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Analyzing The Hindi Print Media, Press And Freedom Struggle In India: An Analytical And Descriptive Nature

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1.0. Abstract:

Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. India is one of the biggest democracies in the world and is ranked second in print media. News publications faced many issues and challenges during British rule. The press faced obstacles from colonial rule and illiteracy and had to overcome many rules that suppressed free speech. The press became an important tool to raise awareness about the need to unify against the British and achieve independence. The press was a major advocate of modern ideas such as democracy, freedom, equality, and patriotism. The press has played a vital role in shaping the Indian freedom struggle. From its early days, it has been a powerful tool for communication, spreading ideas, and mobilizing the masses against colonial rule. Through various publications, the press helped create a sense of national identity and unity among Indians, making it an essential part of the fight for independence. This article explores the significant contributions of the press during this transformative period in Indian history. The Indian press began with the Bengal Gazette in 1780, marking the start of print media in India. Prominent leaders like Gandhi and Tilak used newspapers to spread nationalist ideas and connect with the masses. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 aimed to control the Indian press but ultimately sparked resistance and resilience among journalists. The press served as a platform for discussing social issues and reforms, influencing public opinion and policy. Post-independence, the press became a cornerstone of democracy, promoting accountability and national identity. The press played a notable role in the freedom struggle. They helped in the dispersal of revolutionary ideas, which helped in forming an opposition against the British government. Protected by the First Amendment to the U.S.

Constitution, a free press helps maintain the balance of power in government. Numerous journalists worldwide have been killed while working to fulfill their essential role in free and open societies.

1.1. Key Words: Press and Freedom Struggle, Colonial Policies, Key Aspects, Role, Importance, Institutions, National Repression, Various Bodies, Challenges, Strategies, Limitations, Restrictions, Measures, Criticism and Recommendations, Findings And Suggestions.

1.2. Introduction:

In a democratic country like India, the press plays a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of the populace and shedding light on government actions, serving as a crucial watchdog, tasked with scrutinizing the workings of the government and bringing attention to any perceived injustices or shortcomings done by any state actors. However, the recently released World Press Freedom Index presents a concerning picture for India. India's ranking in the recently released World Press Freedom Index -159th out of 180, is alarming, especially considering its status as the world's largest democracy. While there was a slight improvement in rank, it is not due to progress but rather due to declines in press freedom in other countries. The challenge to Freedom of Press in India includes the concentration of media in the hands of a few individuals or entities and the ownership of media can lead to a lack of diversity in viewpoints and a potential dominance of specific narratives or agendas and can limit the plurality of voices, thereby hindering the ability of journalists to freely report. The press has played a vital role in shaping the Indian freedom struggle. From its early days, it has been a powerful tool for communication, spreading ideas, and mobilizing the masses against colonial rule. Through various publications, the press helped create a sense of national identity and unity among Indians, making it an essential part of the fight for independence. This article explores the significant contributions of the press during this transformative period in Indian history.

1.3. Meaning of Press Freedom:

Press freedom is a fundamental principle that allows journalists and media organizations to operate without censorship or government interference. It is a core component of freedom of expression and is essential for a democratic society. Freedom of the press is a fundamental right that guarantees the ability of individuals and organizations, including journalists and media outlets, to publish and disseminate information without fear of censorship or retaliation. An absence of statutory and administrative control on dissemination of ideas, knowledge and thoughts. It includes the freedom to access information and to hold those in power accountable for their actions.

1.4. Definitions of Press Freedom:

1. Press Freedom can be defined as it refers to the absence of interference from an overreaching state in the operation of press on any form of communication.

2. Press Freedom can be defined as freedom of the press means that individuals have the right to express their opinions and ideas through various forms of media, such as print, broadcast, and online platforms, and to report on events and issues of public interest.

1.5. Meaning of Freedom Struggle:

The Indian Freedom Struggle was a long and arduous battle fought by the people of India to gain independence from British colonial rule. It was a multifaceted movement that involved various strategies, including nonviolent civil disobedience, armed rebellion, and political negotiations.

1.6. Definitions of Freedom Struggle:

The Indian independence movement was in constant ideological evolution. Essentially anti-colonial, it was supplemented by visions of independent, economic development with a secular, democratic, republican, and civil-libertarian political structure. After the 1930s, the movement took on a strong socialist orientation.

1.7. Objectives of the Study:

The study shall have been the following specific objectives.

1. To study the colonial policies to suppress the press in India.
2. To study the key aspects of role and importance of press and freedom struggle in India.
3. to analysis of institutions for protecting press and freedom struggle in India.
4. To study the various bodies associated with press and freedom struggle in India.
5. To study the challenges associated with press and freedom struggle in India.
6. Extent the role of Hindi print media and strategies adopted to revamp press freedom in India.
7. To discuss the limitations and restrictions on the freedom struggle of the press and media.
8. To analyze the measures can be taken to ensure a free and impartial press in India.
9. To study the criticism and recommendations of the study area.
10. To study the findings and suggestions of the study area.

1.8. Research Methodology:

Since the nature of paper is analytical and theoretical in nature, hence data has been collected from secondary sources, for examples journals, papers, internet, and books and from articles also. The collection of necessary data is obtained from secondary sources. Secondary data are sources based upon the reviews and references, books, journals, periodicals and website.

1.9. Research Gap:

Identifying the research gap is crucial for understanding the specific contributions this study will make to the existing literature on the role of the press in the Indian freedom struggle. While considerable work has been done, several critical gaps remain that this study aims to address. There is a limited focus on vernacular press,

with most existing studies primarily concentrating on English-language newspapers. This oversight neglects the significant impact of vernacular publications in mobilizing public sentiment, particularly among rural and semi-urban populations. By exploring regional newspapers, this research will illuminate how these outlets shaped nationalist discourse across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. There is also insufficient analysis of censorship; while some research has addressed its impact; few studies delve into how journalists navigated these challenges. This study will investigate the strategies employed by journalists to circumvent censorship, revealing their resilience as communicators of dissent during the freedom struggle.

1.10. Review of Literature:

1. Shally Rani (2020), “The Great Divide - National Movement in India (Partition & Independence)”

The Indian national movement was one of the biggest mass movement modern societies has ever seen. To end to British colonialism in India, National movement came into existence. At least India got Independence on 15-Aug-1947. Behind the Independence the concept of the Partition has also emerged and the creation of the two dominions, India and Pakistan.

2. Virupakshappa (2018), “The Role of Bellary Siddamma in Freedom Struggle of Karnataka” the history of foreign domination in India is replete with a courage, sacrifice and dedication to the cause of freedom. However, over the decades, the fight for freedom of the country was continued with the same dedication, singleness of purpose and solidarity. This may call as freedom movement is related to human life, namely, traditions, economic activities, rich cultural background and goals, Gandhiji dreamt of Swaraj.

3. Ashish Sharma, (2019), “Growth of Journalism in India and its Contribution in Freedom Struggle: A Study on Fearless Journalist of Pre Independence Era” India is known to be one of the largest democracies in the world and it takes almost 190 years for India to get freedom from British rule. During the British era, one of the biggest problems that freedom fighters, revolutionaries faced was an appropriate channel for the proper dissemination of information among the public. During freedom movement press, various leaders for propagating their ideas among the masses used mainly newspaper.

4. Abhishek Dwivedy (2022), “The Freedom of Press in India and the Impact of Sedition upon IT” The freedom of the press, often regarded as the fourth pillar of contemporary democracy, is a vital component of India’s democratic nationhood. It is considered one of India’s four-crown jewels. The Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary are the other three. In India’s democratic system, the press serves as a check on the workings of the other three divisions by acting as a watchdog. The active engagement of a contemporary and well-informed population provides much-needed oversight of the administration’s actions, which is a vital element of a modern democratic society.

5. Ravi Prakash (2024), “The Role of the Press in Shaping Public Opinion during the Freedom Struggle”

The role of the press during the freedom struggle was instrumental in shaping public opinion and galvanizing the masses against colonial oppression. As India sought independence from British rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets emerged as vital tools for disseminating nationalist

ideas and fostering political awareness. The press not only reported on events but also provided a platform for political discourse, allowing voices from diverse communities to contribute to the independence narrative.

6. Animesh Nagvanshi (2023), "A Comprehensive Study on the Freedom of Press in India: In Reference To Article 19" The press is believed to be the fourth pillar of democracy as its present viewpoint or the position of the citizen in an inopportune moment. It was at the time of Emergency when the requisite or necessity of the press was realized as it presented the current scenario of the people to the democratically elected government. India is known as the largest democracy in the world. It emphasized the significance of the press and media in preserving the Rule of Law contained in the Indian Constitution and safeguarding the nation's democracy.

1.11. Colonial Policies to Suppress the Press in India:

1. Vernacular Press Act, 1878 ("Gagging Act"): Aimed to suppress the vernacular press, which was critical of British policies, especially during events like the famine of 1876-77 and the extravagant Delhi Durbar.

2. Provisions: District magistrates could demand security deposits and confiscate press. Pre-censorship of vernacular newspapers was mandated to gain exemption from the Act. Public opposition led to the repeal of the Act in 1882 by Lord Ripon.

3. Section 124A and 153A of IPC (Sedition Laws): Section 124A criminalized any attempt to cause disaffection against the British government, with punishments including life imprisonment.

Section 153A targeted writings that caused hatred between different classes, primarily aimed at preventing anti-British unity.

4. Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908: Enacted to suppress the extremist nationalist press during the Swadeshi Movement. Empowered magistrates to confiscate printing presses and penalize newspapers publishing content inciting violence or rebellion.

5. Indian Press Act, 1910: Revived the harsh provisions of the Vernacular Press Act, requiring printers to deposit securities and submit copies of newspapers to the government for censorship.

1.12. Nationalist Response to Repression:

1. Strategic Subversion: Nationalist journalists used creative tactics to evade censorship. For example, they prefaced critical articles with declarations of loyalty to the British government or quoted criticisms of imperialism from English newspapers to indirectly target colonial rule.

2. Mass Mobilization: Repressive laws often backfired, fueling protests and enhancing public support for the nationalist movement.

3. Role of the Swadeshi Movement: During this period, newspapers like Kesari and Bande Mataram openly advocated for swadeshi movement and boycotts, despite government crackdowns.

1.13. Key Aspects of Press and Freedom Struggle in India:

1. Freedom from Censorship: Journalists and media outlets should be able to publish or broadcast news and information without government-imposed censorship.

2. Access to Information: A free press should have access to information and sources to investigate and report on matters of public interest.

3. Independence: Editorial independence ensures that news reporting is based on facts and not influenced by outside interests.

4. Protection of Sources: Journalists should be able to protect their sources to encourage whistleblowers and informants to come forward with information without fear of exposure or reprisal.

5. Pluralism and Diversity: A free press should encompass a diverse range of viewpoints and opinions, allowing for open debate and discussion in society.

6. Accountability: The media should hold those in power accountable by investigating and reporting on their actions and decisions.

1.14. Role of the Press in Mobilizing Public Opinion:

1. Awareness and Political Education: Newspapers like Kesari (Marathi), The Hindu, and Amrita Bazar Patrika spread nationalist ideas and educated the masses about civil rights.

2. Formation of Public Opinion: The press urged unity among Indians, commented on British policies, and opposed discriminatory practices like famine mismanagement and exploitative.

3. Platform for National Leaders: Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Surendranath Banerjea, and Dadabhai Naoroji used newspapers as platforms to propagate nationalist ideology and inspire.

4. Political Mobilization in Remote Areas: Newspapers reached even remote villages, where editorials and articles were read aloud in local libraries, encouraging discussions and political.

1.15. The Importance of a Free Press for India:

1. Democracy and Accountability: Journalists investigate and report on government actions, policies, and decisions, holding officials accountable for their actions.

2. Information Dissemination: It helps citizens stay informed about current events, government activities, and societal issues, enabling them to make informed decisions.

3. Check on Power: A free press acts as a check on the abuse of power by the government and other powerful entities. It helps uncover corruption, human rights abuses, and other wrongdoing.

4. Transparency and Accountability: A free press promotes transparency in government operations and decision-making processes.

5. Diverse Voices: India is a diverse country with a multitude of languages, cultures, and perspectives. A free press provides a platform for diverse voices and viewpoints.

6. Protection of Fundamental Rights: A free press is a guardian of fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of expression and the right to know. It helps protect these rights by advocating.

7. International Standing: India's reputation on the global stage is influenced by its commitment to press freedom. Upholding press freedom demonstrates a commitment to democratic values.

1.16. Institutions for Protecting Press and Freedom struggle in India:

- 1. Press Council of India (PCI):** The Press Council of India is a statutory body established under the Press Council Act, 1978.
- 2. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is a government body responsible for formulating policies and guidelines related to the media sector in India.
- 3. News Broadcasters Association (NBA):** NBA is a self-regulatory body representing the private television news and current affairs broadcasters in India.
- 4. Editors Guild of India:** This is a voluntary association of editors of leading newspapers and news magazines in India. It plays a crucial role in defending press freedom and addressing issues.
- 5. Legal System:** India's legal system, including the judiciary, plays a significant role in upholding press freedom. Courts have the authority to address violations of press freedom, protect journalists.
- 6. International Organizations:** International organizations such as Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) monitor press freedom in India.

1.17. The Various Bodies Associated with Press and Freedom Struggle in India:

The Various Bodies Associated with Press and Freedom Struggle in India; they are as follows:

I. Regulatory Bodies:

- 1. Press Council of India (PCI):** Established under the **Press Council Act of 1978**, the Press Council of India serves as a watchdog to uphold and promote press freedom and ethical standards in journalism.
- 2. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:** This governmental body is tasked with creating policies and guidelines for the media sector in India.
- 3. News Broadcasters Association (NBA):** The NBA is representing private television news broadcasters in India. It sets and enforces ethical standards for television news channels.

II. Bodies Ensuring Press Freedom:

- 1. Editors Guild of India:** Comprising editors from prominent newspapers and news magazines, it defends press freedom and addresses journalists' rights and responsibilities.
- 2. Legal System:** India's judiciary, including the Supreme Court, plays a vital role in safeguarding press freedom and courts have the authority to address press freedom violations.
- 3. International Organisations:** Global entities like **Reporters without Borders (RSF)** and the **Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)** monitor press freedom in India and highlight violations on the international stage.

1.18. Challenges associated with Press and Freedom Struggle in India:

- 1. Legal and Regulatory Constraints:** India has laws that can be used to restrict press freedom, such as defamation laws, sedition laws, and laws related to national security.
- 2. Government Interference:** There have been instances of government interference in the editorial independence of media outlets.

3. Threats and Violence: Journalists in India often face physical threats and violence, especially when reporting on sensitive issues like corruption, organized crime.

4. Self-Censorship: Due to fear of reprisals or pressure from various sources, journalists and media outlets may engage in self-censorship, avoiding certain topics or taking a cautious.

5. Ownership and Control: Media ownership in India is often concentrated in the hands of a few powerful entities, which can influence editorial decisions and limit the diversity of voices.

6. Defamation Lawsuits: Journalists and media organizations in India are frequently targeted with defamation lawsuits, which can be time-consuming and financially burdensome.

1.19. Limitations and Restrictions on the Freedom Struggle of the Press and Media:

These reasonable restrictions on the media and press have been briefly discussed as follows with appropriate cases:

1. Security of the State: Restrictions may be imposed on the freedom of press on the ground of security of the state. The exercise of free press is restricted if any news, information.

2. Friendly relations with Foreign States: The press is restricted from publishing or broadcasting any news, information or other matters, which may harm and endanger the friendly relation that India has with other foreign countries.

3. Public Order: The press and media are prevented from exercising their liberty on the ground of public order. Thus, the print and electronic media cannot print or telecast any news.

4. Sovereignty and integrity of the state: The press is prohibited to make any statement, publication, or broadcast of any matter if such material injures or damages the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

5. Decency or morality: The press and media enjoy the liberty to make any publication or broadcast any programme so as such material are decent and moral in character and appearance.

6. Contempt of Court: Contempt is of 2 kinds: Civil & Criminal. Contempt in civil terms refers to any wilful disobedience or breach of any court order, judgement or any undertaking.

7. Defamation: Defamation can be described as any matter which injures the dignity, reputation and image of a person in the eyes of the society and thereby exposes him to mockery, hate, disgust or contempt.

8. Incitement to an offence: The press is restricted from exercising its liberty on the ground of motivating and inciting the public to commit crime.

1.20. Strategies Can Be Adopted to Revamp Press Freedom in India:

1.Implementing Committee's Recommendations: Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2012), the Press Council of India, and the National Human Rights Commission have recommended adopting legal and ethics training for journalists, fostering transparency and accountability.

2. Strong Legal Framework: India has a robust legal framework in the form of Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression. However, there is a need to strengthen laws and regulations to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and violence.

3. Independent Media Regulatory Bodies: Establishing independent and autonomous regulatory bodies to oversee the functioning of the media can help ensure fair and unbiased reporting.

4. Protection for Whistle blowers and Journalists: Enacting laws and mechanisms to protect whistle blower's and journalists who expose wrongdoings or report on sensitive issues can encourage fearless reporting.

5. Addressing Online Threats and Fake News: With the increasing use of digital media, it is essential to address online threats such as cyber harassment, trolling, and misinformation campaigns targeting journalists.

6. Media Literacy and Training: Media literacy and ethics training programme for journalists to tackle ethical dissonance in journalism, promoting transparency and accountability within media organisations, and safeguarding constitutional guarantees of press freedom through legal protections.

7. International Cooperation: Collaborating with international organisations and forums can help promote best practices, share experiences, and leverage global support for press freedom in India.

1.21. Measures can be taken to ensure a Free and Impartial Press in India:

1. Strengthen Legal Protections: Reform laws that can be misused to restrict press freedom, such as defamation and sedition laws. Ensure swift and fair legal processes.

2. Independent Regulatory Framework: Establish independent media regulatory bodies with members representing a cross-section of society, ensuring that they are free from government control and political influence.

3. Protect Journalists and Whistle-blowers: Enact and enforce laws that protect journalists from harassment, violence, and threats, both online and offline.

4. Promote Transparency: Enact robust freedom of information or access to information laws to promote transparency and enable journalists to access government information.

5. Public Broadcasting Independence: Ensure the independence of public broadcasting institutions from government control and influence.

6. Promote Journalistic Ethics: Encourage media organizations to adhere to a code of ethics that emphasizes accuracy, fairness, and balanced reporting.

7. International Cooperation: Collaborate with international organizations, such as UNESCO and international press freedom groups, to promote press freedom.

1.22. Criticism of the Study Area:

1. Lack of Enforcement Powers: Critics argue that the PCI's inability to impose penalties limits its effectiveness. For example, despite several guidelines, sensationalism and paid news persist.

2. Exclusion of Digital Media: The PCI's jurisdiction is limited to print media, leaving the rapidly growing digital media unregulated.

3. Perceived Bias: Accusations of partiality arise, especially in politically sensitive cases. For instance, the council has been criticized for its muted response to issues of media polarization.

4. Ineffectiveness: Critics argue the council's recommendations are often ignored, reducing its impact as a regulatory authority.

1.23. Findings of the Study Area:

The role of the press during India's freedom struggle was multifaceted and instrumental in galvanizing public sentiment against British colonialism. The following findings summarize the crucial contributions of the press and its lasting impact:

1. The Press as A Tool for Political Awakening: The Indian press, particularly vernacular newspapers, played a vital role in politically awakening the masses. Through widespread dissemination of news, analysis, and nationalist ideas, the press educated the people about colonial exploitation and inspired political engagement. Newspapers such as Kesari, Amrita Bazar Patrika, and Hindustan Times became instruments of mass education, raising awareness about the need for independence.

2. Fostering Unity across Regional and Linguistic Divides: The press helped transcend linguistic, regional, and social differences by uniting Indians around the cause of self-rule. Nationalist publications were printed in multiple languages, ensuring that even those in remote parts of the country were informed about the ongoing struggle. This communication fostered solidarity and collective resistance against British policies, acting as a catalyst for mass movements.

3. Defiance of British Censorship: Despite facing severe restrictions, such as the Vernacular Press Act (1878) and the Press Act (1910), the Indian press remained resilient. Newspapers continued to publish nationalist content, often at great personal risk to editors and journalists. The defiance of these acts demonstrated the power of the press as a vehicle of resistance and its determination to keep the spirit of the freedom struggle alive.

4. Influence on Mass Movements: The press was instrumental in shaping public participation in key movements such as the Noncooperation Movement (1920), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), and Quit India Movement (1942). Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi used newspapers to communicate directly with the masses, encouraging civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. The press also provided real-time updates on protests and British reprisals, helping sustain momentum for these movements.

5. Formation of A Democratic Ethos: The Indian press laid the foundation for a culture of public discourse, debate, and democratic engagement. During the freedom struggle, newspapers were not just sources of information but forums for expressing dissent, discussing reforms, and shaping public opinion. This ethos continues to shape the character of Indian journalism today, where the press acts as a crucial pillar of democracy and accountability.

6. Legacy Of Journalistic Integrity: The journalistic values that developed during the freedom struggle—such as courage, patriotism, and a commitment to truth—continue to influence modern Indian journalism. The press emerged from the freedom movement as an institution committed to protecting democratic ideals

and free speech. The legacy of the freedom struggle has embedded in Indian journalism a sense of responsibility to defend the public's right to know and to hold those in power accountable.

1.24. Suggestions and Recommendations of the Study Area:

1. Enhancing the Authority of the Press Council of India: The indispensable role of the Press Council of India in safeguarding press freedom necessitates the reinforcement of its autonomy and independence.

2. Encouraging Self-Regulation: Facilitating the adoption of self-regulatory mechanisms by media organizations can effectively uphold ethical standards and foster accountability.

3. Striking a Balance between Privacy and the Common Good: We must find a middle ground between the essentiality of the press's freedom and the right to privacy.

4. Reinforcing Protections for Whistle-blowers: Whistle-blowers play a pivotal role in uncovering corruption and misconduct. To encourage and safeguard them, we should establish.

5. Enhancing Financial Support for Independent Journalism: In order to decrease reliance on corporate entities and foster independent journalism, it is worth considering the option of providing public funding or grants to media organizations.

6. Cultivating Media Literacy and Critical Thinking: The education system should incorporate media literacy programs to equip citizens with the necessary skills to critically assess news and information.

7. Embracing International Standards and Best Practices: India can draw valuable lessons from countries that have successfully safeguarded press freedom.

1.25. Concluding Remarks:

The press served as the lifeblood of India's freedom struggle by fostering political consciousness, disseminating nationalist ideas, and holding colonial policies to critical scrutiny. Despite repressive laws like the Vernacular Press Act and sedition laws, the resilient nationalist press became a key pillar of the independence movement, bringing the ideals of freedom and democracy to the masses. The media's role in nation building is multifaceted and indispensable. By promoting transparency, fostering economic development, and raising social awareness, the media contributes significantly to the progress and stability of a nation. As it adapts to the digital age, the media must continue to uphold its responsibilities and navigate challenges to remain a pillar of democracy. The media, often referred to as the fourth pillar of democracy, plays a crucial role in nation building. Its influence spans across political, economic, and social spheres, making it an indispensable part of a functioning democracy. The press played a pivotal role in India's struggle for independence, acting as a powerful tool for dissemination of information; raising awareness and consciousness; shaping public opinion; uniting diverse communities; criticising colonial policies; mobilising protests and movements; providing a platform for leaders; fostering nationalism; promoting non-violent resistance. In summary, the press played a vital role in India's fight for freedom. It served as a platform for voices that opposed British rule and helped spread the message of nationalism across the country. Leaders like Tilak and Gandhi used their newspapers to reach people in both cities and villages, inspiring them to unite for independence. The press not only informed the public about injustices but also

encouraged discussions about rights and self-governance. Despite facing strict censorship and laws aimed at silencing dissent, the press remained a powerful tool for change. Today, its legacy continues as it shapes public opinion and supports democracy in India.

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