

# Social Exclusion of Marginalised Section: A Case Study of Scheduled Castes

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**Abstract:** People generally believe that social exclusion issues are diminishing in the current day, even though difficulties persist in our society in many ways. Individuals are selfish and self-centred by nature. As a result, they mistreat others, which is the primary cause of social marginalization. The process of social exclusion not only impacted them physically but psychological, social, political and in other aspects of life. There are many constitutional provisions, but it failed to defend issues of the marginalized section, which is a very serious matter of concern. As a result, the researcher strives to illustrate the problems marginalized groups face on the ground level, which need to be debated in the academic sphere.

**Key Word:** Social Exclusion; Caste-based Discrimination; Social Stratification; Scheduled Caste; Marginalised Section.

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## I. Introduction

Every society in the world is stratified, and Indian society is no different (Ambewadikar, 2015). It is divided into distinct groups based on diverse beliefs, customs, faiths, etc. In India, the Hindu social system is strictly stratified, with various castes and sub-castes. It is built on the principles of hierarchy and graduated inequity. Injustice, inequality, discrimination, and exclusion are all exacerbated by social stratification and hierarchy. Every society is structured into several hierarchically organized strata and a ranking system. The ranking system is based on superior and inferior groupings, and it has taken into account various historical and cultural changes. In society, superior groups are referred to as the dominant class, while inferior groups are considered marginalized. Social exclusion is a process through which certain people are systematically denied access to rights, opportunities, and resources available to others in the same society (Adra, 2006). It is the act of isolating and marginalizing specific groups of individuals within a society. It takes place in India based on caste, race, religion, gender, and disability. Many marginalized groups in society, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women, endure prejudice in the socio-economic and legal spheres. They are unable to meet their fundamental survival needs. The research primarily focuses on Scheduled Castes in rural regions.

The Indian government has created a reservation policy that focuses on employment and education for the impoverished to alleviate their problems. The primary purpose of today's Indian reservation system is to enhance low-income people's social and educational conditions, hence raising their quality of life (Insights IAS, 2019). The reservation policy has been implemented in India since 1950 to address the country's history of discrimination against groups such as the untouchables. Even members of that target demographic are sometimes ignorant of government measures targeted toward their development.

## II. Review of Literature:

**Bennetts Benjamin (2000)**, in his article on "Rural Social Exclusion", highlighted the long-term problems faced by rural communities up and down the country. The social Exclusion agenda is a rural agenda. It faces a lack of rendering steaming from law awareness of the Problems and the relatively high cost of providing solutions in a rural context. This article suggested that most of the population generally lives in urban and semi-urban areas, and public energy and resources should be channelled to strengthen inner cities. Still, public services also must provide for the needs of the rural area people. **Borooah Vani K.(2010)** published a paper on "Social Exclusion and Jobs Reservation in India, " emphasizing social exclusion in the job sector. He primarily addresses two basic points. First affirmative action regarding the job sector is an excellent attempt to create a

just society, but these reservations are not enough to solve exclusion in the community. In his second point, the Author argues that the education system and illiteracy is the main reason behind this. If Dalits people get good quality of education, they can minimize the sphere of social exclusion respectively.

**Raghunath (2017)**, in his paper on "Socio-Economic conditions of scheduled castes in Haryana", deals with the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes in case of population size, sex ratio, literacy rate, employment rate, poverty and participation in MGNREGA in the state of Haryana. The study assumes that the issues mentioned above increased in Haryana. However, still scheduled cast people are still deprived of some basic and essential needs due to low level of living income, lack of educational opportunities and the participation in MGNREGA has decreased due to poor implementation and delay in payment of wages. The present study suggested the following measures for improving the socio-economic condition of scheduled castes in Haryana. The government should make the necessary efforts to increase literacy rates. Anti-poverty programmes, mainly MGNREGA, should be appropriately implemented for the generation to gainful employment.

**Ambewadikar Jayashree (2017)** published a paper on "Interlinking Discrimination, Poverty and Social exclusion of Scheduled Castes in Rural India: A Literature Review". This paper examines various aspects of the caste-based discrimination against the Scheduled Castes or Dalits in rural areas. It also investigates the practice in the forms of denial of socio, cultural, civil, political and economic rights of the SCs, leading to their poverty and social exclusion from their participation therein. The findings of the article are that both discrimination and poverty have caused the exclusion of scheduled caste people from participation in community life and their access to public facilities and social development. This article has drawn some insights for understanding the concept of discrimination and its relation to poverty and social exclusion. There are several works of literature available on the issues of Social Exclusion, but this paper aims to establish ground level conditions for marginalized groups of people. There are many works of literature which discuss social exclusion and its process, but this paper emphasized the objectives such as:

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To find out the causes of Social Exclusion.
2. To study the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Castes people in the rural area.
3. To identify the problems faced by the Scheduled Caste People.
4. To address the policies and initiatives taken by the government to reduce the problems of Scheduled Castes.

### **III. Material And Methods**

The research method is a systematic plan for conducting research. It is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about the topic.

**Descriptive Research Design:** Descriptive research design describes a topic's events, phenomena, and situations. In this study, descriptive design is used to describe the status of SCs in the social and caste hierarchy, their socio-economic background, family size, income pattern, educational level, and health status and especially describe the forms of discrimination faced by them in the sphere of social, cultural, political and economic.

**Selection of Study Area and Sampling Method:** This study has carried out in the village area of Pattamundai Block of Kendrapara District, Odisha. For the data collection, two types of sampling, viz. purposive sampling and simple random sampling, have been used in this study. One hundred samples have collected for this study.

**Sampling:** Sampling is a subset or smaller portion of a population used to represent the entire group. When a small group is taken as the representative of the whole, the study is called a sampling study.

**Purposive Sampling:** In this sampling method, researchers purposely choose the respondent who can provide information regarding their research topic to achieve the objectives of their study. This study is based on the social exclusion of scheduled caste people, so I have purposively selected the village where Scheduled Caste people are staying.

**Simple random sampling:** It is a method in which the researcher's sampling is based on a simple random process. In this case, each element in the entire population has an equal and independent chance of selection as a sample. Among the 5 SC panchayats, I have selected five villages through a simple random sampling method.

**Sources of Data Collection:** The study is based on primary and secondary data collection sources.

**Primary sources of data collection:** Primary data are collected by the researcher through field study. To study the social exclusion of SCs, data has been collected with the help of interview schedule, interview and observation method.

**Interview Schedule:** The interview Scheduled is a set of questions prepared by the researcher to collect data on a specific topic (social exclusion of SCs). During the field interview, the interviewer asks each respondent specific study questions and fills in the answers at the time of the interview.

**Interview:** An interview is a verbal conversation between two people to collect relevant information for research. A research interview is different from general interviewing concerning its preparation, construction and execution. A research interview is prepared and executed systematically, the researcher controls it to avoid bias and distortion, and it is related to a specific research question and specific purpose.

**Observation:** In this method, data are collected directly or indirectly involving respondents without disturbing their work and action. In this case, the researcher observes or sees the people's situations, behaviour, and problems. In this study, the researcher observed the conditions and behaviour of the SCs and the difficulties faced by them.

**The secondary source of data collection:** Secondary sources of data are collected from the articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, books, and unpublished report

#### IV. Result

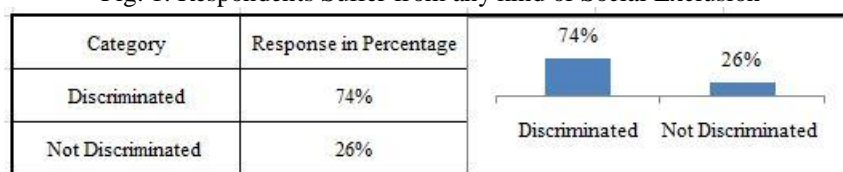
**Table No.1:** Respondent Profile

Education	Percentage		Sub-Caste	Percentage
Illiterate	28%		Kandara	55%
Under Primary	14%		Kaibartya	20%
Under Matric	35%		Dhoba	5%
Matriculation	9%		Gokha	20%
Intermediate	3%			
Bachelor Degree	10%			
Master Degree	1%			
Age group	Percentage		Gender	Percentage
20-30	11%		Male	66%
30-40	26%		Female	34%
40-50	27%			
50-60	18%		Occupation	Percentage
60-70	13%		Teaching	2%
70 >	5%		Asha	1%
			Bussiness	2%
Monthly Income	Percentage		Farmer	32%
Less than 5000	59%		Govt service	3%
5000-10000	36%		Housewife	25%
10000-20000	4%		Labour	33%
Above 20000	1%		Private Job	3%
			Student	1%

Source: Primary Study

The above tables show that most Schedules Caste people are illiterate, and those who are literate can enjoy a good, worthy social status. Still, uneducated and unemployed people don't have any social status. They lose their ability to involve in the decision-making process and another social sphere. More than half of the population doesn't have a pucca house. They have lived in a thatched house. Indira Awas Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna are active, but maladministration and corruption are barriers to getting it quickly. Few Scheduled Caste People have engaged in government services, and an income ceiling of 59% of people have below 5000, which shows how they are marginalized in their society. Social& Economic condition refers to Occupation, Household, Property and those materials things which present conditions of Scheduled caste peoples. In these graphs, we can measure how measurable a situation they have.

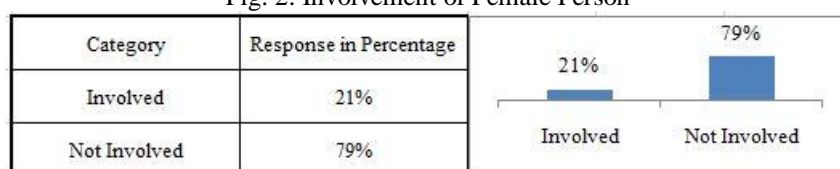
Fig. 1: Respondents Suffer from any kind of Social Exclusion



Source: Primary Study

The above figure represents that majority of the respondents are somehow suffered from the issues of social exclusion, which almost 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the total. Caste is the main reason behind the exclusion. In Pattamundai Block caste system have very strong roots in society. People are excluded from availing equal status in public places, Scheduled Caste Peoples are going through underdevelopment, and their conditions are very marginal compared to other higher class people. The feelings of untouchability are growing among higher class people Dalits.

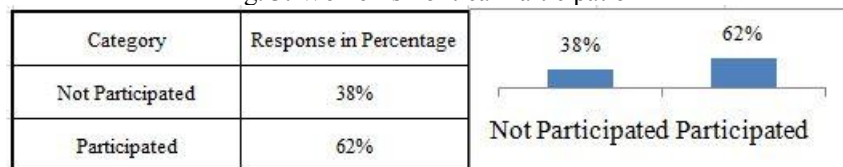
Fig. 2: Involvement of Female Person



Source: Primary Study

Significantly few women have been involved in the decision-making process in these areas. The above table shows that out of 34 respondents, only 21% are involved in the decision-making process, and 79% are not involved in the decision-making process. Due to the patriarchal system, women have no right to take any decision. Male-dominated society did not allow women to participate in the decision-making process.

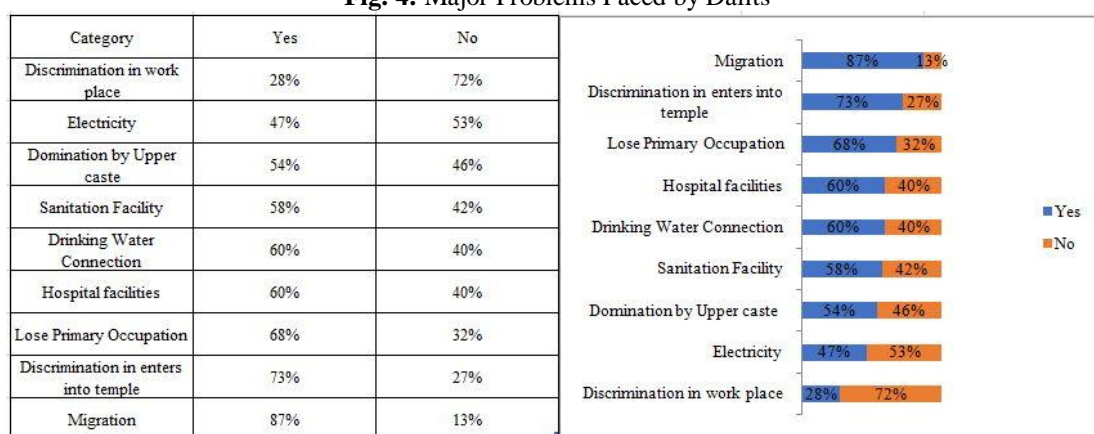
Fig. 3: Women’s Political Participation



Source: Primary Study

The above table shows out of 100 respondents, 62% are participating in political activities, and the rest, 38%, are not participating in political activities. Women are involved in political participation, but they have no right to choose the representatives of their own choice. They are chosen representatives by the selection of male members of the family.

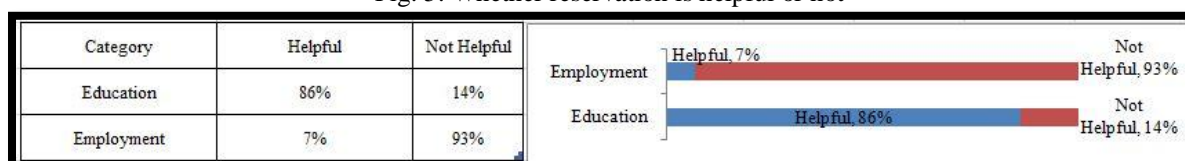
Fig. 4: Major Problems Faced by Dalits



Source: Primary Study

Practically marginalized people face a lot of problems. Some problems have decreased with new ideas about cultural and social relations, but other factors are growing rapidly in the social process. First, due to being born in a lower caste, they have always been treated as inferior or constantly subjected to domination by upper castes. 54% of respondents feel this kind of domination in various places. Discrimination in entering the temple-people have been following the traditional custom that an untouchable cannot enter the temple that we can find in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 73% of respondents said they have still faced discrimination in entering temples in their villages. Discrimination in the workplace has reduced as the modern period has progressed, yet 28% of people have been discriminated against at work because of their caste. Hospital facilities have not available in their locality. Due to the growing market price rate, people have lost their primary occupations like agriculture, fishing, etc. They are migrating from village to town for better work and more wages. In this study, 68% of people have lost their primary occupation, and 87% have migrated. These categories don't get basic facilities like 60% of people don't have their water connection system. Still, they depend on the public water system. Lack of Electricity and sanitation facilities pushed them into poorer to new poor sections. 47% of people don't have electricity connections, and 58% don't have sanitation facilities.

Fig. 5: Whether reservation is helpful or not



Source: Primary Study

In education level reservation and governmental Scheme 86% helpful and working quite correctly. Still, poor students have not taken so much interest in higher study after completing the intermediate level. They like to join any kind of work. Very few students are continuing their studies. In the employment sector, they engaged in the unorganized sector, and very few have been able to join government services. The reservation system is only 7% helpful in the employment sector.

### V. Discussion

Social exclusion occurs based on identities in India, including caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, and disability. According to the valid text of India, society is divided into four varans, or divisions of a group of people based on their birth, such as the chaturvarna, or the division of society into four classes, a hierarchy based on the Brahmins cultivating knowledge, the Kshatriyas bearing arms, the vaishyas trading, and the Shudras serving all three categories (Rani, 2016). The Brahmins pleased the Kshatriyas by allowing the Vaishya to live so that they might live off of him, but the three decided to beat down the Shudras (Pritchett, 1944). He was forbidden from accumulating riches for fear of relying on the three Varnas. He was banned from gaining information to maintain constant vigilance over his interests. He was forbidden from carrying weapons for fear of being able to rebel against their control. The Laws of Manu show that the Shudras were treated in this manner by the Tryavarnikas. Manusmriti described that A Brahman is purified by water that reaches his heart, a

Kshatriya is purified by water that reaches his throat, a Vaishya is purified by the water received into his mouth, and a Shudra is purified by water touched with the extreme (of his lips) (Singh, 2016).

The Shudras could not receive an education due to chaturvarnya. They were unable to comprehend or comprehend the path to their redemption. They were sentenced to be humble, and since they didn't know how to get out and didn't have the resources to get out, they accepted lifelong service as their unavoidable fate. This is capability deprivation, in the word of Adam Smith. In modern India, social exclusion is founded on caste and untouchability. Even today, Indian civilization continues the same Varna system, which divides society into four categories: Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. In this system, Shudra are discriminated (Haseena, 2015). The Shudras are now referred to as **Dalits** in modern Indian society, a Marathi word that means "**broken men**".

Presently, there are 180 million Dalits categorized and classified as scheduled castes in the Indian constitution (Haseena, 2015). However, more than 180 million Dalits are subjected to social, economic, political and cultural exclusion deeply embedded in social practices. Dalits are social and physically separate. Most live outside areas of the village in rural areas and specified areas in cities. They are denied fundamental human rights, not allowed to own property rights, and use public and common property such as Temples, tanks, and wells. When India declared itself a democratic nation after independence, it adopted a written constitution. The practise of untouchability was banned and constituted a criminal offence under Indian constitution articles 17 and 18 and various developmental measures for Dalits. Despite this, social exclusion and discrimination have been practised in one, and the other form of practice still exists in newer forms and strategies. Government policies for the empowerment of Scheduled Castes.

#### **Constitutional Mechanism:**

- Article 17 relates to the abolition of untouchability being practised in our society. The Protection of Civil Rights Act of 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 were passed by Parliament to address the issue of untouchability, which is practised against SCs (Scheduled Castes).
- Article 23 prohibits traffic in human beings and 'beggars' and other similar forms of forced labour. It provides that any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law. Although the SCs are not explicitly mentioned in this article, they account for most bonded labour. As a result, this article has a unique meaning for them. Parliament passed the Bound Labor System (Abolition) Act of 1976 to identify, liberate, and rehabilitate bonded labourers (Nath, 2010).
- Article 24 provides that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. Even in this Article, there is no specific mention of the SCs, but a substantial portion of child labour involved in hazardous employment belongs to SCs.
- Article 25(2)(b) provides that Hindu religious institutions of a public character shall be opened to all classes and sections of Hindus. The term Hindu includes persons professing Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist religions (Purkayastha & Sharma, 2016).
- Articles 23, 24 and 46 form part of the economic safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Article 46 Provides, "The state shall promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- Article 15 (4) Empowers the state to make special provisions to advance any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for SCs. This provision has enabled the state to reserve seats for SCs in educational institutions in general and professional courses etc.
- Article 243D Reservation of seats in every Panchayat for Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes.
- Article 243T Reserving seats in every Municipality for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Article 330 Reservation of seats for SCs & STs in the people's House.
- Article 332 Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

#### **Legal Rights of Dalits:**

Special social enactments have come into force from time to time for SCs to uphold the constitutional mandate and safeguard the interests of Dalits in India. The primary legal enactments at the national level are (i) Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955; (ii) Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Protection of Civil Rights Act of 1955 was enacted to implement Article 17 of the constitution, which prohibits the practice of untouchability in any form (Government of India, 2016).

**Educational Empowerment:**

Various scholarships are available to students from the Scheduled Castes to guarantee that education is not denied owing to their families' financial circumstances. These scholarships are available for both pre-matriculated and post-matriculated students. SC students are also given scholarships to pursue further education in India and overseas, including at prestigious educational institutions (Bopanna, n.d.)

Free coaching is provided for SCs to appear in competitive examinations.

**Economic Empowerment:**

National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation: Set up under the Ministry to finance income-generating activities of Scheduled Castes beneficiaries living below the poverty line.

**National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC):**

Another corporation under the Ministry provides credit facilities to beneficiaries amongst Safai Karamcharis, manual scavengers, and their dependents for income-generating activities for socio-economic development through State Channelizing Agencies VV.

**Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP):**

It is a policy initiative for the development of Scheduled Castes in which 100% assistance is provided as an additive to SCSP of States/UTs based on specific criteria such as SC population, relative backwardness of States/UTs, percentage of SC families in States/UTs covered by composite economic development programmes in the State Plan to enable them to cross the poverty line, and so on. It is an umbrella plan to guarantee that Scheduled Castes receive targeted financial and physical advantages from all general development areas.

**Scheme of Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs):**

The State Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs) receive a 49:51 share capital contribution from the Central Government and the State Governments under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Twenty-seven such State-level Corporations are working for the economic development of Scheduled Castes. At the same time, some of these Corporations also serve the needs of other marginalized groups, such as Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Minorities, etc. SCDCs' primary functions are to identify eligible SC families and motivate them to participate in economic development schemes, to sponsor the schemes to financial institutions for credit support, to provide financial assistance in the form of margin money at a low rate of interest, and to provide subsidies out of funds made available to the States under the Scheme of Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan of the States to reduce the repayment obligation. SCDCs play a crucial role in delivering credit and missing inputs through margin money loans and subsidies to the target population. SCDCs fund employment-oriented programmes in a variety of economic sectors, including agricultural and related activities, including minor irrigation, (ii) small scale industrial, (iii) transportation, and (iv) commerce and service sector.

**Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes:** The Fund aims to encourage entrepreneurship among Scheduled Castes interested in innovation and growth technologies and offer them low-interest loans. On January 16, 2015, the Fund was launched. Initially, Rs.200 crore was allocated to IFCI Limited, a Nodal agency, to execute the Fund in 2014-15.

**Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes:** The objective of this Scheme is to provide a credit guarantee facility to Young and start-up entrepreneurs belonging to Scheduled Castes. They seek to be classified as neo-middle-class to promote entrepreneurship in the lowest strata of society, hence creating jobs and instilling confidence in Scheduled Castes. The Scheme was launched on 06.05.2015. Initially, Rs.200 Crore was released under the Scheme to IFCI Limited, a Nodal agency to implement it.

There are many legal and constitutional provisions for protecting issues of the marginalized group, but the process of social exclusion still affects various spheres of marginalized group people's life.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In Odisha, social exclusion is not a new concept, as we know this concept is too old, like our social system. Since the social system exists, social exclusion is a part of it. Due to the rigid caste system, it's very easy to flee them from the mainstream of society. Social exclusion is grounded in every aspect of human society, but in recent three decades, the concept of exclusion scope wider than in previous decades. In Odisha, the caste system is inheriting nature. Due to the strong practice of the caste system and untouchability, schedule caste (SC) peoples are subjected to alienation from every sphere of our society. In Odisha, untouchability practices in almost every district.

Though there has been some improvement and changes made in some areas, the standard of living of marginalized sections has not improved yet. The central and state governments have launched various schemes and programmes to empower marginalized sections. Still, most of these schemes are not implemented properly due to a lack of active participation of beneficiaries and governments.

## Suggestions

- Gram Sabha meeting is not held regularly in those areas, which is the main problem for unaware people about government policies. So the consistency of Gram Sabha should be needed for their awareness about government schemes, policies and welfare programmes.
- A strong Dalits Community should be required against the domination of the higher class.
- Education is a big weapon, so every parent must promote elementary education to their children for their future.
- Government must take some awareness programmes for marginalized people.

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