



## **The policies for tribal education in India: Need for redraft**

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### **Abstract**

Government planners see education as indispensable for helping tribal peoples cope with national integration. Education will also determine their prosperity, success and security in life. The tribes which remain either deprived of or negligent toward education will suffer the consequence.

Compared with the literacy rates of 29.34% for the general population, literacy among tribal peoples in India is at most 6%. The Union and the state governments have spent considerable sums of money for tribal youths' education, but the results are meagre. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes asserts that unless exploitation among the tribes is combatted and eliminated through education, no improvement in tribal welfare will occur. Within tribal areas, education can be the basis for integrated development.

Government has provided many facilities like SSA, DPEP, MAHILA SAMAKHYA (MS) EXTERNAL WEBSITE THAT OPENS IN A new window, and npegel, SKP, JSS, KGBV'S, CIIL, KVS, NVS and NIOS are implemented for the sake of Tribal Education. Government reports indicate that there is no scarcity of schools, other facilities or scholarships for the implementation of tribal education schemes. Most tribal youth find these incentives unattractive, however. Consequently, the government's dream to assimilate the tribes remains unfulfilled and raises basic questions about the implementation of such policies and strategies.

**Keywords:** SSA, DPEP, MS, NPEGEL, CIIL, KGBV, NVS, NIOS, culture

### **Introduction**

#### **The relation between tribal students and teachers**

Among the various important factors of tribal education that influence integration into the national mainstream of life are the students and their teachers. Tribal students have different backgrounds from their non-tribal schoolmates and even the teachers, who are normally outsiders, do not understand the tribal students. To the teachers, tribal students appear untidy, reinforcing their biases against tribals. These biases are expressed in various forms of discrimination. Tribal youths have complained that teachers did not teach them in the schools because they believed that if they did, the tribal students would no longer be dependent on them. Tribal youths also feel that teachers endeavor to undermine the attitudes toward their own customs, mannerisms, language, or, toward their cultural heritage in general.

During my own student career, I had many experiences which made me feel that I belonged to a primitive, uncultured group whose youth were not worthy of being students. I can still recollect many such incidents vividly from my school and college days. One such incident occurred when I was studying in Nagpur for a graduate degree. An essay entitled "How Many Cultures?" had been prescribed in second year general English in the B.A. course. The author referred to the tribes and their cultures and mentioned the Bhils in passing. One of the students in the class asked the lecturer who the Bhils were. The lecturer showed contempt and said, "a kind of jungly people." The students had a good laugh. One of the students in the class, who knew that I belonged to that tribe,

turned and pointed toward me, saying, "One of them is here." They all laughed louder.

On another occasion, while I was working toward an M.A. in sociology at Indore University, a professor made a reference to the Bhuiya tribe in Orissa during his lecture. One of the girls sitting close to me said insultingly, "One of them is sitting here." I walked out of the lecture hall and for the next fifteen days I did not appear on the college campus. My tribal classmates shared similar experiences with me.

Later, when I began to pursue anthropological research on the tribal cultures, I found that many tribal cultures had positive elements which were absent in mainstream "national" culture. I became aware of tribal groups' proud heritage and started to impart this knowledge to tribal youth in schools and colleges. I accepted myself as a Bhil, spoke Bhili in public places and testified on the radio, in newspapers and at public meetings that I belonged to the Bhil tribe. This helped me come to terms with the inferiority complex the non-tribal teachers and other so-called superior persons such as government officials had implanted in me. Today, I am free of feelings of cultural inferiority because I have analyzed the whole situation and put it in the proper perspective. When I, as an educated Bhil, accepted myself as a tribal person, other tribal individuals began to realize that non-tribal people were continuing to oppress them in various ways.

#### **Tribal festivals, freedom and youth vs. education**

The educational schedule - the school year, daily classes and holidays - is organized with little understanding of

tribal cultures. Tribal festivals and celebrations and the seasonal pursuit of agriculture and gathering are not taken into consideration in planning educational timetables. All too often teachers hold classes as they would in cities or towns, ignoring the daily or seasonal habits of tribal pupils.

### **Educational institutions**

The schools and their surroundings shape the minds of the children who frequent them. Most tribal schools do not blend well into the tribal environment. They are alien and often ugly structures in tribal villages. Shortly after schools are opened, they acquire the look of neglected and dilapidated buildings. Even after tribal youths' educations are completed and they find employment, negative attitudes fostered in the classroom remain a real social hurdle. They do not belong in their tribal culture, nor in the national culture.

### **The medium of instruction**

Some tribes still speak their language. While adult males are often bilingual, the women and children speak tribal dialects almost exclusively. Yet, a tribal child, on entering school, is suddenly expected to understand the state language. Children cannot understand the teacher, let alone answer questions. Many teachers assume that tribal students are slow; even if the teachers are sympathetic, overcoming this language barrier requires a great deal of effort. It would help considerably if tribal pupils were taught, during their first years in school, in their tribal language. They could then be gradually encouraged to learn the regional language.

The Constitution of India, under Article 350A, affirms that every state must provide adequate facilities for instruction of pupils in their mother tongues. Decades have passed and state governments have ignored this prescription for tribal people. Since initial instruction to the tribals is given in a foreign language, they understand and assimilate very little. Consequently, their response to education is poor. Had the instruction at the primary stage been in their own tongue, the progress of tribal students would have been better, and today there would be awareness of the importance of literacy among the tribal populations. Some attempts are being made to educate Gonds, Bhils, Santals, and other groups in their own tongues. According to recent reports, tribal children are responding well to such programs.

### **Content and method of tribal education**

The content and the method of tribal education must be objectively evaluated. Tribal youth have unique historical and social backgrounds but need special attention and orientation in their attempts to bridge two cultures. Many school and college curricula which tribal youths encounter are either irrelevant to them and/or offer only negative views of tribal societies. While national and state governments, in theory, offer many benefits, concessions and facilities to tribal students, few of them reach the intended recipients.

### **Integration of tribal youth in their own culture**

Tribal youth, even while they Study at the secondary and college levels, should, be encouraged not to jettison their own cultures and to remain integrated in their own societies. Once they become culturally and socially alienated, it is impossible for them to protect and lead their

own societies and maintain traditions that may be essential to the viability of tribal cultures. Furthermore, tribal leaders often begin to imitate non-tribal peoples' exploitive tactics, even looking down on their own people. In some cases they treat tribal populations worse than non-tribal populations. Development in tribal societies should focus on educational programs that encourage keeping tribal youth genuinely integrated in their own culture.

### **Education of tribal leaders**

Tribal leadership has been subverted by outside influences and agencies such as the police, the courts and political parties. In the case of political parties, tribal leaders are often manipulated for the block of votes they can deliver rather than encouraged to take the initiative of leading their people to find locally derived solutions to local problems. As a result, village autonomy was destroyed, law and order has deteriorated, and respect for authority was lost. Tribal leaders began to exploit their own people politically, socially and economically.

Tribal students, even while they are receiving their education, must be trained to be dedicated to the service of their own people. They must help to develop their people's inner resolve to resist exploitation and to safeguard their own rights.

### **Commitment in NCMP**

The UPA government has set six basic principles for governance. One of them is "To provide for full equality of opportunity, particularly in education and employment for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, OBCs and religious minorities". Besides, the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the UPA Government contains following provisions aimed at the welfare and empowerment of these communities:

UPA Government will take immediate steps to reverse the trend of communalisation of education that had set in the past five-years. Steps will be taken to remove the communalisation of the school syllabus that has taken place in the past five-years. A review committee of experts will be set up for this purpose. The UPA will ensure that nobody is denied professional education because he or she is poor. All reservation quotas, including those relating to promotions, will be fulfilled in a time bound manner. To codify all reservations, a Reservation Act will be enacted. The UPA Government is very sensitive to the issue of affirmative action, including reservations, in the private sector.

### **Special Provisions**

After independence, the Government of India has taken number of steps to strengthen the educational base of the persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Pursuant to the National Policy on Education-1986 and the Programme of Action (POA)-1992, the following special provisions for SCs and STs have been incorporated in the existing schemes of the Departments of Elementary Education and Literacy and Secondary and Higher education(External website that opens in a new window):relaxed norms for opening of primary/middle schools; a primary school within one km walking distance from habitations of population up to 200 instead of habitations of up to 300 population. Abolition of tuition fee in all States in Government Schools at least up to the upper

primary level. In fact, most of the states have abolished tuition fees for SC/ST students up to the senior secondary level. Incentives like free textbooks, uniforms, stationery, school bags, etc., for these students. The Constitutional (86th Amendment) Bill, notified on 13 December 2002, provides for free and compulsory elementary education as a Fundamental Right, for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

#### **Sarva shiksha abhiyan (ssa)**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (External website that opens in a new window) is a historic stride towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with States. SSA, which promises to change the face of elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010.

Schedule tribes in India are generally considered to be Adivasis, meaning indigenous people of original inhabitants of the country. The tribes have been confined to low status and the country is often physically and socially isolated instead of being absorbed in the mainstream Hindu population. Education was conceived as a means promoting the overall development of the tribes and also adopted as a strategy for mainstreaming them. Education is not an isolated process, not only involves the clientle but also their family, community, teachers etc. In order to identify the factors contributing of otherwise to promotion of education among the tribes, there is a need to take the opinion of all the stakeholders of the educational system i.e., the above groups. Psychologically, the scheduled tribes often experience passive indifference that may take the form of exclusion from educational opportunities. Social participation and access to their own land. All tribal communities are not alike. They are products of different historical and social conditions. However, out of these tribal of india were treated as sub human or forest dweller, which have been deprived of various basic requirements of life. Such condition continued till independence but government of india sketched a new dimension of democracy and gave them every benefit of life as equality, liberty, dignity etc. under the frame of social justice in different articles of Indian constitution. Education refers to the method by which a society attempts to direct and accelerate the learning process of its individuals. For the development of a society there is need for equitable and balanced progress of all the sections of human communities and for this perspective. It is imperative to bring the weaker, deprived and discriminated sections such as Scheduled Tribes in India to the forefront of educational revolution and mainstream of national development. In spite of efforts made by the constitution, the position of tribal education is still poor in India. Poverty, the changing economy and lack of knowledge affect the educational development among the tribes. They are not aware of the educational facilities and the function and value of education.

Education imparts knowledge, and knowledge of self identity and human environment will infuse a sense of confidence, courage and ability among the weaker sections of the society to know and overcome their problems associated with exploitation and deprivation, and avail

socio-economic and political opportunities extended to them. Although there is a significant increase in the literacy of population of all categories in india, the tribes are far behind from the national increase. The attitude of teachers towards the tribal students is not healthy. The medium of instruction is not in their mother-tongues, the matter in the textbooks has no relevance to their culture and needs, as they have rich oral tradition they are sensitive to print. They are basically not interested in education so they have low motivation and aspirations. All these lead to educational deprivation among the tribes. Despite special initiatives on tribal education by the government, since independence, the achievement is not as per expectations and the problem of tribal education is still a matter of concern. Tribal education, being a distinct discipline with different socio-cultural fabrics and hardships, needs to be analysed to focus on the problems associated with it. Hence educational programmes could not make much progress due to their ignorance and illiteracy. So educational programmes could not make much progress against their background of economy and society.

#### **Social inclusion & exclusion in tribal education**

The present millennium is witnessing phenomenal global changes and no nation can isolate itself from this process. The desirability of globalization have now given way to the growing reorganization that this process is not just reversible with a continuous free flow of information, investment capital, human capital, opportunities, goods and services between countries. Parallel to emergence and spread of globalization there has occurred fast transformation of societies into 'knowledge societies'. Acknowledging this, 21<sup>st</sup> century has been described as 'knowledge century Era' in which knowledge will be the resource and knowledge workers will be the dominant force. In the process of global changes and development our country has achieved success in various fields like industrialization, urbanization, modernization, communication, science, technology etc. With the result of these phenomenal changes education are also expanding at every corner in India. After independence, the country has become more conscious to educate our backward communities. Therefore various educational schemes and programmes have been introduced to attain higher level of education and to enhance awareness for achieving socio-economic development. The scheduled Tribes, one of the major segments of marginalised section of Indian society are still lagging behind in all stages of education and completely excluded from the mainstream society. Despite constant efforts by both Central and State Governments to spread the education of scheduled tribes, the level of education of S.T's is very low in comparison to other communities. Improve the quality of education for tribals to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation in developmental processes.

#### **Education facilities for tribal societies:**

Literacy is an important and primary index of Human Development. Literacy as an indicator of socio-economic status is highly essential for the economic development as well as social development of scheduled tribes. According to Article-46 of the Indian constitution, special emphasis is laid on the educational development of tribals. Education refers to the method by which a society attempts to direct

and accelerate the learning process of its individuals. For the development of a society there is need for equitable and balanced progress of all the sections of human communities and for this perspective, it is imperative to bring the weaker, deprived and discriminated sections such as Scheduled Tribes in India. As most of their education is informal, the tribes find the formal type of education disinteresting. Poverty, the changing economy and lack of knowledge effect the educational development among the tribes. They are not aware of the educational facilities and the function and value of education. Education imparts knowledge, and knowledge of self identity and human environment will infuse a sense of confidence, courage and ability among the weaker sections of the society to know and overcome their problems associated with exploitation and deprivation, and avail socio-economic and political opportunities extended to them. Although there is a significant increase in the literacy of population of all categories in India, the Tribals are far behind from the national increase. Despite special initiatives on tribal education by the government, since independence, the achievement is not as per expectations and the problem of tribal education is still a matter of concern. Tribal education, being a distinct discipline with different socio-cultural fabrics and hardships, needs to be analyzed to focus on the problems associated with it. Hence educational programmes could not make much progress due to their ignorance and illiteracy. So education among the tribes should be viewed against their background of economy and society.

**Literacy amongst schedule tribal groups in India**

**Table 1**

S.No	Year	Male %	Female %	Total %
1	1961	13.84	3.19	8.54
2	1971	17.64	4.88	11.43
3	1981	24.53	8.03	16.46
4	1991	40.68	18.22	29.67
5	2001	58.98	34.79	47.19
6	2011	69.01	49.37	58.99

Source: 2011 Census,

Since independence there is an increase in the tribal literacy but not as per the national average. According to 2011 census, the total literacy rate among tribals( excluding children aged 0-6 years) in India is 59% where it is 74% at the national level. Literacy rate in tribals is lower than the national average. And on the basis of male and female percentages, the male account 69% and 49.37% among females. There is literacy gap of 19.3% between males and females and it is higher in rural area (19.9%) as compared to the urban areas (12.9%). Overall literacy rate among tribal is the highest in Lakshadweep (91.7%) and lowest in Andhra Pradesh (49.2%).

**Dropout rates in school education in india at three levels (%)**

**Table 2**

S.No	Level	Boys	Girls	Total
1	I-V	37.2	33.9	35.6
2	I-VII	54.2	55.4	71.3
3	I-X	70.6	55	70.9

Source: 2011 Census,

Above table shows that the dropout rate among Boys in I-V is 37.2%, I-VII is 54.7%, and I-X is 70.6% which is very high when compare to girls. The total dropout rate I-VII is 71.3% which are very high. According to 2011 census, the total dropout rate among tribes in India Very higher than the National average.

**Barriers in tribal education:**

Despite all these, the rate of literacy, gross Enrolment Ratio and Dropout rate amongst Scheduled tribes population continue to remain a serious cause of concern. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been an increase in the literacy rates of STs since independence, the present position is still far from satisfactory. The female literacy rate has very low. Some of the major hurdles of tribal education are discussed below:

- Teachers absenteeism
- Heavy dropouts.
- School is not an attractive place
- Language obstruction.
- Poverty and backwardness.
- School is at a distance place.
- Lack of awareness of parents.
- Lack of vocational education.
- Social discrimination and exploitation.
- Constitutional Safeguards for STs Education:

Education is also protected by human rights declaration but results regarding tribal education are not very encouraging. Education is the foundation for any kind of socio-economic development. Education of scheduled Tribes assumes added importance in the sense that it elevates their social status and equips them with the acumen to take advantage of the emerging opportunities both in employment and other economic activities. The founding fathers of the constitution, were actually aware of the iniquitous forces embedded in the social systems, economic institutions and political organizations in India in relation to the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society. Article 15 (4), Article 21-A, Article 41, Article 46, Article 51-A and A host of articles (Article 332, 335, and 338 to 342) and the entire Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the constitution deal with promotion of education and economic interests of these sections and to protect them from all forms of social and economic exploitation. Government at the National and State levels have been implementing a number of programmes for Education.

- Post-metric scholarship of students
- Provision of free school uniform and textbooks.
- Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan area.
- Establishment of Residential Schools and Hostels.
- Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF) Scheme.
- Relaxation in the minimum qualifying marks for admission for SC/ST candidates.
- National Eligibility Test (NET) remedial coaching conducted by UGC/ CSIR.
- Some of the significant programmes initiated by Government in this direction have been explained below:

**District Primary Education Programme (Dpep)**

The thrust of the scheme is on disadvantaged groups like girls, SCs/STs, working children, urban deprived children,

disabled children, etc. There are specific strategies for girls and SCs/STs; however, physical targets are fixed, in an integrated manner including coverage of these groups as well. According to a study by NIEPA, schools in DPEP districts had more than 60 per cent students belonging to SC/ST communities

#### **Mahila Samakhya (Ms) External Website That Opens In A New Window**

MS addresses traditional gender imbalances in educational access and achievement. This involves enabling women (especially from socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalised groups) to address and deal with problems of isolation and lack of self-confidence, oppressive social customs and struggle for survival, all of which inhibit their empowerment.

#### **National programme for education of girls at elementary level (Npegel) (File referring to external site opens in a new window)**

The NPEGEL under the existing scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (External website that opens in a new window) provides additional components for education of girls under privileged/ disadvantaged at the elementary level. The Scheme is being implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average, as well as in blocks of districts that have at least 5 per cent SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10 per cent based on 1991.

#### **Shiksha karmi project (SKP)**

SKP aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid and socio-economically backward villages in Rajasthan with primary attention to girls. It is noteworthy that in ShikshaKarmi Schools, most of the students are from SCs, STs and OBCs.

#### **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (External Website That Opens In A New Window)**

Under the scheme of Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayas(External website that opens in a new window), 750 residential schools are being set up in difficult areas with boarding facilities at elementary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities. The scheme would be applicable only in those identified Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where, as per census data 2001, the rural female literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is more than the national average. Among these blocks, schools may be set up in areas with concentration of tribal population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school.

#### **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (Jss)- External Website That Opens In A New Window**

The Scheme of JSS(External website that opens in a new window) or Institute of People's Education is a polyvalent or multifaceted adult education programme aimed at improving the vocational skill and quality of life of the beneficiaries. The objective of the scheme is education, vocational and occupational development of the socio-economically backward and educationally disadvantaged

groups of urban/rural population particularly neo-literates, semi-illiterates, SCs, STs, women and girls, slum dwellers, migrant workers, etc.Literacy campaigns have had an enormous impact on other social sectors. The campaigns have served the cause of promoting equity and social justice in society and fostering of a scientific temper and a sense of belonging to India's great composite culture and consciousness of unity in diversity.

#### **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (External Website That Opens In A New Window)**

The Mid-Day Meal scheme(External website that opens in a new window) is a successful incentive programme. It covers all students of primary classes in all government, local body and government aided schools in the country with the aim to improve enrolment, attendance and retention while simultaneously impacting on the nutritional status of the children.

#### **Central institute of Indian languages (Ciil)**

External Website That Opens In A New Window The Central Institute of Indian Languages(External website that opens in a new window), Mysore has a scheme of development of Indian Languages through research, developing manpower and production of materials in modern Indian Languages including tribal languages. The Institute has worked in more than 90 tribal and border languages.

#### **Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVS)**

External Website That Opens In A Newwindow15 per cent and 7.5 per cent seats are reserved for SCs and STs respectively in fresh admissions. No tuition fee is charged from scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students up to class XII.

#### **Navodaya Vidyalaya (NVS)**

External Website That Opens In A Newwindow Reservation of seats in favour of children belonging to SCs and STs is provided in proportion to their population in the concerned district provided that no such reservation will be less than the national average of 22.5 per cent (15 per cent for SCs and 7.50 per cent for STs) and a maximum of 50 per cent for both the categories (SCs & STs) taken together. These reservations are interchangeable and over and above the students selected under open merit.

#### **National institute of open schooling (NIOS)**

External Website That Opens In A New Window Concession in fee to SC/ST candidates The SC/ST students are given concession in admission fees to the extent of Rs.450/- for Secondary Courses and Rs.525/- for Senior Secondary Courses. Under the Scheme of strengthening of Boarding and Hostel Facilities for Girls Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools cent percent financial assistance is given to Voluntary Organisations to improve enrolment of adolescent girls belonging to rural areas and weaker sections. Preference is given to educationally backward districts particularly those predominately inhabited by SCs/STs and educationally backward minorities. Out of 43,000 scholarships at the secondary stage for talented children from rural areas 13,000 scholarships are awarded to SC/ST students subject to fulfillment of criteria laid down.

### **National Council For Educational Research And Training (Ncert)-**

External Website That Opens In A New Window NCERT (External website that opens in a new window) focuses on the development of textbooks, teacher guides, supplementary reading materials, evaluation of textbooks, vocational education, educational technology, examination reforms, support to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)(External website that opens in a new window), education of educationally disadvantaged groups.

NCERT (External website that opens in a new window) operates the National Talent Search Scheme for pursuing courses in science and social science up to doctoral level and in professional courses like medicine and engineering up to second-degree level subject to fulfillment of the conditions. Out of 1000 scholarships, 150 scholarships are reserved for SC students and 75 scholarships for ST students.

### **National institute of Educational Planning And Administration (Niepa)**

External Website That Opens In A New Window Educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is an area of major concern of NIEPA(External website that opens in a new window). It carries out a number of studies relating to educational programmes and schemes for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It has also been generating material relating to educational institutions and development of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students.

### **University grants commission (UGC)**

External Website That Opens In A New Window UGC(External website that opens in a new window) provides financial assistance to universities/deemed universities for the establishment of SC/ST cells in Universities to ensure effective implementation of reservation policy for SCs and STs. The UGC has established SC/ST Cells in 113 Universities including Central Universities to ensure proper implementation of the reservation policy. The Standing Committee on SCs/STs monitors and reviews the work undertaken by the universities/colleges.

### **Improve the Tribal education**

1. Reduction of Dropouts
2. Skill Development programmes.
3. Growing consciousness.
4. Capacity Building Programmes for Teachers.

### **Conclusion**

Ministry of Human resource Development remarked that three issues. "One is the issue of access, which means the expansion. Second is the issue of equality, which means the inclusion. And third is the issue of quality, which means excellence. I think i am going to combine all three to take this country forward". Truly the future roadmap of tribal education has to follow these three issues.this dimension important as too many students from due to their low background and other barriers. These disparities foster alienation among them. India is actively pushing forward with its agenda for revamping and restructuring education. To move towards a new century of growth and innovation, we need overall progress on all fronts.education policies

should be redrafted with the context specific to enhance access and remove barriers. In this circumstances the introduction of Right to Education Bill is a significant catalyst. We need mindsets with innovative and practical ideas to make delivery of services easier and to create opportunities where they did'nt exist.

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