

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND SOCIO – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF 1981 AND
2001 CENSUS OF WEST BENGAL**

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ABSTRACT

The educational profile of Indian Muslims is perhaps the clearest indicators of the overall backwardness of this community. Low rate of literacy compelled to engage in primary activities, mainly as marginal workers. Low work participation rate allow living in nasty unhygienic slum area in urban as well as in rural. The present paper attempts to analyze the socio – economic condition of Muslims of West Bengal and also to explore the correlates of socio – economic development. In this regard emphasis has been given to study education in particular. Most specifically, the state of Muslim education deals with attitude towards education, religious education, women education, problem of drop out and stagnation etc.

Key Words: Women education, drop out, religious education

Introduction:

The dynamic trends in the components of population growth viz, fertility, mortality and migration are set altered and recognized by the social and cultural setting of a society. So, there are some inherent socio – physiological, cultural economic, demographic factors which may have influenced the productive behavior of the peoples of all communities – Hindus, Muslims, Buddhist, Sikhs, Christians etc.

India has one of the largest concentrations of Muslim Population. The total number of Muslim in the world is estimated to be around 1207 millions. The only concentration of Muslims larger than that of India (138.20 millions) is Indonesia which has about 200 millions Muslim population. Until recently, academics expressed their surprise over the fact that so little data was available on Indian minorities in general and Muslims in particular. But according to 2001, census published by Census of India, Govt. of India about of Muslims resides in India and integrated with other religious communities and develop their separate cultural traits under distinct regional moulds.

Data sources and Methodology:

Data related to the paper has been collected from secondary sources which include- Central and State Government Offices, Statistical Department of West Bengal, Reports, Census of India (1981 and 2001), Statistical Abstract of West Bengal, Sachar Committee Report (SCR) and other Government documents.

To illustrate the absolute and percentage data various Cartograms have been done. Regression Analysis, after Spearman's method is also introduced and Residuals techniques are used to justify the spatial correspondence between concentration of Muslim population and level of development of West Bengal considering educational and economic parameters.

Relevance of the Study and Objectives:

India has experienced huge population explosion in the census year 1981 and 2001. So this study is a gateway to understand the demographic phases of population change in West Bengal as 1971 is also a landmark year in the growth of population in West Bengal.

The main objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the relation between share of Muslim population and level of development in west Bengal.
- b) To evaluate the factors responsible for the social, cultural and economic backwardness of Bengali Muslims.
- c) To evaluate the relation between educational status and level of development of Muslim community.
- d) To examine the present level of Muslim development in relation to
 - i) Education
 - ii) Work participation rate
- e) To evaluate the measures taken by Government authority and proposed strategies for socio-economic development of Muslim Community.

Demographic Profile:

Considering minorities in general and Muslims in particular, the state of West Bengal has registered an explosive growth. The social and cultural traits, religious beliefs and norms, traditional economic processes and pursuits are may be the reason for it. As per 2001 census, out

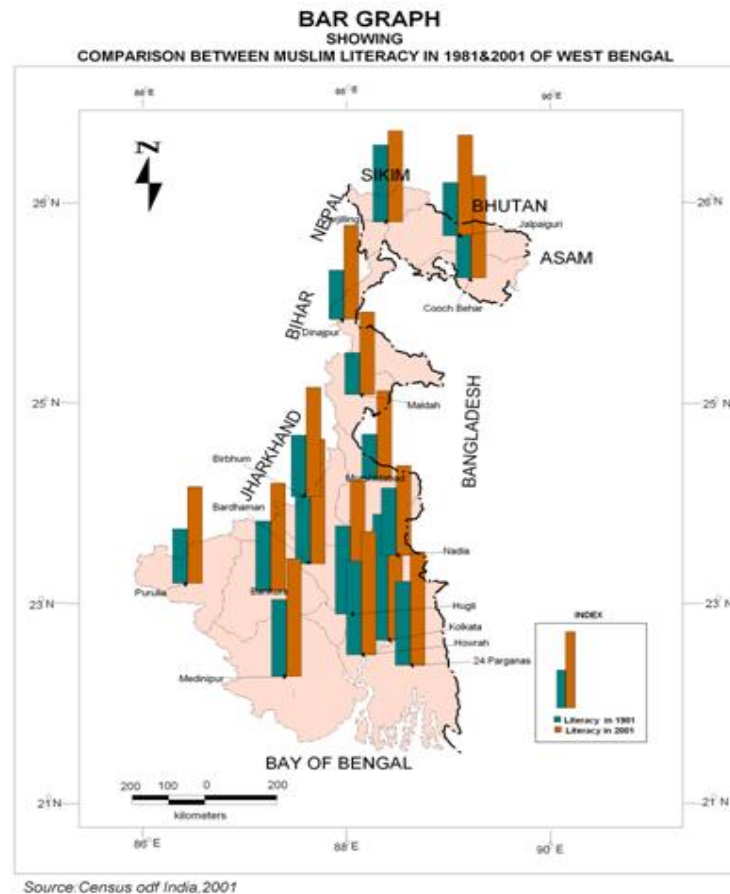
of 26.26% of minorities, 25.25% population belongs to Muslim community, i.e., more than 96% of minorities in West Bengal are Muslim. The state has second highest Muslim population, next after Uttar Pradesh (3,07,40,158) and also second highest percentage , next to Jammu and Kashmir (67.00%). Thirteen districts of the state namely, Murshidabad, Maldah, Uttar Dinajpur, Birbhum, South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Howrah, Cooch Behar, North 24 Parganas, Dakshin Dinajpur, Kolkata, Bardhaman and Hugli are amongst the top 50 district of the country. Five of them amongst the top 10 in terms of Muslim concentration and 10 district have more than 10 lakhs Muslim Population (See table no. 1). But it is to be noted that Muslims of West Bengal are also backward in terms of Educational and as well as socio – economic profile (*Chakroborty,A.K., 2002*).

Table: 1 Concentration of Muslim Population and literacy rate 1981& 2001

District / State / Country	Total Population	Muslim Population	Percentage of Muslim Population	Literacy rate (in %), 1981			Literacy rate (in %), 2001		
				Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Derjilling	1609172	85378	5.31	42.47	51.89	31.85	50.38	60.86	37.92
Jalpaiguri	3401173	369195	10.85	29.19	37.30	20.27	55.34	64.98	45.01
Cooch Behar	2479155	600911	24.24	30.10	40.09	19.55	56.07	64.59	47.11
Uttar Dinajpur	2441794	1156503	47.36	27.00	36.22	17.17	36.04	45.98	25.25
Dakshin Dinajpur	1503178	361047	24.02				67.21	72.81	61.33
Maldah	3290468	1636171	49.72	23.06	31.44	14.22	45.30	51.56	38.68
Murshidabad	5866569	3735380	63.67	24.89	31.75	17.75	48.63	54.21	42.76
Birbhum	3015422	1057861	35.08	33.69	42.58	24.46	59.86	68.28	50.97
Bardhaman	6895514	1364133	19.78	42.43	51.29	32.56	68.79	75.54	61.39
Nadia	4604827	1170282	25.42	36.71	43.75	29.28	49.41	54.42	44.03

Hugli	5041976	763471	15.14	48.79	57.99	38.65	73.50	79.43	67.31
Bankura	3192695	239722	7.51	38.33	51.90	24.20	59.91	71.81	46.96
Puruliya	2536516	180694	7.12	29.69	45.41	13.25	53.44	71.32	34.14
Paschim Medinipore	5193411	1088618	11.33	42.73	55.57	29.24	64.97	75.05	54.36
Purba Medinipore	4417377								
Howrah	4273099	1044383	24.44	51.39	60.78	40.64	67.80	74.13	60.78
Kolkata	4572876	926769	20.27	69.12	73.47	63.01	68.08	71.25	63.81
North 24 Parganas	8934286	2164058	24.22	46.17	55.78	35.53	65.05	71.41	58.13
South 24 Parganas	6906689	2295967	33.24				59.83	68.84	50.27
West Bengal	80176197	20240543	25.25	40.94	50.67	30.25	57.47	64.61	49.75
India	1028610328	138188240	13.40	36.23	46.89	24.82	59.90	67.60	50.10

Source : Census of India, 1981 and 200



Social structure:

Social structure of Bengali Muslims is very complex, which has been constituted by the relationship between many groups and sub-groups. These are as follows ...

- A) Basis of sariat law : a) Hanafis
b) Shafeis
- B) Basis of sects and sub sects : a) Sunni
b) Shia
c) Ahel – e – hadish
- C) Basis of Association : a) Khanqahs
b) Silsilas

- D) Basis of Social honour : a) Khas / Miyan - 1. Sayyad
2. Shaik
3. Mirza
4. Khan / Pathan
b) Aam / Garosti
c) Taraf shrani / Katua / Fakir

The Bengali Muslims have quite higher meant age of marriage for boys 21 years and girls 16 years. The polygynous study reveled that less than 3% Muslim appeared to it and the incidence of divorce is also very low, i.e. less than 1 % (*Ahmed,I., 1973 & 1976*).

Educational development:

The development of education of Muslims in Medieval period was in the hands of private individuals, particularly under the learned Muslim theologians or *Ulemas*. *Maktabs* were the primary schools where fundamentals of religious education were imparted run by *Muluvis* (mosque in charge). *Khanqahs* are used for secondary educations which were also usually attached with the mosque like *Maktab*. Higher education was goes on in *Madarsha* through the leadership of *Ulemas* and Imams located mostly in towns and cities.

The *Mughal* emperors were patrons of learning and their policy was to increase the knowledge of art and sciences. So the educational institutions (*Maktabs* and *Madarsha*) multiplied within a short period throughout the country (*Peer,M.,1991*).

The rising of British Power in India brought a huge change in political, social and educational spheres by introducing English education for the shake of the British Raj. But Muslim communities deny accepting these new approaches because of the apprehension that such an alien education would destroy their religious and cultural value. The women education of Muslims of Bengal faced serious problems due to early marriage and pardah system (*Jahangir,K.N., 1991*).

“Calcutta Muhamadan Literacy Society” (CMLS), in 1863, “Calcutta National Muhammadan Association” (CNMA) in 1878 and “Muhammadans Reforms Association” (MRA) in 1886 was established to impart useful information to higher educated and aristocrat class of the Muslims by means of lectures and discussions in literature, science and culture through English language.

The partition of Bengal strongly affected the growth and socio – political and economic development of middle class Muslims of Bengal when a good number of Muslims migrated to East Pakistan, contemporary Bangladesh. At this critical stage (the 1st half of 20th century) the educated Muslims found competition for jobs and thus their sense of education and economic backwardness in relation to other socio – religious groups grew day by day.

The post independence period also recognized as the establishment of a very large number of educational institution through both of Government as well as private endeavors. Thus the lack of previous opportunities, feeling of deprivation and lack of interest led to a general dissatisfaction and parochial tendencies among the Muslims in the context of educational development of their community.

Educational status:

The unavailability of community wise literacy information of India after independence does not allow knowing how far behind the Bengali Muslim has fallen in literacy and education. The availability of 1981 census information revealed that only 51% of male and 30% of female are literate in Muslim Community in West Bengal with an average of 40.94%. There are seven districts named Malda (23.06%), Murshidabad (24.89%), West Dinajpur (27.00%), Jalpaiguri (29.19%), Puruliya (29.69%), Cooch Behar (30.10%) and Birbhum (33.69%) which had literacy rate below the nation average (36.23%) of Muslim community. 2001 census reported that the literacy rate was 64.61% for male and 49.75% for female with an average of 57.47% of Bengali Muslims (see table No.-1). There is only one district that is Hugli (73.50%) which have literacy rate above the state average (2001). But there are ten districts which had literacy rate below the national average of Muslim literacy (59.40%). Not only total literacy but also there are wide disparity of literacy between male and female at the same time between urban and rural of Muslims of West Bengal.

It has been reported that the rate of *dropout* and *stagnation* is also high from school and other educational institution of Muslim community. A sample survey carried out by Prime Minister High Level Committee, 2004-05 (*Sachar Committee Report, 2006*) shows that the enrollment rate of Muslims is 75%, only above the SCs / STs and the dropout rate exceeds 25% which is lowest among all Social Religious Communities (SRCs). The result is similar in case of Mean Year of schooling (MYS) of Muslims (83%). The literacy of various age groups of Muslim is very low (59.9%), in comparison to other SRCs and even other minority (75.2%).

So, the empirical observation reveals that the ignorance and illiteracy are still the major problem of Muslim community living in West Bengal. Not only backwardness of schooling, but also the learning of new skills and technology is also not very satisfactory among them (*Mondal, R.,*

1997). So, majority of parents have worst interest to educate their sons, where as their major concern to solve the current poverty by sending them in gainful occupation at very early age. A report carried out by a private authority revealed that, in premier colleges, only 1 out of 25 is under graduate and 1 out of 50 post graduate students is Muslim (*Robinson, R. 2007*).

Economic structure:

The economies of Muslims are highly diverse from transhumance Gujjars backwards of Jammu and Kashmir to Bihar and Bengali rice growers, silk weavers of Murshidabad to metal and leather works of Lucknow, Moradabad, Kanpur and Aligarh, the nomadic pastorals of Jaisalmeer to serviceman of Kerala. Most work forces belong to agriculture in rural areas and tailoring, embroidery, poor peasants, industrial daily workers in urban. The economic structure of Muslims in west Bengal is broadly classify into primary (agricultural labourers and cultivators), secondary (household industry workers) and tertiary (service) sectors for better understanding. It is clear to see that Bengali Muslim is very poor than others SRCs. Census of 2001 reveals that among the working Muslims of Dakshin Dinajpur and Uttar Dinajpur district 80.12% and 78.95% are engaged in primary sector where as it is 67.21% and 69.24% and engagement of secondary sector is 2.06% and 3.92% and tertiary sector is 17.82% and 17.13% respectively, far below than state average (See table no-2). Not only the Muslim farmers are basically the marginal in nature but also there are only microscopic sections, about 5.00%, of Muslim are land owners in west Bengal.

Due to some socio-economic causes in urban area Muslims are basically engaged in tailoring, embroidery, petty trader, industrial workers and rickshaw pulling. The fringe districts of Kolkata, i.e. Howrah reveals that there are only 8.70% of primary workers, where secondary and tertiary workers are 27.19% and 64.11% respectively due to physio - politico causes. No statistical data has been prepared by Government Authority to determine the degree of poorness and percentage of BPL (Below Poverty Line) population of Muslims of west Bengal. But according to a report of a private organization, though Murshidabad (63.67%), Maldah (49.72%) have dominated by Muslim population but more than 70% people belongs to BPL. The low rate of work participation may be the reason of it. It is extremely difficult to find out the information about the percentage of Muslims in various service sectors both of government and private institution. The small size of available information reported that the share of Muslims in public order and safety activities at the central level is only 7%. Only 4% Muslims are engaged in defence related activities. An empirical observation reveals that there are only 3% Muslims in the IAS, 1.8% in the IFS and a mere 4% in IPS. There are only 4.5% Muslims in railway authority and only 4.7% in university in respect to total employees (*Robinson, R., 2007*).

Table: 2 Table shows District wise economic structure of Muslims,2001

District / State	Total Population	Total Workers	Work Participation Rate (%)	Percentage of Workers		
				Primary Sector	Secondary Sector	Tertiary Sector
Derjilling	85378	25592	29.97	34.08	2.88	63.05
Jalpaiguri	369195	133349	36.12	53.85	1.29	44.86
Cooch Behar	600911	221043	36.78	64.60	1.47	23.29
Uttar Dinajpur	1156503	410624	35.51	78.95	3.92	17.13
Dakshin Dinajpur	361047	124720	34.54	80.12	2.06	17.82
Maldah	1636171	655908	40.09	47.07	20.91	32.02
Murshidabad	3735380	1252177	33.52	48.91	24.12	26.96
Birbhum	1057861	337362	31.89	55.58	10.47	33.95
Bardhaman	1364133	434350	31.84	49.94	6.05	44.01
Nadia	1170282	396369	33.87	64.96	8.15	26.89
North 24 Parganas	2164058	661980	30.59	44.48	6.14	49.38
Hugly	763471	242844	31.81	33.45	7.60	58.95
Bankura	239722	95015	39.64	52.59	13.87	33.53
Puruliya	180694	62310	34.48	46.76	8.16	45.08
Paschim Medinipore	1088618	332663	30.56	40.33	10.14	49.53
Purba Medinipore						
Howrah	1044383	308361	29.53	8.70	27.19	64.11
Kolkata	926769	325413	35.11	0.62	8.74	90.64
South 24 Parganas	2295967	636203	27.71	39.17	9.13	51.69
West Bengal	20240543	6656283	32.89	46.89	12.61	40.50

Source: Census of India, 2001

It has been reported that Muslims have poor access to bank credit. The percentage of households facilitated through banking is much lower in rural area than other SRCs. There has been a general tendency of the Muslims towards savings and investment (Mondal, R., 1992). A research work noticed that the immense fragility of Muslims participation in the economy and the low level of their asset accumulation in general further intensify their vulnerability to the displacements, physical and economic caused by situations of containing communal strife leads to poor access to banking.

Result and Analysis:

Although it is not possible to have a flawless quantitative measure of development, U.N.D.P. (The United Nations Development Program) has developed a composite index method which includes all of economic, social and cultural parameters (see table no.-3). These variables are expressed in different units. Therefore to make unit free, a methodology was evolved to construct a composite index in spite of several indices.

Table : 3, Rank Weightage Composite Index

District	Per Capita Income (Rs.)	Literacy Rate (%)	Urban Pop. (%)	Road Density (km/sq.km)	Per Head Electricity Consumption (kwt)	Sex Ratio	Work Participation (%)	Primary School / 1000 person	Food Crops Production (kg)	Pop Den / sq.km	Rank Weightage Composite Index
Derjilling	25894	71.79	32.34	1.11	216.37	934	35.39	0.74	71.22	511	58.83
Jalpaiguri	21390	62.85	17.84	1.07	45.39	942	38.31	0.58	129.81	546	43.05
Cooch Behar	18139	66.30	9.10	0.73	34.44	949	38.99	0.73	231.77	732	39.64
Uttar Dinajpur	13818	47.89	12.06	1.49	27.59	938	38.31	0.58	295.32	778	38.16
Dakshin Dinajpur	18461	63.59	13.10	1.86	23.27	951	40.76	0.87	329.30	677	45.64

Maldah	19764	50.28	7.32	0.52	35.17	948	40.75	0.60	209.30	881	36.57
Murshidabad	18162	54.35	12.49	1.81	33.87	952	34.18	0.54	167.01	1102	40.89
Birbhum	17174	61.48	8.57	1.55	73.17	950	37.42	0.82	295.85	663	43.54
Bardhaman	25398	70.18	36.94	1.83	68.36	922	35.55	0.57	231.44	982	56.65
Nadia	20662	66.14	21.27	1.97	119.61	946	35.09	0.58	183.18	1173	51.45
North 24 Parganas	18070	78.04	54.30	3.31	130.31	926	33.45	0.47	76.69	2182	66.61
Hugly	24013	75.11	33.47	2.84	69.16	947	36.88	0.59	100.83	1601	58.40
Bankura	19995	63.44	7.37	1.27	78.35	952	44.70	1.07	318.45	464	45.93
Puruliya	16901	55.57	10.07	1.05	35.86	954	44.75	1.16	203.51	405	40.83
Paschim Medinipore	22458	70.40	11.90	1.62	100.40	960	39.03	1.09	266.76	531	50.64
Purba Medinipore		80.20	8.29	2.88	117.53	950		0.90	283.72	1028	55.34
Howrah	24406	77.61	50.29	4.49	52.40	906	33.67	0.51	62.41	2913	68.95
Kolkata	53015	80.86	100.00	10.00	1160.44	829	37.56	0.32	00.00	24718	189.69
South 24 Parganas	18547	69.45	15.73	1.62	38.72	937	32.47	0.54	127.34	693	42.67
Mean	22038	66.61	24.34	2.26	129.65	936	37.70	0.70	188.63	903	

Source : Census of India, 2001

But now the question arises about what is the relation between the concentration of Muslim Population and Development. As we said earlier that though the state of West Bengal has highly resourceful in terms of Muslim Population but they are backward in social, economic and culturally because of many socio - economic – political interference.

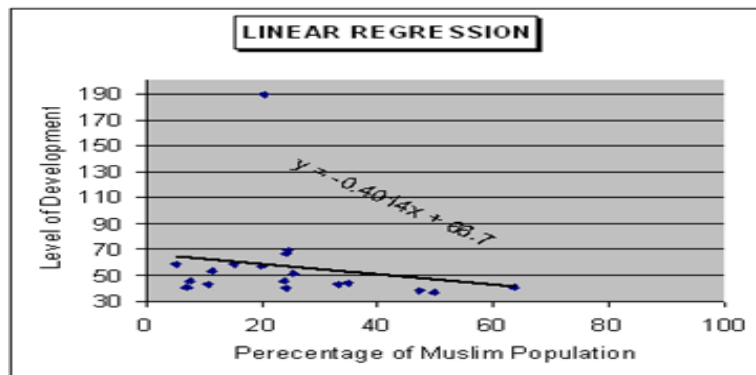
Table : 4, Table for Regression and Residuals

District	Percentage of Muslim Population (x)	Weight age Composite Index value (y)	Regression (Yc = a + bx)	Residuals
Derjilling	5.31	58.83	63.59076577	-4.476076577
Jalpaiguri	10.85	43.05	61.5123422	-18.4623422
Cooch Behar	24.24	39.64	56.48887713	-16.84887713
Uttar Dinajpur	47.36	38.16	47.81504378	-9.65504378
Dakshin Dinajpur	24.02	45.64	56.57141361	-10.9314136
Maldah	49.72	36.57	46.92965248	-10.35965248
Murshidabed	63.67	40.89	41.69608954	-0.80608954
Birbhum	35.08	43.54	52.42207983	-8.88207983
Bardhaman	19.78	56.65	58.06211661	-1.51211661
Nadia	25.42	51.45	56.04618148	-4.59618148
North 24 Parganas	24.22	66.61	56.49638044	+10.11361956
Hugly	15.14	58.40	59.90288593	-1.50288593
Bankura	7.51	45.93	62.76540100	-16.835401
Puruliya	7.12	40.83	62.91171567	-22.08171567
Paschim Medinipore	11.33	50.64	61.33226764	-10.69226764

Purba Medinipore		55.34		-5.99226764
Haora	24.44	68.95	56.41384397	+12.53615603
Kolkata	20.27	189.69	57.97828536	+131.7117146
South 24 Parganas	33.24	42.67	53.11238491	-10.44238491

The relationship shows that the concentrations of Muslim Population and under development are directly related. The statistics revealed the fact that, Murshidabad, Maldah, Uttar Dinajpur, Birbhum having very high concentration of Muslims, but these districts are less developed. On the other hand Derjilling has very low concentration of Muslims (5.31%), but it belongs to very high level of developed district. On the other hand districts like Howrah, Kolkata, North 24 Parganas are with also moderate concentration (more than 24% - less than 35%) of Muslims but they are characterized by high level of development.

However, to determine the relation between the concentration of Muslim Population and level of Development, some quantitative methods have been applied. Regression analysis and Residual Mapping techniques reveled that high concentration of Muslim population is characterized by underdevelopment both of social – and economic aspects and vice versa. So, we may conclude that due to various socio–political–economic and religious factors Muslims are lagging behind in terms of development in West Bengal. So it is further to be investigated about the precise level of dependency between Muslim population and level of development. At present the fact revealed that there is a negative relationship between development and concentration of Muslim population.



Conclusion:

The post independence period witnessed the establishment of a very large number of educational institutions through both of Government as well as private endeavors. The old systems of Madarsha education with certain modification in courses and curriculum persist in contemporary times of West Bengal. The parallel systems of secondary education in West Bengal viz, West Bengal Board of

Secondary Education and West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education have greatly influenced the education level of the Bengali Muslims to a greater extent. But it must be point out that Bengali Muslims appear to have fallen in the vicious circle of poverty, depression, frustration, backwardness and isolation.

It is evident from the fact that there is a wide disparity between male and female in context of literacy. The Government of West Bengal introduced West Bengal Minority Development and Financial Corporation for the economic support of weaker section of Muslims. Establishment of Aliah University, Aligarh Muslim University (proposed) and West Bengal Central Madrasa Service Commission are hints to Government's care for educational upliftment of Muslim Community of West Bengal. But it must be said that mainly because of educational backwardness, social situation of Bengali Muslims of contemporary times kept in a mentally unsettled condition

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