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**DISTRIBUTION OF LANDHOLDINGS AMONG SCHEDULE CASTE AND SCHEDULE TRIBES IN  
THE STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the distribution of landholding in general and schedule and schedule tribes in particular in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Data was collected from statistical abstracts, various issues of Report on SC and ST Land Holdings, Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Hyderabad and agriculture census in India and NSSO Report. The present study shows that even after 60 years of planned initiatives and policy measures, there have not been substantial improvement in the landholding status of scheduled groups in the state of Andhra Pradesh, it has declined further. Finally, the study finds that the average size of area of each landholding for scheduled caste decline from 1.19 hectares to 0.41 registered during the same period, for the marginal holdings it showed same trend in this period, for the small holdings it declined from 1.45 to .38, form semi-medium landholder it declined from 2.69 to 2.51, for medium landholders it declined from 6.21 to 5.36, for large landholder it declined from 15.62 to 14.76. On the other hand, scheduled tribes, during same period also shows the similar situation in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Land is the vital factor that forms the basis for economic activity and it is the crucial natural resource that produces food and non-food products, if used properly, and thereby serves as a resource to generate incomes to the people, more specifically, rural population in agriculture dominated economics. The productivity of land serves as the engines of economic growth and the ownership of this asset determines the level of social equality and inequality in the society. During the British rule land was considered as the essential resource and hence land revenue formed the major source of income to the exchequer. Perhaps, for this reason marginal and small farmers and tenants were exploited by the rulers and a middle man's associated with the collection of land revenue. Ownership of land formed the basis for the classification of the social groups into Zamindars, Mahalwars and Ryots who experienced class struggle among them. Skewed distribution of land especially in India is important because of its association with the caste system. Land is concentrated mostly in the hands of the upper caste and the dominant peasants castes to the exclusions of scheduled caste. Thus there are two district categories of castes in India, those who own land and

those who do not own any significant amount of land and hence the farmers enjoying higher status over the latter. The concentration of ownership holdings in a small number of households who own 80 per cent of cultivating area, left three-fourth of the total rural households economics poor and weak. To reduce inequalities land reforms have been attempted in India. But the most vulnerable sections in agriculture like the landless labour and small tenets did not gain anything and concentration, of land holding in few hands persists. In this contest this paper examines the distribution of landholding in general and schedule and schedule tribes in particular in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In the case of Andhra Pradesh several land legislations have been made to augment the production and to reduce the inequalities in the distribution of land. The following are the most important of them;

- i. Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Area) Estates Land (Reduction of Rent) Act, 1947: The major objective of this Act was to provide for reduction of rents payable to ryots in Estates approximate to the level of assessment levied on lands in Ryotwari area in the neighborhood.
- ii. The Madras Estate (Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari) Act, 1948: It provided for the repeal of the permanent settlement, the acquisition of the rights of land – holders in permanently settled and

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certain other estates in the province of Andhra and the introduction of the Ryotwari settlement in such estates. "Estate" means a Zamindari or under-tenure or an Inam Estate. This act extends to the whole state of Andhra.

- iii. The Andhra Pradesh (Telangana Area) Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950. The major objectives of this Act are (i) to regulate the relations of landlords and tenants of agricultural lands (2) to regulate alienations of land (3) to prevent excessive sub-division of agricultural holdings (4) to provide for the legislation of co-operative farm and (5) to empower Government to assume in certain circumstances management of agricultural lands.
- iv. Andhra Inams (Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari) Act, 1956 to abolish and convert certain Inam lands into Ryotwari lands. It extends to the whole of the state of Andhra but applies only to Inam lands.
- v. Andhra Tenancy Act of 1956 provides for the payment of fair rent by cultivating tenants and for fixing the minimum period of agricultural leases in the State
- vi. The Andhra Pradesh ceiling on Agricultural Holdings Act, 1961 provides for the imposition of ceiling on agricultural holdings ranging from 27 acres to 324 acres depending upon the class of land.
- vii. The Andhra Pradesh Land Reform (ceiling on Agricultural Holdings) Act, 1972, which provides for a ceiling area of one standard holding ranging from 4.05 hectares (10 acres) to 10.93 hectares (about 27 acres) in the case of wetland and from 14-16 hectares (35 acres) to 21-85 hectares (54 acres) in case of dry land.

Despite the enforcement of these land legislations, it is interesting to state the concentration of land in the few households persists in Andhra Pradesh.

### Land Utilisation Pattern in Andhra Pradesh

The nature and the magnitude of economic activities mainly depend upon the quantum of land resources and manner in which these are used. Given the limited area of land, it has to be utilized such a way that it maximizes the current return from it and does not damage its potentialities for yielding better returns in future years. In a developing economy, like ours, the management of land in an efficient way assumes greater importance to feed the growing population and to strengthen the economy as whole. Therefore, people, particularly in developing countries should use the available limited land resources in a better or planned manner. The economics of land use are concerned with the major uses of land such as crop production, grazing, forestry, constructing the roads, houses and other economic purposes and particularly with the factors, which determine each use and the shift from one use to another. Land, one of the basic resources in the agricultural production process has turned out to be a limiting factor. For instance, the planning commission predicted that the arable land of the country would remain stagnant at 141 million hectares. In fact, the annual growth rate of net sown area (NSA) has sharply declined in recent decades and attained almost zero growth rates in 2004-05<sup>1</sup>. This saturation on the extensive use of land frontier, and rising population pressure on land imply the cropping pattern shifts. The farmers are thus forced to choose better profitable crops

than the traditional crops in the changing scenario. Before we examine the cropping pattern changes, it is good to observe the land utilization pattern in our country region wise. Table 1 presents the land utilization pattern of Andhra Pradesh during 1970-71 to 2007-08. The geographical area of Andhra Pradesh is 274.40 lakh hectares. The data on land use characteristics reveals that significant changes in the land utilization have taken place over a period of time. It is very much evident from the table that forest area has significantly declined in 1970-71 and then registered a rise in 2007-08. The area under cultivable waste has declined from 11.16 lakh hectares in 1970-71 to 6.94 lakh hectares in 2008-09 and its share in total geographical area has declined from 3.8 percent to 2.5 percent during the same period.

**Table 1. Land Utilization Pattern in Andhra Pradesh**

Category	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2008-09
Forests	62.34 (23)	62.13 (22.6)	62.68 (22.8)	61.99 (22.6)	61.99 (22.6)
Barren and uncultivable land	21.01 (8.4)	23.40 (8.5)	20.96 (7.6)	21.00 (7.7)	20.84 (7.6)
Land put to non-agriculture uses	21.22 (7.6)	21.68 (7.9)	23.07 (8.4)	25.19 (9.2)	26.08 (9.5)
Cultivable waste	11.16 (3.8)	8.71 (3.2)	7.80 (2.8)	7.28 (2.7)	6.94 (2.5)
Permanent pastures and other grazing land	10.79 (3.7)	9.28 (3.4)	8.43 (3.1)	6.75 (2.5)	6.76 (2.5)
Miscellaneous tree crops and groves not included in net sown area	2.97 (1.0)	2.69 (1.0)	2.62 (1.0)	2.69 (0.9)	2.78 (1.0)
Current fallows	17.71 (8.5)	25.63 (9.3)	24.85 (9.1)	23.12 (8.4)	28.19 (10.3)
Other fallow lands	8.83 (3.11)	13.51 (4.9)	13.77 (5.0)	14.17 (5.1)	16.51 (6.0)
Net sown area	117.34 (4.07)	107.38 (39.2)	110.22 (40.2)	112.20 (40.9)	104.31 (38.0)
Total geographical area	274.42 (100)	274.40 (100)	274.40 (100)	274.40 (100)	274.40 (100)
Gross sown area	133.47 (48.6)	122.82 (44.8)	131.93 (48.1)	135.45 (49.4)	125.18 (45.6)
Area sown more than once	16.27 (5.9)	15.44 (5.6)	21.71 (7.9)	24.31 (8.9)	21.91 (8.0)

Source: Statistical Abstract of Andhra Pradesh, 1970-71 to 2008-09.

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages of total geographical area.

Current fallow land area gone up from 17.71 lakh hectares in 1970-71 to 25.63 lakh hectares in 1980-81, after wards it has significantly declined up to 2000-01 and again it increased in the following years and reached to 28.19 lakh hectares in 2008-09. And its share in total geographical area has increased from 8.5 percent to 10.3 percent during 1970-71 to 2008-09. The area under other fallow land (the land, which kept under fallow for more than one year) also registered an increasing tendency during the study period. This reveals that due to low rainfall in Andhra Pradesh, since several years the farmers are unable to cultivate their lands. The land put to non-agricultural uses, mainly for construction of houses, establishing industries, etc. which has been monastically increasing<sup>2</sup>. Its share in total geographical area also increased from 7.6 percent in 1970-71 to 9.5 percent in 2008-09. It is quite natural that the land put to non-agricultural uses has increased with the steep rise in population vis-à-vis urbanization. There is enough evidence in support of large scale conversion of agricultural lands or any other type of land into non-agricultural lands<sup>2</sup>. Interestingly net sown area also has registered a decreasing tendency and during all the periods' area under this category was decreasing, except in 1990-01 and 2000-01.

### Distribution of Land Holdings in A.P

Having looked into the Land Utilization Pattern in Andhra Pradesh, now we will try to look into the distribution pattern of landholding. The data on landholdings is available from three sources, viz., (i) National Sample Survey (NSS), (ii) Census of India and (iii) Agricultural Census. The NSS reports furnish data on (a) Household Ownership Holdings (HOH), (b) Household Operational Holdings (HOPH) and (c) Operational Holdings (OH). These data are available at state level in each state but not at district level<sup>3</sup>. The Table 3.2 projects the marginal holdings, which constitute 46.6 percent of total operational holdings but control only 9.3 percent of total operated area in 1976-77. Smallholdings constitute 20.3 percent of total holdings but control 12.8 percent of total operated area. Marginal and small together constitute nearly 67 percent of total holdings but control only 22 percent of operated area in 1976-77. On the other hand, medium and large holdings together constitute about 15 percent of total operational holdings but control more than 56 percent of total operated area during the same period. This indicates that the distribution of land was skewed in 1976-77. By 2000-01, there was a tremendous increase in the number of marginal holdings.

holdings declined the area under their control has not declined proportionately. On the other hand, number of marginal holdings has increased from 46.6 percent to 60.9 percent but the operated area under their control has increased to only 21 percent of total operated area in 2000-01. By the 2005-06, there was a tremendous increase in number of marginal and small and both together constitute 83.5 per cent of total holdings but control 48.5 per cent of operated area. On the other hand, medium and large constitute about 4.05 per cent of holdings but control 25.1 per cent of operated area in 2006. Gini coefficients for operational holdings (rural) at Andhra Pradesh level by NSSO is presented in the table 3.3. As per NSSO, Gini coefficient ratios slightly decreased from 0.603 to 0.599 in 1970-71 to 1981-82 and further decreased to 0.543 in 2002-03 in case of operational holdings. The land distribution is still skewed substantially. The marginal farmers, who constitute very large percentage in number, possess very little cultivated land. Nevertheless, the large farmers, who constitute very small percentage in the number, control more percentage of land. The large farmers respond quickly to the increases in prices of agricultural commodities, as they fetch higher profits for them; moreover, they cultivate those crops, which have high export potential. However, the marginal and small farmers with very little produce at their disposal have to buy

**Table 2. The Distribution of Operational Landholdings in Andhra Pradesh during 1970-2010**

years	Size of Operational Holdings									
	Marginal		Small		Semi-medium		Medium		Large	
	Nos	Area	Nos	Area	Nos	Area	Nos	Area	Nos	Area
1970-71	46	8	18.5	11.3	17.4	19.2	12.7	30.8	4.3	30.7
1976-77	46.6	9.3	20.3	12.8	17.4	20.8	12.2	32.3	3.4	24.8
1980-81	51.6	13.1	21.6	16.8	16	22.7	8.8	27.8	2.1	19.5
1985-86	54.1	14.5	20.8	17.3	15.2	23.9	7.98	27.2	1.77	16.9
1990-91	56.1	16.4	21.2	19.5	14.5	25.2	6.93	26.1	1.27	12.8
2000-01	60.9	21.6	21.8	24.7	12.3	26.4	4.4	19.9	0.6	7.5
2005-06	61.6	22.7	21.9	25.8	12	26.5	4	19	0.5	6.1
2010-11	63.94	26.08	22.15	28.82	10.62	25.78	3.02	15.45	0.27	3.87

**Source:** 1. Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Hyderabad.

**Note:** 1. Marginal – 0 to 1 hectare; Small – 1 to 2 hectares; Semi-medium – 2 to 4 hectare; Medium – 4 to 10 hectare; and Large – 10 and above hectare; 2. Agricultural Census, 2011.

**Table 3. Gini-coefficient of Operational in Andhra Pradesh**

Year	Operational holdings*
1970 - 1971	0.603
1980 - 1981	0.599
1990 - 1991	0.576
2002 - 2003	0.543

**Source:** 1. Report on Some Aspects of Operational Holding; 1970- 71, 26<sup>th</sup> Round NSSO Report No.215.

2. Report on Some Aspects of Operational Holding;

1980- 81, 37<sup>th</sup> Round NSSO Report No.331.

3. Report on Some Aspects of Operational Holding;

1991- 92, 48<sup>th</sup> Round, NSSO Report No-407.

4. Report on Some Aspects of Operational Holding;

2002- 03, 59<sup>th</sup> round NSSO Report No-492.

Their percentage share in total holdings increased to about 61 percent but area operated under their control has increased to only 21.6 percent of total operated area. On the other hand, the number of medium and large holdings has declined to 5.7 percent of total operational holdings but controlled nearly 28 percent of total area. If we take large holdings, alone their share is only 0.6 percent of total holdings but controlled nearly 8 percent of total operated area in 2000-01. This clearly indicates that although the number of medium and large

the food grains from the market<sup>4</sup>. They cannot respond as quickly as large farmers' to policy changes. Thus, the size of the land is also an important factor, which influences the changes in cropping pattern. From the above analysis, it may be concluded that in Andhra Pradesh, net sown area has been declining and on other hand, the land distribution has been skewed. These two factors have strong influencing impact on farmers' choice regarding crops and which ultimately reflects in the cropping pattern changes.

### Distributions Landholding among Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribe

Andhra Pradesh has a sizeable Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. According to census The Scheduled Caste population in 1991 was 10.6 million constituting 15.9 percent of the total population of the state. The Scheduled Tribe population was 4.2 million constituting 6.3 percent of the total population. While the Scheduled Castes are distributed throughout the state, the Scheduled Tribes are concentrated in the hilly and forest areas of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad districts and the Nallamala forest. As

per census 2001 figures indicate an increase both in number and percentage of SC and ST in Andhra Pradesh. In 2001, there were about 12.3 and 5 million SC and ST comprising 16.2 and 6.6 percent of the total population in Andhra Pradesh. The percentage of SC in the population was marginally lower while ST population was nearly 2 percentage points lower in A.P. as compared to all-India. Now let us see the changes in landholding distribution among scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in Andhra Pradesh.

**Table 4. Percentage distribution of operational holdings and operated area different social groups in Andhra Pradesh**

Years		Category			Total
		S.C	S.T	Others	
1976-77	Nos	13.4	6.3	80.3	100
	Area	6.9	6.2	86.9	100
1980-81	Nos	12.6	6.4	81	100
	Area	6.9	6.3	86.8	100
1990-91	Nos	12.73	6.88	80.39	100
	Area	7.48	7.23	85.29	100
1995-96	Nos	12.12	7.11	80.77	100
	Area	7.42	7.56	85.02	100
2000-01	Nos	11.85	7.47	80.66	100
	Area	7.86	8.23	83.91	100
2005-06	Nos	11.8	7.69	80.49	100
	Area	7.84	8.36	83.8	100

Source: 1. Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings  
2. Agricultural census, 2011

Table 4 explains the operational holdings and area operated by different groups since 1976- 77 to 2010-11 in Andhra Pradesh. In 1976-77 SC households constituted about 13.4 per cent of total holdings but control only 6.9 per cent of the area, while others constitute about 80.3 per cent of total holdings but control 87 per cent of total operated area. By 2000- 01 the percentage of SC holdings declined to about 11.85 per cent and their controlling area share slightly increased to 7.86 per cent. While the percentage of others’ holdings retains the same i.e. 80.7 per cent and their operated area share slightly declined to 84 per cent of total operated area. In 1976-77, ST operational holdings constitute 6.3 per cent of total holdings and control 6.2 per cent of total operated area. By 2000-01 their holdings increased to more than 7 per cent while their share in area also increased to 8.23per cent. During 2005-06, it shows both increasing trend, in terms of operational holding and operated area.

**Table 5. Percentage distribution of operational holdings and area operated by scheduled castes in Andhra Pradesh**

Years		Different Size group					All groups
		Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	
1976-77	Nos	64.8	19	11.5	4.1	0.6	100
	Area	22.3	23.1	26	21.5	7.1	100
1980-81	Nos	67.7	18.9	10.2	2.9	0.3	100
	Area	27.6	26.2	25.2	15.2	5.5	100
1990-91	Nos	70.67	18.43	8.7	2.03	0.17	100
	Area	31.98	28.28	24.4	12.38	2.96	100
1995-96	Nos	73.46	17.75	7.39	1.32	0.08	100
	Area	37.15	29.74	22.51	8.82	1.78	100
2000-01	Nos	73.84	17.64	6.98	1.42	0.12	100
	Area	36.45	29.53	21.33	9.36	3.33	100
2005-06	Nos	74.59	17.42	6.63	1.27	0.09	100
	Area	38.32	30.21	20.9	8.64	1.93	100
20010-11	Nos	76.2	17	5.74	0.99	0.06	100
	Area	41.44	31.1	19.03	7.04	1.38	100

Source: 1. Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.  
2. Agricultural census, 2011

The Percentage distribution of operational holdings and area operated by scheduled castes in Andhra Pradesh is presented

Table 5. From above table 5 it is noted that, most of the SC are small or marginal farmers. In 1976-77 marginal and smallholdings of SCs constituted 83 per cent (control nearly 46 per cent of total operated area of SCs) of total holdings and their percentage tremendously increased to about 91.5per cent (control nearly 66 per cent of total operated area of SCs) in 2000-01, on the other hand medium and large holdings declined from 4.7per cent (control nearly 29 per cent of total operated area of SC) to 1.4 per cent (control nearly 12 per cent of total operated area of SC). In 2010-11, both marginal and small together accounted for 93.2 per cent of operational holding only their control 72.54 per cent of operated area. On the other hand, both medium and large together accounted for 1.05 per cent of operational holding only their control 8.43 per cent of operated area.

**Table 6. Average size of the holdings operated by scheduled castes (in hectares)**

Years	Size groups					All groups
	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	
1976-77	0.41	1.45	2.69	6.21	14.65	1.19
1980-81	0.43	1.46	2.62	5.66	16.48	1.06
1986-87	0.41	1.4	2.56	5.59	14.41	0.95
1990-91	0.41	1.4	2.56	5.58	16	0.91
1995-96	0.42	1.39	2.53	5.53	19	0.83
2000-01	0.41	1.39	2.54	5.47	21.88	0.83
2005-06	0.41	1.38	2.52	5.44	16.49	0.8
2010-11	0.41	1.38	2.51	5.36	16.5	0.41

Source: 1. Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.  
2. Agricultural census, 2011

Table 6 presents average size of the holdings operated by scheduled castes during 1976-77 to 2010-11. Among the all categories of average size land holdings in Andhra Pradesh shows that marginal, small and semi- medium size of holds continued same trend between all periods. On the other hand, medium farmers average size of holdings, it shows the decreasing trend from 6.21 per cent in 1976-77 to 5.37 per cent in 2010-11 and large farmers average size of holding it shows the there is increasing trend from 14.65 in 1976-77 to 16.5 per cent in 2010-11.

**Table 7. Average size of the holdings operated by scheduled tribes (in hectares)**

Years	Size groups					All groups
	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	
1976-77	0.52	1.47	2.62	5.82	15.62	2.33
1980-81	0.51	1.42	2.65	5.77	14.49	1.91
1986-87	0.49	1.44	2.62	5.7	14.47	1.8
1990-91	0.49	1.43	2.66	5.65	13.72	1.64
1995-96	0.5	1.41	2.63	5.53	15.67	1.44
2000-01	0.48	1.41	2.63	5.55	15.07	1.37
2005-06	0.48	1.41	2.63	5.51	14.33	1.31
2010-11	0.57	1.34	2.76	5.54	14.76	0.57

Source: 1. Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.  
2. Agricultural census, 2011

**Conclusions**

From this analysis on distribution of operational handholding’s and operated area among different size size groups and different social groups in Andhra Pradesh. The following observation can be drawn. The state of Andhra Pradesh constitute 52.40 per cent of geographical area is under landholding of various size of belongs to various social groups. The introduction of

land reforms changed the distribution of landholding in Andhra Pradesh during last five decades. In 1970-71 one fifth of the operational holdings area is controlled by two thirds of the total number of holdings. On the other hand, large and medium landholdings accounted for more than one fifth of the total operational area owned by and controlled by only one sixth of total land holdings showing positive distributions of land holdings in favour of large and medium size landholders. Between 1970-71 and 1975-76 the number of small and marginal holdings increased indicating fragmentations of land holdings on one hand and the medium and large holdings of the area controlled by them also increased on the other hand. By 1980-81 the share of marginal holdings to total operational holdings increased by 54.1 per cent while area controlled by them increased by 13.1 per cent showing that the impact of surpluses land distributions of land and forest land to schedule tribes. Similarly trends continued at slower pace during 1985-86 and the per cent of marginal holdings to total holdings increased by 54.1 per cent and that of area of marginal holdings to total operational holdings increased by 14.5 per cent.

In 199-91 a little more than one fifth of the total holdings were small landholdings that were holding very little less than one fifth of the area of the total operational holding in the state. In 1995-96 small size operational holdings area controlled by a larger number of landholding in Andhra Pradesh. In 2001-02 the number of smallholdings and semi- medium holdings belongs with their propositions of total operational holdings along with the area under their controlled. Further, the share of large and medium operational land holdings and area under these holdings decline. In Andhra Pradesh, during 1976-2010 the estimated average size of area of each landholding for scheduled caste decline from 1.19hectares to 0.41 registered during the same period, for the marginal holdings it showed same trend in this period, for the small holdings it declined from 1.45 to .38, form semi-medium landholder it declined from 2.69 to 2.51, for medium landholders it declined from 6.21 to 5.36, for large landholder it declined from 15.62 to 14.76. On the other hand, scheduled tribes, during same period In Andhra Pradesh during 1976-2010 the number of marginal holdings increased by 63.94 per cent, the small holding increased by 22.15 per cent and semi- medium landholdings increased by 10.62 per cent. On other hand, the number of the medium landholding declined by 3.02 per cent and the large

landholding by 0.27 per cent. This indicates the redistributions of landholding from medium and large landholding to small and marginal landholders. During 1996-2001 the share of the number of operational landholdings to total landholdings belongs to schedule castes decreased from 12 per cent. More than 7 per cent of the operated area of total landholding in the state belongs to scheduled tribes in 1995-96 and it increased to 8.82 per cent in 2001-02. The per cent of number of landholdings belongs to other social groups to all land holdings in the state remained more or less the same around 80 per cent indicating a marginal shift in the landholdings owned by other social groups to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The shares of scheduled castes marginal, small and medium size landholdings to total scheduled caste land holders and area controlled by them remained more or less the same.

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