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## Spatio -Temporal Analysis Of Women's Education And Empowerment In India

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### Abstract

Education empowers girls to achieve more in their social, career, economic and family lives. Women's education is a multi-faceted factor that can be held responsible for the low status among women in India. The factors like social, demographic, political and economic are the backbone of low or high literacy rate. Women's education is a milestone in empowerment because, it allows women to meet the obstacles, and improve their lives. So, the relevance of education in relation to empowerment for women cannot be neglected. India has been thought to be the world's great power in the last few years to witness the progress of women's education. As the position of women has been determined, women's empowerment and the growing changes in their education are to be recognized. The present research carried out the spatio-temporal analysis of the women education and empowerment in India. For spatio-temporal analysis of the women education and empowerment in India, data of three decades from 2001, 2011 and 2021 is considered. The general literacy rate for three decades is 54.0 percent, 65.46 and 70.3 percent of respectively. India's female literacy rate was only 7.3 percent at time of independence. Since then, it has increased but at varying rates in different states.

**Key words:** Education, Women empowerment, Spatio-temporal, Decade, Literacy.

### Introduction

Education is considered the most important tool for empowering women in society. It is not only limited in developing the personality of an individual but also plays an important role in economic, social, and cultural development. UNESCO put its effort to achieve equal opportunity of education regardless of age, gender, race, or any other difference in social and economic status. Education plays a critical role in women's

economic empowerment. It takes the center stage, but for a long, most women especially in the rural areas have been denied this right and have been subjected to very degrading practices and responsibilities.

The role of women in the education system can play a big part in society. The factors like cultural, social, political, and technological changes in the world have revolutionized the education and social life of women. Studies have shown that the rate of economic growth from women's education matches with those from men's education. Women empowerment is a pivotal part of any society, state, or country. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important section of our society. Education as a means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is, therefore, crucial for the socioeconomic and political progress of India.

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. With the increasing change in women education, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women.

## Objectives

The major objectives of present study are as follows:

1. To study the temporal variation and progress of women education and empowerment in India during 2001, 2011 Census and in estimated data of 2021.
2. To evaluate the spatial pattern of the performance of women education in India.

## Data Base and Methodology

The present study is mainly based on the secondary resources of data. The data pertaining to literacy rate of different states during three decades i.e from 2001 to 2021 is taken from Census of India. Spatio-temporal analysis of the women education is used as a women empowerment parameter.

Women Education shows a greater variation among the states of India. This variation is presented with the help of cartographic method like choropleth maps and graphs.

## Decadal Variation in Women Education in India

The first Census (1901) had recorded the lowest literacy rate of 5.3 percent. Only 9.8 percent of the males were literate and less than one percent of the females were educated. In successive decades literacy rate of both males and females went on increasing. General literacy rate increased from 5.9 percent in 1911 to

74.04percent in 2011 and it is projected to reach 77.7 percent in 2021. Growth rate of literacy was also very low during the decade of 1901-1911 as it was only 0.4 percent. With rapidly increasing literacy, its growth rate also increased from 0.7 percent in 1911 to 11.46 percent in 2011 and it is projected to go down to 0.9percent in 2021. However, the highest growth rate i.e 14.8 percent was recorded during the decade of 1991-2001.

Compared to female literacy, male literacy rate witnessed a very fast growth from 10.6 percent in 1911 to 82.14 percent in 2011 and it is expected to reach 84.70percent in 2021. While, female literacy rate rose at a snail speed i.e from 1.1 percent in 1911 to 65.46 percent in 2011. As per the estimates it may go up to 70.30percent in 2021 (Table 1 and Fig.1).

**Table 1: Female Literacy of India 1901-2021**

(In percentage)

Year	Person	Male	Female	Growth Rate
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7	-
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1	0.4
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8	0.7
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9	1.1
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3	4.4
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3	0.0
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0	5.7
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7	5.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8	6.1
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2	14.4
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0	14.8
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	11.46
2021	77.70	84.70	70.30	0.9

**Source: Census of India and Projected Data of 2021**

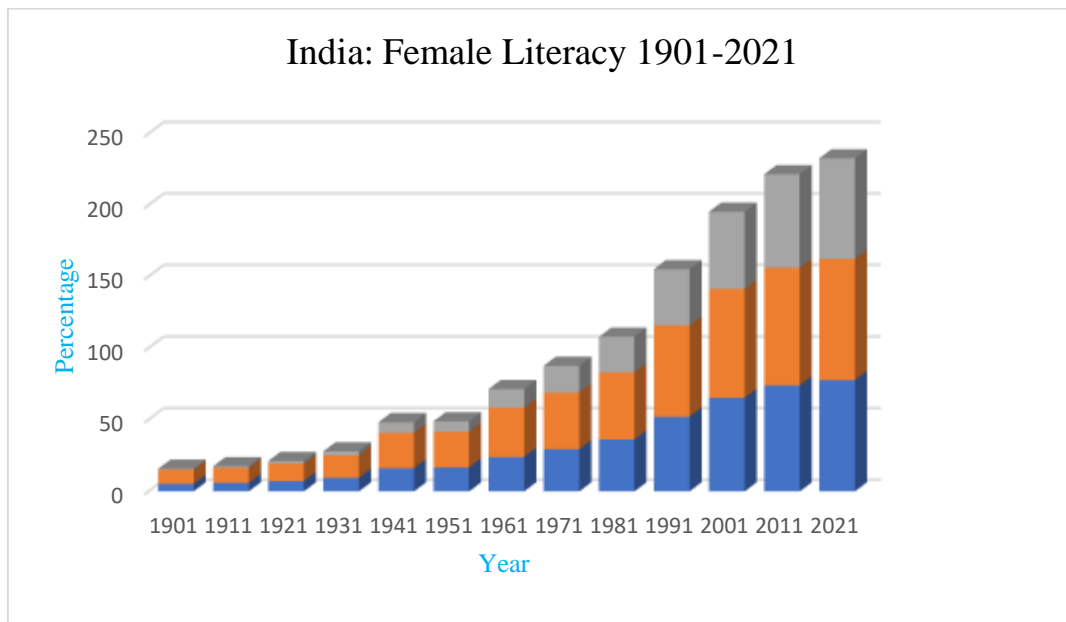


Fig.1

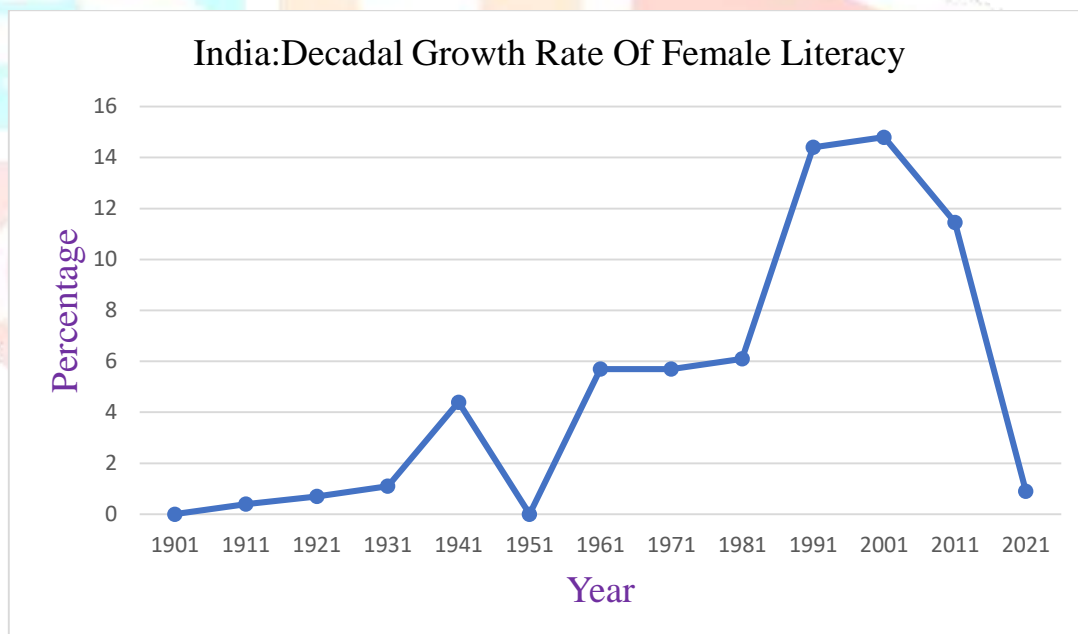


Fig.2

### Spatial Variations in female literacy and women Empowerment in India

Women education shows a greater variation among the states and Union Territories of India during all the three decades. An effort is made here to analyse the spatial pattern of female literacy in India along with the decadal variation in the different states from 2001 to 2021.

### Spatial Variations in Female Literacy in 2001

During this decade national female literacy rate was 59.6 percent. More than twelve states such as Kerala, Mizoram and Goa etc have the female literacy which is above the national average. All other states have the literacy which is below the national average. In case of Union Territories except Dadar and Nagar Haveli all other UTs had very high literacy rate.

**Areas of high literacy rate:** As in the previous decades, Kerala recorded the highest female literacy in 2001 with 87.9 percent and it was followed by Mizoram and Goa where the rate was 86.8 and 75.4percent respectively. Delhi with 74.7percent was in the fourth position. Apart from these, Lakshadweep had recorded the highest female literacy among the Union Territories. While, Chandigarh and Andaman and Nicobar islands are in the second and third positions with the female literacy of 76.5 and 75.2 percent respectively.

**Areas of moderate literacy rate:** 18 states in addition to a Union Territory fall in this category as their female literacy rate was ranging between 45 to 70 percent. Major states of this group are Himachal Pradesh (67.4%), Maharashtra (67.0%) and Tripura which had reported 64.9 percent literacy rate for females. Union Territory, Daman and Diu also had moderate female literacy rate of 70.0percent.

**Areas of low female literacy rate:** States which had the literacy less than 40percent during 2001 are categorized in this group. There are totally six states in this group. Bihar had recorded the lowest female literacy in this period and followed by Jharkhand (38.9%) and Uttar Pradesh (42.25%). Jammu and Kashmir with 43.0 percent and Rajasthan with 43.9percent are the other states where the female literacy rate was very low. Apart from these Dadra and Nagar Haveli was the only Union Territory which had very low literacy of 43.0percent. Most of these states are economically backward and discrimination between men and women is more pronounced in these states.

### **Spatial Variations in female literacy in 2011**

During this decade 19 states have female literacy above the national average of 65.46percent. And all the Union Territories also have recorded literacy above the national average in this period.

**Areas of high literacy rate:** Kerala with 92.0percent and Mizoram with 89.4 percent of female literacy retained their first and second ranks. While, Goa state lost its third position to Tripura which has recorded 83.1 percent of female literacy in 2011. Other states in this group are Goa (81.8%), Delhi (80.9%). Union Territory of Lakshadweep has also retained it first position with 88.2 percent of female literacy. Further, Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh and Pondicherry also have recorded high rate of female literacy which is above 80percent.

**Areas of moderate literacy rate:** Fifteen states have recorded the moderate female literacy in the country during 2011. Among the states of this group, Nagaland with 76.7 percent, Himachal Pradesh with 76.6 percent



and Maharashtra with 75.5 percent area the major ones. Two Union Territories namely Daman and Diu (79.6%) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (65.9%) also have moderate female literacy.

**Areas of low female literacy rate:** There are eight states in this category and Rajasthan has the lowest female literacy i.e 52.7percent. Bihar with 53.3 percent and Jharkhand with 56.2 percent are the other states which have recorded very low rate of female literacy. None of the Union Territories' female literacy is below national average.

Compared to the female literacy rate of 2001 all states have reported an increase in the literacy rate. However, some states have shown very high growth and in some other states growth rate is slower. Haryana witnessed a drastic increase of 21.1percent during the decade of 2001 to 2011 as the female literacy increased here from 45.7percent to 66.8 percent. Tripura also recorded a rapid increase in literacy rate from 64.9 percent to 83.1percent which shows the hike of 18.2 percent. Opposite to this, Mizoram has recorded a slight increase i.e only 2.6percent as the literacy rate increased here from 86.8 percent to 89.4percent in 2011. Thus, the growth rate female literacy also varies greatly from state to state. Union Territories are no exceptions for this as maximum 22.9 percent increase is observed in Dadra and Nagar Haveli where the female literacy rate increased from 43.0percent (2001) to 65.9 percent in 2011.

### **Spatial Variations in female literacy 2021**

The projected values make it clear that same trends in women's literacy continued in this decade also. Kerala has maintained its first position and in Mizoram no change is predicted as its estimated literacy remained 89.4 percent. It is interesting to know that more than twenty states have the female literacy above the national average of 70.3 percent. The major contributing factors responsible for relatively high literacy rates in these areas are early starts in the field of education as well as easy access to educational facilities. The high literacy rates in these states are mainly associated with high proportion of non- agricultural workers and high degree of urbanization.

Its projected that Rajasthan still remain the state with the least female literacy of 57.6 percent. Even Arunachal Pradesh also could not cross 60 percent of female literacy. Bihar (60.5%), Uttar Pradesh (63.4%) and Jharkhand (64.7%) are the other states with very low female literacy. As far as Union Territories are concerned Dadra and Nagar Haveli is the only territory which has below national average literacy of 65.93percent and remaining all other Union Territories have recorded very high female literacy. The highest female literacy rate i.e 88.25 percent has been reported in Lakshadweep among the Union Territories (Table 2 and Fig. 3).

## Findings

The variation in female literacy rates across different states in India can be attributed to a combination of historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors. States with a history of progressive social reforms and early educational initiatives tend to have higher literacy rates. For example, states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have had a long history of promoting education and gender equality. Economic Development of a state plays a major role in the better female literacy as rich states make more investments in education and give preference to women education. Further, the effective government policies and educational programs can boost literacy rates. “Cultural attitudes towards gender and education can significantly impact literacy rates. States with more progressive views on women's education and higher social awareness about the importance of educating girls tend to have better literacy rates for females”.

The moderate female literacy rates in regions like Daman and Diu, Maharashtra and Karnataka can be attributed to several factors such as economic status and infrastructure of these areas. In addition to this, government programmes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme and various state-specific programs contributed to better literacy rates. “Overall, the moderate female literacy rates in these regions are the result of a combination of these factors, reflecting a balance between progress and existing challenges”.

With all the government effort to raise the female literacy, there are many states such as Rajasthan, Bihar and Arunachal Pradesh etc. Low literacy of these areas often corresponds with regions that have socio-economic challenges and historical disparities. Factors contributing to this include poverty, traditional gender roles, and inadequate infrastructure.

Particularly, Rajasthan with its large rural population facing the problems like early marriages of the girls, cultural norms and limited access to schools contributed to this issue. Generally, “large family size, low diversification of economy, prejudices against female education, low mobility among female for education and employment and poor infrastructure facilities for education are the other associated factors responsible for very low literacy rates in these states”.

## Women Empowerment through Education

In all societies, states or countries, women's empowerment is important. In women's life, education makes a major impact. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life.

Direct relationship between the women's level of education and women empowerment makes it clear that women of states like Kerala, Mizoram etc. are more empowered than their counterparts of states such as Rajasthan, Bihar and Arunachal Pradesh etc.

**Table 2: Female literacy rate in India 2001-2021**

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Literacy rate (in percentage)		
		2001	2011	2021(Projected)
1	Andhra Pradesh	50.4	59.7	65.93
2	Arunachal Pradesh	43.5	59.6	59.57
3	Assam	54.6	67.3	81.2
4	Bihar	33.1	53.3	60.5
5	Chhattisgarh	51.9	60.6	68.7
6	Delhi	74.7	80.9	82.4
7	Goa	75.4	81.8	81.84
8	Gujarat	58.6	70.7	74.8
9	Haryana	45.7	66.8	71.3
10	Himachal Pradesh	67.4	76.6	80.5
11	Jammu & Kashmir	43.0	58.0	68
12	Jharkhand	38.9	56.2	64.7
13	Karnataka	56.9	68.1	70.5
14	Kerala	87.9	92.0	95.2
15	Madhya Pradesh	50.3	60.0	65.5
16	Maharashtra	67.0	75.5	78.4
17	Manipur	60.5	73.2	73.17
18	Meghalaya	59.6	73.8	73.78
19	Mizoram	86.8	89.4	89.4
20	Nagaland	61.5	76.7	76.69
21	Orissa	50.5	64.4	70.3
22	Punjab	63.4	71.3	78.5
23	Rajasthan	43.9	52.7	57.6
24	Sikkim	60.4	76.4	76.43
25	Tamil Nadu	64.4	73.9	77.49
26	Tripura	64.9	83.1	83.15
27	Uttar Pradesh	42.2	59.3	63.4
28	Uttarakhand	-	70.7	80.17
29	West Bengal	59.6	71.2	76.1
30	Telangana	-	-	65.1
<b>Union Territories</b>				
1	Andaman and Nicobar	75.2	81.8	81.84
2	Chandigarh	76.5	81.4	81.38
3	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	43.0	65.9	65.93
4	Daman and Div	70.0	79.6	79.59
5	Lakshadweep	80.5	88.2	88.25
6	Pondicherry	73.9	81.2	81.22
<b>India</b>		<b>59.6</b>	<b>65.46</b>	<b>70.3</b>

Source: Census of India -2001, 2011 and projected data of 2023



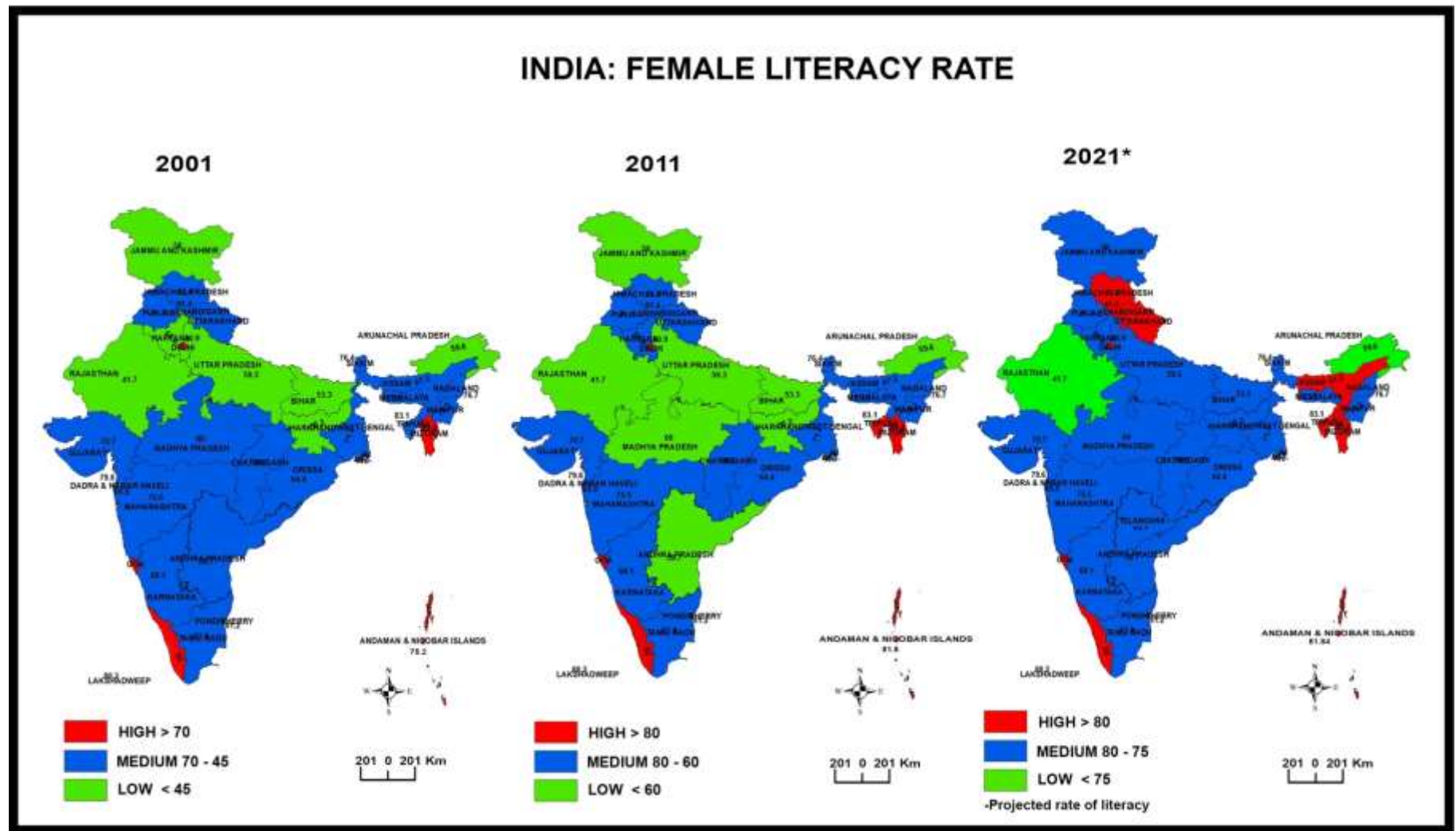


Fig.1

## Conclusion

State wise female literacy rate shows greater variations. Several factors such as regional disparities, gender inequities, and economic development of the states influence the level of female literacy rate. As the literacy rate varies across the country there is greater variation in women empowerment also. Thus, both state and central governments have to implement the better educational policies and the effective measures to improve the literacy rate in the low literacy areas to bridge the spatial disparity in women literacy and their empowerment.

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