:

The removal of human feces from public streets is described as wiping by hand and dry toilets, septic tanks, sewers and drains, manually by humans. It's action Manual removal of human waste / night sludge from 'dry toilets' such as toilets without modern flush systems. The General Assembly was established during the British rule Hiring people to remove toilets and defecation was introduced in India. Municipalities were established and the municipal system was implemented during colonial authority. Containers were commonly used in bathrooms that



had to be emptied on a regular basis during the time. As a result of the invention of flush toilets, all other forms of toilets have vanished from the Western world. However, many underdeveloped countries, like India, continue to follow this barbaric practise. Caste, class, and revenue and income are used to divide training.

Causes of manual scavenging in India:

According to the renowned Indian writer and social activist Harsh Mander, the failure to eradicate hand wiping from our country is the greatest humiliation of modern India and the most despicable practice of untouchability.

Social scarcity: People born into this profession have experienced societal stigma for years, and despite welfare programmes and regulations designed to help them, they have been unable to take advantage of possibilities because they have been ostracized and reviled. As a result, people who work in this menial, inhumane, and disgusting occupation become immersed in it and continue to do so for generations.

Low self-esteem: Being labeled as untouchables, dirty, having little or no education, being afraid of losing their jobs, and being exploited from infancy results in low self-esteem.

Continuation of unhygienic toilets: Although the country is only recently awakening to the need of living in sanitary circumstances as a human right, the country continues to maintain unclean latrines in which human waste is physically cleansed rather than flushed or drained. Cleaning such latrines is done by hand because they are dry toilets that have not been properly constructed.

Poor enforcement of existing laws: Although there are laws prohibiting manual scavenging, the problem is that the people who engage in it are unable to access the criminal justice system due to caste bias among government employees, police, and society. Sometimes it appears that rules relating to manual scavenging are not enforced.

Unorganized group: Unlike most professions that have labor unions, manual cleaners do not have an organized group or union, so they have no significant voice in the political process, so the government in the country.



Lack of empathy:One of the most important factors in this case is the complete lack of sympathy for the plight of manual cleaners.

Lack of other employment and rehabilitation:People continue this occupation because our community and organization cannot rehabilitate these people or include them in the mainstream of our community. Constitutional provisions against manual cleaning in India: Human dignity is an inalienable right as part of a fundamental right. Life under the Constitution of India (Section 21 - Union of India v. Maneka Gandhi). ‘Dignity’ is considered to include equality and the protection of the law and equal respect. This is a unanimously accepted right, verified by Sections 1, 22 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Below is a list of the provisions under the Constitution of India that must meet the rights of equality, dignity and dignity before the law.

- Article 14 is about equality before the law, which should not be denied to any individual in India.
- Article 15 provides that no discrimination on the basis of a person's place of birth, race, religion, caste and gender is allowed. However, manual cleaners face discrimination because of their caste throughout their lives.
- Article 16 of the Constitution of India guarantees equal opportunity to all its citizens in matters of public employment.
- Article 17 contains a way to abolish untouchability, which is guaranteed to all under this constitutional provision.
- Article 19 (1) (g) gives every citizen the right to engage in any occupation, trade or business of their choice.
- Article 21 guarantees life security and personal liberty to all citizens residing in India.
- Apart from these, under Article 46 and Section 338 of the Constitution of India there are certain other rights which protect the hand cleaners as SC or ST.

Review of literature:

Rajneesh Kumar Gautam, Islamuddin, Nandkishor, Mohammad Usama et al, (2017), This study examines the many sorts of wastes that scavengers deal with, as well as the



working conditions and living standards of those who do scavenging operations. It also emphasises the need to change attitudes and legislation around manual scavenging.

Jayalakshmi (2019), suggest that the surveying and identifying process was not completed successfully, and that more time and effort is needed to accomplish this task effectively. When manual scavengers travel to other parts of the country, they suffer language and cultural hurdles, making it difficult for them to self-identify as such because they are often ignorant of the plans and procedures in place.

Ashutosh Singh (2020), the researcher suggested that the article discusses the situation of manual scavengers in our country, as well as the toothless law that exists due to a lack of proper application.

Objective of the study:

1. To study the job involvement of sanitary workers.
2. To give suggestion for the improvement of sanitary workers.

Research Gap:

According to the preceding literature studies, the researcher examines the many sorts of wastes that scavengers deal with, as well as the working conditions and living standards of those who do scavenging operations, the next researcher said that the surveying and identifying process was not completed successfully, and that more time and effort is needed to accomplish this task effectively, and another researcher proposed that the article discusses the situation of manual scavengers in our country, as well as the toothless law that exists due to a lack of proper application, However, the current study, as well as the growing societal challenges and potential solutions for manual scavengers.

Methodology of the study:



The manual scavengers are still viewed as second-class citizens in our society, and it is claimed that they are doing a public duty. Their welfare, health, and safety may be investigated. A study based on public knowledge of solid waste management must also be done. A study of how medical waste is disposed in this city may also be conducted. The information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. A thorough interview schedule was created for the goal of collecting primary data. Secondary data gathering sources include journals, books, periodicals and relevant websites. The acquired data was processed and entered into an SPSS data sheet, after which it was analysed using statistical methods. The study included 80 individuals who work as scavengers in Tirunelveli City. To obtain the opinions of the sample respondents, a well-planned Interview Schedule was created and distributed.

Table 1-Scavengers Death Rate in India:

States	Number of deaths
Haryana	73
Karnataka	78
Delhi	89
Uttar Pradesh	103
Gujarat	161
Tamil Nadu	206
Others	210
All India	920

Source: Statista

Chart-1 Scavenger's Death rate

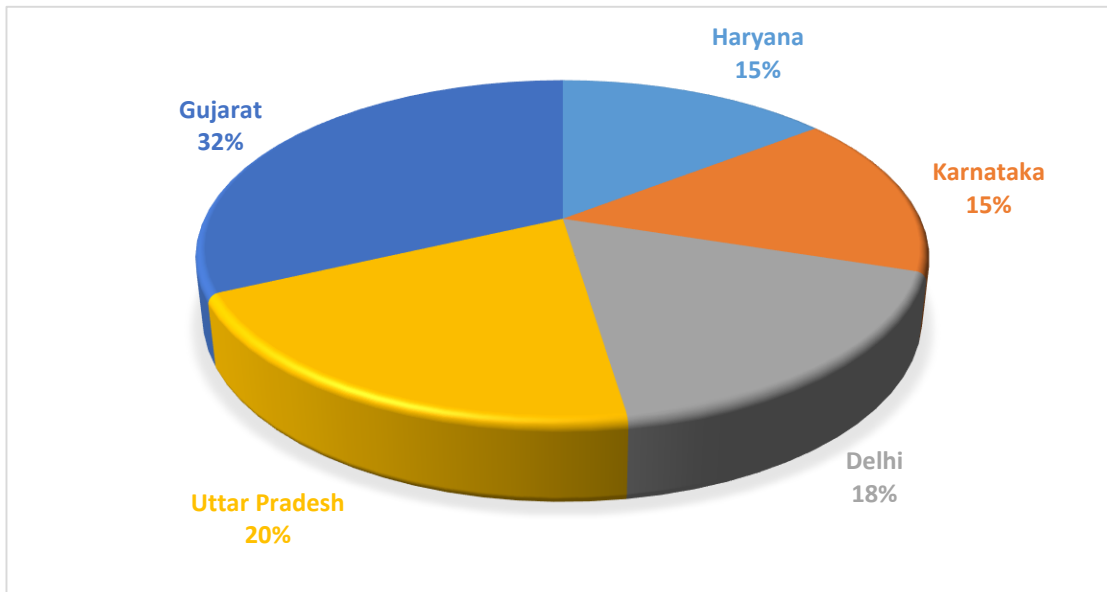


Table-2 Demographical profile:

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age wise classification			
18-30 years	4	5.0	5.0
31-45 years	45	56.2	61.2
46-60 years	31	38.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	
Gender wise classification			
Male	34	42.5	42.5
Female	46	57.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	
Education Status			
Primary	70	87.6	87.6
Secondary	7	8.8	96.2
Higher Secondary	1	1.2	97.5



Under Graduation	2	2.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	
Marital Status			
Married	73	91.2	91.2
Unmarried	7	8.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	
Community wise classification			
OC	3	3.8	3.8
SC	26	32.5	36.2
SCA	51	63.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	
Health Care Camp			
Yes	67	83.8	83.8
No	13	16.2	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

Source: Primary Source

Table 1 shows that out of 80 respondents 56.2 percent were age of 46 to 60 years; 38.8 percent were age of 31 to 45 years of old and 5 percent were 18 to 30 year old, 57.5 percent were female and 42.5 percent were male, 87.6 percent were studied only primary education, 9 percent were Secondary, 1 percent were Higher Secondary, 3 percent were under Graduates, 91.2 were married, 8.8 respondents were unmarried, 96 percent were Hindu and 4 percent were Christian, 63.8 Percent were community group of SCA, 32.5 percent were SC, 3.8 percent were OC, 83.8 percent were say yes for conducting health camp, rest of the person say no for conducting health camp. In the above table majority of the age classification is middle age, in gender female is higher, most of the scavengers were primary education, majority people have married, SCA were frequently choosing this job and maximum attend health care camp.

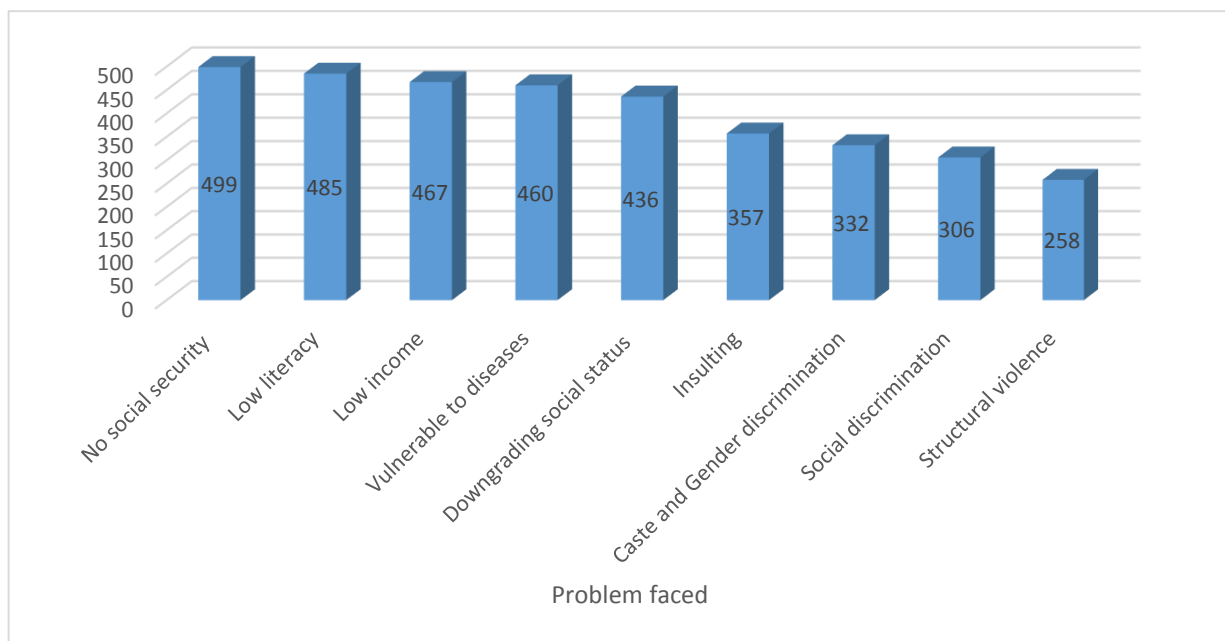
Table -3: Rank the problems faced by the Scavengers



Problems faced	Weighted Score	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
No social security	499.00	6.2375	I
Low literacy	485.00	6.0625	II
Low income	467.00	5.8375	III
Vulnerable to diseases	460.00	5.7500	IV
Downgrading social status	436.00	5.4500	V
Insulting	357.00	4.4625	VI
Caste and Gender discrimination	332.00	4.1500	VII
Social discrimination	306.00	3.8250	VIII
Structural violence	258.00	3.2250	IX

Source: Primary Source

CHART-2 Problem faced by the scavengers





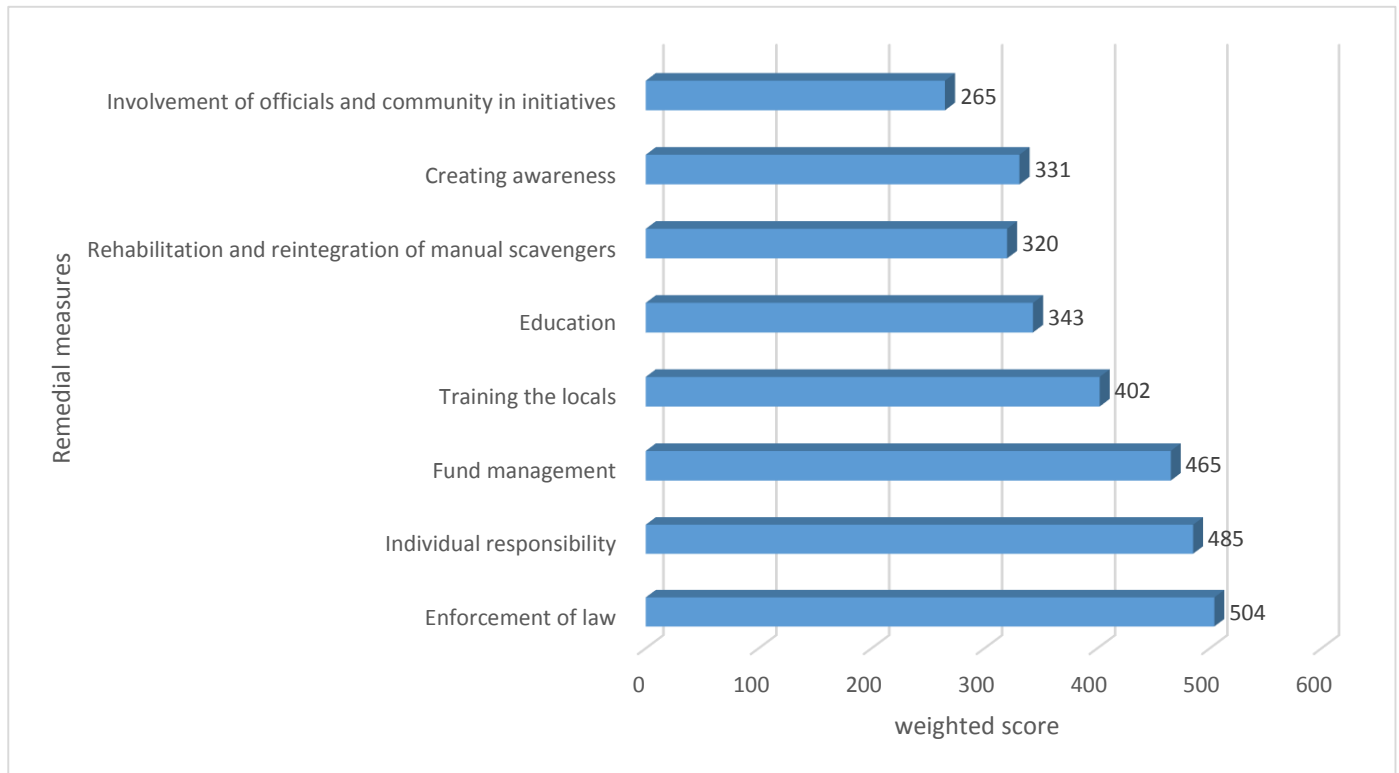
They have no social security (6.24) in the society; They have low literacy (6.06); Incurred low income mean score (5.83); they caused vulnerable diseases (mean score- 5.75); the society don't respect the scavenging work and the scavengers. They downgrading in the society (5.45); people insulting the scavengers (4.46); they discriminating the caste and gender (mean score- 4.15); social discrimination and structural violence mean score 3.82 and 3.23 respectively. It is clear that social security is the main problem of the scavengers.

Table -4: Weighted average Rank of the Remedial measures of scavengers

Remedial Measures	Weighted Score	Weighted Mean score	Rank
Enforcement of law	504.00	6.3000	I
Individual responsibility	485.00	6.0625	II
Fund management	465.00	5.8125	III
Training the locals	402.00	5.0250	IV
Education	343.00	4.2875	V
Rehabilitation and reintegration of manual scavengers	320.00	4.0000	VI
Creating awareness	331.00	4.1375	VII
Involvement of officials and community in initiatives	265.00	3.3125	VIII

Source: Derived

CHART-3 Weighted average Rank of the Remedial measures of scavengers



The government enforces law for the economic status of the scavengers. In fact, many benefits arrived through the enforcement of the law. But extension of the law is more important for scavengers (6.30); Individual responsibility is second rank of the problem of solution with the mean score (6.06); fund management (5.81) is also more important to the scavengers; trained the people of scavengers how to do easily, cleanly, time saving and uninjured with safety equipment. Fifth rank goes to Education with the mean score (4.28), Sixth rank goes to Rehabilitation and reintegration of manual scavengers (4.00), Creating awareness is seventh rank (4.13), Involvement of officials and community in initiatives is eighth rank.



Table-5 KMO and Bartlett's Test for compulsion of performing other task

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.768
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	414.219
	Df	120
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin metric is a criterion for determining sampling adequacy. Accepting values greater than 0.5 is recommended by Kaiser (1974). Furthermore, numbers between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, 0.7 and 0.8 are acceptable, 0.8 and 0.9 are outstanding, and values beyond 0.9 are exceptional. The value for these data is 0.768, which is within the acceptable range for using the data reduction approach.

The Bartlett's test of sphericity assists a researcher in determining whether the results of factor analysis are worth considering and whether the study activity should be continued. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant at a level of 0.001, indicating that there is a high level of correlation between variables, making factor analysis appropriate.

Table-6 Nature of Task Performance



Nature of Task	Components		
	Death Rituals	Sanitation	Animal related tasks
Beating drums in funeral processions and other occasions	.731	-.208	.088
Assisting in postmortem	.721	.337	.042
Cremating unclaimed corpses	.715	.182	.014
Taking the clothes of the deceased	.678	.232	.008
Collecting food on special occasions	.650	.245	-.021
Informing villagers about death rites	.615	-.025	-.281
Castrating animals	.548	.304	.454
Rearing pigs	.436	.427	.098
Sweeping	.051	.684	.242
Cleaning the surrounding of the pandal before wedding feast	.262	.636	-.337
Cleaning drains	-.117	.618	.157
Engaging in cleaning work prior to weddings	.175	.578	-.252
Clearing up the leftovers	.300	.569	-.085
Disposing animal faeces	.192	.544	.526
Disposing animal carcasses	.266	.083	-.658



Cleaning safety tanks	.419	-.008	.540
% of Variance	23.784	17.461	9.836
Cumulative %	23.784	41.245	51.080
% to total	47	34	19
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			

Respondent opinion about economic status of scavengers based on sixteen variables are explained in the table

Death Rituals: This factor consists of eight tasks related to death related jobs such as Beating drums in funeral processions and other occasions (.731), Assisting in postmortem (.721), Cremating unclaimed corpses (.715), Taking the clothes of the deceased (.678), Collecting food on special occasions (.650), Informing villagers about death rites (.615), Castrating animals (.548) and Rearing pigs (.436). This factor has the variance of 23.784 consists of 47 percent out of total.

Sanitation: This factor consists of six tasks related to death related jobs such as Sweeping (.684), Cleaning the surrounding of the pandal before wedding feast (.636), Cleaning drains (.618), Engaging in cleaning work prior to weddings (.578), Clearing up the leftovers (.569), and Disposing animal faeces (.544). This factor has the variance of 17.461 consists of 34 percent out of total.



Animal related: This factor consists of two tasks related to death related jobs such as Disposing animal carcasses (.658), and Cleaning safety tanks (.540). This factor has the variance of 9.836 consists of 19 percent out of total.

CONCLUSION:

In this regard, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has stated that in India, a person does not have to be a scavenger because of his vocation, but he is one regardless of whether he scavenges or not. This raises worries and issues about what we are doing as a country if we are oblivious to the condition of these manual scavengers. It took many fatalities, as well as the efforts of social organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to bring their predicament to light. So many people have died as a result of manual scavenging, but few prosecutions have been filed against the perpetrators. It is past time for the Indian government to go beyond drafting laws and ensure that suitable equipment and contemporary technology are used to clean septic tanks, drains, and sewages, so that future generations are free of the humiliating duty of manual scavenging and their dignity and rights are restored. It is concluded from the present study that the majority of the scavengers are from the age between 31 to 45 because middle people can actively participate in their work. The inequality was found high female scavengers than male scavengers (58%). The educational background of most of the scavengers in this study were only elementary school (87.6%), 91.7% were married, 63.8% are from Schedule Caste Arunthathiar (SCA) community wise, 83.8% attended the health camp programs. Funerals, sanitation performance and animal- related performance are the other performing tasks besides scavenging. Cleaners face a major problem due to lack of social security. The laws enforced should be carried on diligently. Many laws are enforced by the government, but it does not reach the scavengers. Proper awareness can be build to impart the laws on them to know their rights.

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