



THE INFLUENCE OF RESERVATION POLICY ON THOSE BELONGING TO SCHEDULED CASTES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Pangannavar aims to facilitate social transformation and enhance the socioeconomic conditions of neglected populations.

Aim of the study: The main aim of the study is the influence of reservation policy on those belonging to scheduled castes

Material and method: The current study has used methodological triangulation, a research approach that entails the utilization of many research methods to investigate a certain topic.

Conclusion: Social exclusion occurs when dominant groups deny some groups equal opportunity, isolate them from other social groups, and disapprove of their capacity to participate in the social, political, and economic aspects of society.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Pangannavar aims to facilitate social transformation and enhance the socioeconomic conditions of neglected populations. The measure may be characterized as a kind of affirmative action aimed at ensuring proportional representation of historically marginalized castes and societal segments. According to Verma (2011), the purpose of implementing reservation policies was to elevate marginalized castes to positions of higher social status, authority, power, and influence. This was intended to address the historical discrimination and injustice faced by these groups due to the unequal social structure and the vested interests of the dominant caste. Throughout history, some marginalized communities have experienced a range of social discrimination, economic disadvantages, and a lack of agency. The Scheduled Castes are one such group. The Scheduled Castes were positioned in the lowest echelons of social stratification due to their inherent categorization based on notions of purity and contamination. Consequently, the Scheduled Castes encountered many forms of societal marginalization, including social degradation, economic exploitation, and cultural suppression, leading to their eventual social exclusion. Hence, it is essential to understand the



essence of exclusion inherent in the caste system, as it forms the foundation for the formulation of equitable policies, such as the quota policy for the Scheduled Castes (SC), which has its roots in the early 1930s.

1.2 Scheduled Castes

Scheduled Castes refer to certain sub-communities that exist within the hierarchical structure of the Hindu caste system. These sub-communities have traditionally encountered various forms of hardship, discrimination, and severe social isolation in India as a result of their assigned low social rank. The groups referred to as Scheduled Castes in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950 are those that experience marginalization. According to Pais (2011), there is no specific definition of Scheduled Castes in the Constitution from a sociological perspective. However, Pais emphasizes that the term "Scheduled Caste" is used to classify groups of individuals who are considered socio-economically disadvantaged in India. According to Ghurye (2014), it has been observed that the Scheduled Castes, formerly referred to as depressed classes, occupy the fifth position within the hierarchical structure of the Hindu caste system, which traditionally consists of four orders. The Constitution of India grants the Scheduled Castes certain benefits pertaining to recruitment in public services, as well as specific representation in legislative bodies. The category of Scheduled Castes gained prominence in history with the implementation of the Government of India statute 1935. This statute specified those who met the requirements of being considered untouchables. In accordance with the rules outlined in the Government of India Act, 1935, a selection of untouchable castes was identified and designated as scheduled for the purpose of implementing special electoral representation in 1936. Since that time, the phrase "Scheduled Castes" has been widely used and has been officially recognized as a constitutional category in the Constitution of India. According to Bakshi (2013), the phrase "Scheduled Caste" is considered by some to be a legal construct and a constitutional misconception. Consequently, individuals belonging to social groupings characterized by their untouchable status were systematically identified and categorized according to a predetermined hierarchy, thereby granting them access to certain protections and privileges.

1.3 Scheduled Caste Status and Reservation Policy in India

The term "Scheduled Caste" pertains to an administrative and legal classification encompassing multiple castes that are grouped under the category of "depressed classes." This categorization is based on the official recognition of the concept of "pollution-line," which subsequently led to the formation of "Scheduled Castes." This classification system gives rise to a paradoxical model of caste division, distinguishing between the categories of "touchable" and "untouchable." According to Nath and Parakandathil (2016), the Scheduled Castes are a group of individuals who were once considered untouchables and now adhere to the Hindu religion. The phrase "Scheduled Castes" was first included in the Government of India Act of 1935, marking its historical inception. The designation of castes as Scheduled Castes serves the purpose of protecting the interests of individuals who experience caste-based discrimination. It aims to address this inequality by offering specific concessions in the form of protective discrimination, with the goal of facilitating their integration and equalization with the broader population throughout the process of development. According to Das (2000), the reservation or quota system has its origins in Malta and was then implemented in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rashmi, & Sharma, Anju (2022) The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which Agra District, also known as Taj City worldwide, effectively implements the reservation policy for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the higher education system. The study aimed to provide an accurate and authentic assessment of the educational experiences of SC and ST students in Agra District. Additionally, the study sought to identify other districts within the state that demonstrate exemplary practices in implementing reservation policies at the higher education level. Recent research findings indicate that the reservation policy in higher education, specifically for the SCs/STs community, continues to be significant in contemporary society. However, it is worth noting that the assertions regarding awareness, effectiveness, literacy rates, and educational attainment have not been uniformly observed within the higher education sector. In the contemporary era characterized by technological advancements, the educational system has undergone significant expansion, offering students in both Indian and international colleges a broader range of opportunities.

Jahangir, Mohmad & Rather, Shumaila (2021) The persistent presence of structured inequality, poverty, identity, deprivation, isolation, and marginalization throughout the history of human civilization signifies the enduring impact of established systems of trade and societal norms on certain groups and communities. Over the last several decades, there has been a discernible increase in socioeconomic inequality, resulting in a growing disparity between those of higher and lower income brackets. There are notable disparities in the allocation of resources and access to opportunities among certain social groupings, with the scheduled caste being a disadvantaged community that has been systemically disenfranchised due to the longstanding caste-based hierarchical structure prevalent in India. This research conducts a comprehensive review of existing material and examines the execution of policies targeting scheduled castes. This study examines the paradoxical situation whereby, despite the implementation of several policies and programs aimed at enhancing the socio-economic status of scheduled castes in India, significant disparities persist when comparing their situations with those of other social groups. Against the backdrop of analyzing the implementation of diverse constitutional welfare measures and policies, this study also endeavours to elucidate the realities and misconceptions surrounding the execution of these policies, which have failed to bring about any substantial improvement in the social and economic circumstances of these scheduled castes.

Kumar, Bushan (2021) The Indian higher education system has always seen education as a public benefit, hence categorizing it under the social sector. For an extended period of time, it has made persistent efforts to enhance the socio-economic status of the marginalized segments of Indian society. This study aims to examine the obstacles and facilitators faced by Scheduled Castes students (SCs) in pursuing higher education. It seeks to identify and analyze the social, personal, economic, and educational challenges experienced by SC students within their respective social settings, comparing those who are currently pursuing higher education with those who have not pursued it. This study will examine the relationship between higher education and the Scheduled Caste population in the Indian and Jammu and Kashmir contexts. Additionally, it will explore the significant contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the



implementation of affirmative action policies in India. The purpose of this study is to examine the obstacles encountered by students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in their decision not to pursue higher education, as well as to investigate the factors that facilitate their successful pursuit of higher education. This paper will further emphasize the experiences of scheduled caste students who have effectively surmounted these challenges, as well as those who have had difficulties in doing so. The data was acquired via interviews and subsequent analysis.

K R, Gopalan (2020) Following India's attainment of independence, the Indian government's legitimacy became intricately tied to its capacity to effectively include the substantial population, who had long been subjected to marginalization, into the country's democratic institutions. Before attaining independence, Indian politicians had a proclivity towards advocating for preferential treatment to address the economic and social marginalization faced by some communities due to the caste system. The 1951 Indian constitution, namely the 1st Amendment, included a provision that required the inclusion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the representation of educational institutions via the implementation of reserved quotas. Over the course of time, the reservation system within the constitution has undergone modifications and updates in order to facilitate the provision of social justice. In the year 2019, more adjustments were made to extend reservations to include economically disadvantaged segments of society, hence being seen as an endeavour towards promoting economic justice as well. This research examines the level of knowledge and the attitudes held by students enrolled in Arts colleges in Chennai on the 103rd Amendment Act of 2019, which provides a 10% reservation for individuals from economically weaker sections of the general category. This research examines the level of knowledge and public attitudes towards the upliftment of economically disadvantaged segments of society.

Weisskopf, Thomas (2004) Reservations implemented throughout several tiers of higher education have the dual effect of facilitating the upward mobility of SC and ST students within the university quality hierarchy, as well as serving to recruit a substantial number of SC and ST students who may not have otherwise pursued higher education, into universities. The fact that reservations often favor a privileged segment of SC and ST students does not always imply that they are ineffective in attaining their intended goals. Rather, these initiatives may be seen as endeavours aimed at fostering social integration among the privileged segments of society. This is achieved through enhancing the opportunities for individuals from severely marginalized and underrepresented populations to enter prestigious professions and influential roles in decision-making processes.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current study has used methodological triangulation, a research approach that entails the utilization of many research methods to investigate a certain topic. The use of extensive data in validating results serves to strengthen the validity and deepen the knowledge of the phenomena under study. Hence, in order to get a thorough comprehension, this study used methodological triangulation by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The study employs an exploratory research approach and aims to analyze topics that have received less attention or investigation. Given the absence of prior research in the relevant field, an exploratory study approach was used to get a comprehensive and reliable knowledge.

Descriptive study endeavors to methodically depict a given scenario, problem, program, or the living conditions of a community, as well as offer information and elucidate people's opinions towards a certain subject. Hence, within the given setting, the current study used a descriptive research approach to investigate the application of reservation regulations and individuals' viewpoints towards those policies. The research incorporates both primary and secondary data sources. The collection of secondary data included several sources, including books, articles, newspapers, research studies, reports, policy documents, internet websites, Employment Exchange, and journals, among others.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

4.1.1 Caste –wise Break up of Respondents

The Nepali caste system, as elucidated in chapter three, is characterized by hierarchical divisions, including Brahmin, Kastriya, Vaisya, and Shudra. The Kami, Damai, and Sarki communities are situated in the bottom stratum of the caste order and have historically been marginalized social groupings. Table 4.1 displays the categorization of the respondents based on their caste..

Table 4.1 Caste –wise Break up of Respondents

District	Sub-Caste			Total
	Kami	Damai	Sarki	
Nainital	25 (21.9%)	70 (61.4%)	19 (16.7%)	114 (100%)
Kalimpong	40 (33%)	43 (35.5%)	38 (31.4%)	121 (100%)
Kurseong (Mirik)	47 (40.9%)	16 (13.9%)	52 (45.2%)	115 (100%)
Total	112 (32%)	129 (36.85%)	109 (31.14%)	350 (100%)

Table 4.2 Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Gender	Number	Percentage
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Male	228	65.1%
Female	122	34.9%
Total	350	100%

Table 4.2 displays the distribution of responses categorized by gender. Based on the 2011 census data, the demographic composition of Nainital district reveals that males constitute 50.7 percent of the population, while females account for 49.3 percent. It is evident from the data that the majority of participants in the study are male, accounting for 65.14 percent of the entire sample, whilst the remaining 34.86 percent are female. The observed variance may be attributed to the presence of a noticeable sense of discomfort among the female participants throughout the fieldwork. Individuals may exhibit a preference for responding to close-ended questions or may choose to consult the male member of their family in order to address the inquiries at hand. Consequently, the data analysis reveals a lower proportion of female participants. In order to have a more comprehensive comprehension of the viewpoint and ramifications of reserve policies on the three groups, it is essential to consider the contextual dynamics in both urban and rural environments. Therefore, the following section presents a breakdown of the region into rural and urban categories.

4.1.2 Rural-Urban Break-Up

Nainital is characterized by its topography, which consists mostly of steep terrain, including both rural and urban regions. Hence, Table 4.3 presents the demographic distribution of respondents based on their rural-urban background, aiming to gain insights into the effects of the reservation policy on rural and urban areas.

Table 4.3 Rural-Urban Distribution of Respondents

Area	Number	Percentage
Rural	198	56.6%
Urban	152	43.4%
Total	350	100%

4.1.3 Age Wise Distribution of Respondents

Age is a crucial factor in the design and implementation of research studies, as it represents a significant element for comprehending persons' perspectives and concerns. The concept is seen as a framework through which one may comprehend intergenerational differences in cognitive processes, movement patterns, and other related phenomena. Hence, it is a crucial factor in comprehending the effects of the reservation policy implementation on various age groups within the population.

Table 4.4 Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	15-29	19 (54.29%)	16 (45.71%)	35 (10%)
	30-45	77 (65.81%)	40 (34.19%)	117 (33.42%)
	46-60	84 (64.62%)	46 (35.38%)	130 (37.14%)
	60Above	48 (70.59%)	20 (29.41%)	68 (19.42%)
Total		228	122	350

Table 4.4 displays the distribution of responses categorized by age. The primary demographic groups of interest were those aged 30-45 and 46-60, accounting for 33.42% and 37.14% of the total sample, respectively. The primary objective for choosing individuals within this age demographic is due to their likely engagement in employment or completion of higher education, which is crucial for comprehending reservation concerns in both educational and occupational contexts.

4.1.4 Educational Level of Respondents

Education is often recognized as a powerful tool for empowerment, serving as a technique to address and alleviate many forms of inequality. Education offers people the chance to enhance their socio-economic standing. In Shah's (2012) analysis, it is posited that the contemporary educational system has two primary purposes within society. Firstly, it operates as a means of transmitting cultural legacy to the succeeding generation. Secondly, it aims to equip these new generations with the necessary skills and knowledge to effect positive change within the societal framework. According to Türkkahraman (2012), it may be said that community development encompasses comprehensive development, whereby the educational system and economy are interconnected social institutions that eventually contribute to the advancement of the community. According to Sen (2003), education serves as a crucial factor in enabling individuals to effectively engage in decision-making processes across different levels. The concept under consideration pertains to the empowering and distributive function of education. It posits that education has the potential to address inequities by enabling individuals from disadvantaged, marginalized, and excluded groups to actively engage in social and political structures. Education has a key role in enabling individuals to

contribute to the betterment of both themselves and others. In their study, Gang et al. (2012) examined the growing significance of education among the Scheduled Castes (SCs) residing in urban areas of Karnataka, which led to the community's upward social mobility. Research done by Elhini and Moursi (2015) identifies a similar pattern of upward mobility, whereby education emerges as a significant factor in an individual's attainment. Education plays a crucial role in the research process as it allows the researcher to have a comprehensive awareness of the social context and the perspectives and interpretations of the individuals being studied. Within the context provided, Table 4.5 illustrates the educational attainment of the participants.

Table 4.5 Educational Level of Respondents

Respondents Education	Age				Total
	15-29	30-45	46-60	61 above	
Illiterate	0	7(5.8%)	14(10.4%)	14(22.9%)	35(10%)
Literate	2(5.8%)	12(10%)	17(12.6%)	13(21.3%)	44(12.6%)
Primary(I-V)	3(8.8%)	30(25%)	22(16.3%)	10(16.4%)	65(18.6%)
Upper-Primary (VI-VIII)	5(14.7%)	31(25.8%)	29(21.5%)	9(14.7%)	74(21.1%)
Secondary (IX-X)	5(14.7%)	9(7.5%)	22(16.3%)	6(.8%)	42(12%)
Higher Secondary (XI-XII)	8(23.5%)	20(16.6%)	15(11.1%)	4(6.5%)	47(13.4%)
Graduation	6(17.6%)	11(9.1%)	10(7.4%)	2(3.3%)	29(8.3%)
Post-Graduation	3(8.8%)	0	6(4.4%)	3(4.9%)	12(3.4%)
M.Phil/Ph.D	2(5.8%)	0	0	0	2(0.6%)
Total	34	120	135	61(100%)	350
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(17.4%)	(100%)
	(9.7%)	(34.3%)	(38.6%)		(100%)

Based on the data shown in Table 4.5, the age group with the largest proportion of respondents is 46-60 years, accounting for 38.6% of the total. This is closely followed by the age category of 30-45 years, which comprises 34.3% of the respondents. The proportion of respondents aged 61 years and over is 17.4%, while



the younger generation within the age range of 15-29 years represents 9.7% of the total. In terms of educational attainment, it is observed that the illiterate category has the greatest proportion of respondents, namely 22.9 percent, who fall within the age range of 61 and above. The group of individuals in question had not had any formal education and showed little likelihood of enrolling in educational institutions, so exemplifying a kind of exclusion known as zone one type 16. As to the paradigm created by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity, one kind of exclusion pertains to those who have never attended school and deliberately choose not to enroll in educational institutions owing to different structural factors. The prevalence of illiteracy is lower among those in the younger age group, and there are no respondents in the 15–29-year age category who reported being illiterate. The upper-primary level exhibits the largest proportion of responses, with 21.1 percent, while the primary level follows closely behind with 18.6 percent. When considering the aggregate proportion, it is seen that 25.4 percent of the participants possess an educational background at the Secondary and Senior Secondary levels. A total of 12 percent of the respondents had achieved higher education, including graduation, post-graduation, M.Phil, and Ph.D. The age-group of 15-29 years has the largest proportions in Graduation (17.6 percent), Post-Graduation (8.8 percent), and M.Phil/Ph.D (5.8 percent). However, it is worth noting that there are respondents in the upper age-categories who have also pursued Graduation and Post-Graduation.

4.1.5 Respondent's Occupational Distribution

An individual's economic standing and subsequent lifestyle are influenced by their occupation. Hence, it is crucial to ascertain the work history of the participants when assessing an individual's socio-economic level and their place within the societal class structure. According to Marx, a social class may be defined as a group of individuals who share common roles and responsibilities within the framework of production organization. The determination of an individual's social status is not contingent upon their work or money, but rather on the specific position they hold and the role they fulfill within the production process. According to Weber, class and status can be understood as distinct domains. Class pertains to the economic sphere and is structured based on individuals' relationships to the production and acquisition of goods. On the other hand, status groups are stratified based on the principles governing their consumption patterns, as exemplified by their distinctive lifestyles. In the context of Indian civilization, an individual's social class and rank are intricately tied to their conventional or customary vocation, as determined by the caste system. The dominant groups frequently engaged in discriminatory practices and subjugation, deriving their authority from the established social structure rooted in the caste system. This phenomenon reinforces the notion of cultural hegemony, wherein the Scheduled Castes, positioned at the lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy, were subjected to domination and discrimination. Within the context of this study, Table 4.3.6 explores the occupational position of the respondents in order to ascertain if the reservation policy has resulted in any kind of occupational mobility.

4.2 Occupational Mobility Across Generations Among Nainital's Scheduled Castes

Children from working-class households don't attend decent schools and have lesser educational credentials than middle-class classmates, according to Plewis and Bartley (2014). Therefore, there is less access to employment possibilities, which lowers the rate of upward social mobility. Westoff, Bressler, and Sagi

(1960), in their discussion of mobility metrics, cite occupational mobility as one of the key social mobility indicators. Like this, Torche (2013) and Nazimuddin (2014) explore many social mobility indicators, with occupational mobility being seen as the primary driver of an individual's upward social mobility. In his paper, Sharma (2011) emphasized the importance of the employment opportunity for social mobility, which might alter a person's social position. The term "social mobility" refers to a person, family, or community moving from one social position to another, which might be an upward or downward movement, depending on the context.

Table 4.6 Comparison of Job Status of Respondents and their Parents

Occupation		Parents	Respondents
Without Job		1.7%	21.1%
Government Sector	Group A	---	1.7%
	Group B	0.3%	3.4%
	Group C	2%	13.4%
	Group D	4.6%	9.1%
	Total	6.9%	27.6%
Private Sector	Company	24.9%	14.3%
	Sales	5.1%	1.4%
	Hotel	17.4%	1.1%
	Total	47.4%	16.8%
Business		---	16.6%
Wage and Agriculture Labour		0.9%	7.1%
Traditional		43.1%	10.6%
Total		100%	100%

4.3 Respondents Availing Reservation

Following independence, the scheduled castes were promised a number of constitutional protections under the guise of "protective discrimination policy" or reservation policy. The wellbeing of socially excluded groups and their integration into society are the fundamental goals of these programs and measures. Since the policy strives to safeguard the interests of different Scheduled Castes in the nation and enables their

social and economic development, it is especially the reservation offered in the areas of education and employment that is the primary focus of the current research. Scholarly research has shown that the advantages of reservations do not really reach the general public. According to Sheth (1987) on SC/ST, even after 50 years of affirmative action implementation, at least some members of the excluded group are represented in senior positions within the government services. Louis (2003) had a similar opinion when he said that despite the policy's adoption, their socioeconomic situation had not much improved. In order to determine if the three SCs communities in Nainital Hills have taken advantage of the reservation policy and seen an improvement in their socioeconomic situation, the next part will do just that. As a result, Figure 4.1 shows the proportion of respondents who have so far used the reservation scheme.

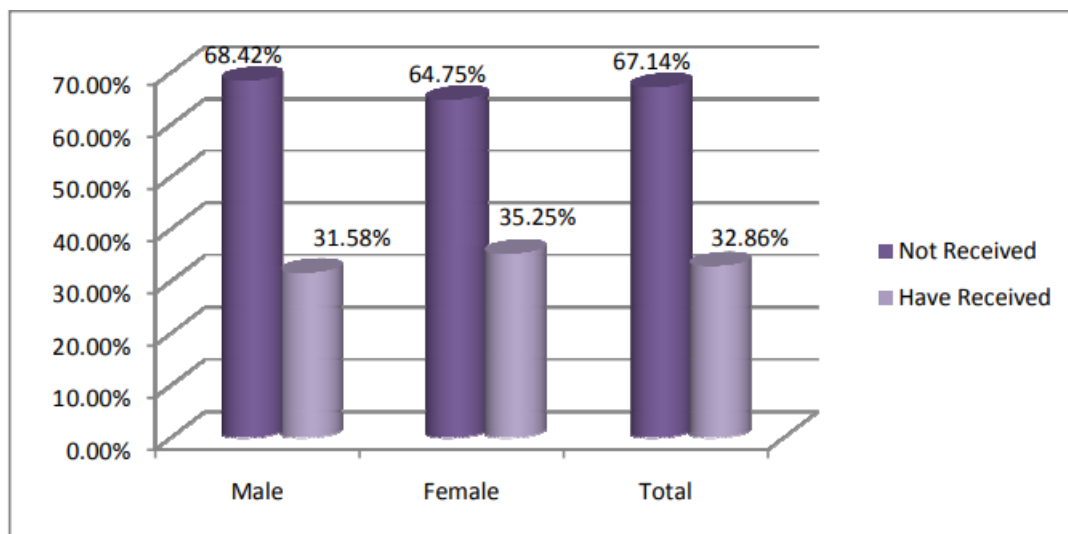


Figure 4.1 percent of respondents who used reservation facilities

5. CONCLUSION

Social exclusion occurs when dominant groups deny some groups equal opportunity, isolate them from other social groups, and disapprove of their capacity to participate in the social, political, and economic aspects of society. Social exclusion may take many different forms, but in India it is strictly caste-based. Many low caste social groups fell into the Scheduled Caste category, which is now recognized by the constitution. These groups were deprived of their rights and subjected to a variety of forms of exclusion on the social, political, religious, economic, and educational fronts. According to Chaudhry (2013), caste-based discrimination, exclusion, and divides have persisted throughout history as an institutionalized system intended to improve the status of the underprivileged, oppressed, and marginalized. It limited their access to resources that may have improved their lives and allowed them to advance. The Indian Constitution, which is based on the egalitarian principle, set forth inclusive policies to close this social gap and provided opportunities for socially excluded groups in the areas of education, employment, and parliamentary seats using reservations (Ambedkar, 2008).



As part of a larger policy package that includes a number of laws, initiatives for social improvement, and preferential policies aimed at helping the poorer segments of society, the reservation policy was developed as a corrective tool to close the social gap. The package has undergone extensive development and has been handled by both the federal and state governments. It is a convenience that guarantees the involvement of the social group that is often overlooked in all social events and activities. It is regarded as a sign of advancement and gave the Scheduled Caste community a chance to organize. By including the fixing of quota in various spheres, the Constitution has protected the weaker section of society and ensured participation of the historically marginalized groups. By utilizing these protective measures, the Scheduled Castes have been able to achieve a new social position in society.

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