AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WIDOWS LIVING IN SINDH UNIVERSITY COLONY JAMSHORO, SINDH

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ABSTRACT

The present research study analyzes the socio-economic and cultural status of widows in University of Sindh, Jamshoro Residential colony. Information was collected from the 39 widows living in the said colony on structured self-administered questionnaire. As there was no secondary data available on the widows in the colony, the research started with overall household survey in order to ascertain the number of the target population. The study aimed at comprehensive analysis of situation of the widows in the area and major problems faced by them. It also offers a set of suggestions and solutions to help these women out of various problems based on the findings of the research study.

KEY WORDS: Widows, women, social status, economic conditions, remarriage, psychological stress, deprivation, literacy, education, health, widowhood.

INTRODUCTION

Women are half world, if one takes into account their biological role as child bearers, and their 'professed' ideological role as producer of the nation, then well; they are the entire world. Every religion gives a great importance to the woman. A woman is also considered to be very

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important even by those who do not believe in the religion. The woman is supposed as the half part of the body of a person. Through all relations like daughter, sister, wife etc get equal importance, but mother has been given a special importance because mother is first learning place of the person where a person learns about life, attitudes, manners, languages, blood relationships, society's relationships and many other many things. So a woman plays important role in the world. Despite all this, a woman faces many problems and challenges in our society. There are many gender gaps in the world especially in developing countries like Pakistan. According to a study by Dr. Tara Vishwanath titled Bridging the Gender Gap: Opportunities and Challenges (Pakistan Country Gender Assessment) there are significant gender gaps in education, health and economic aspects. Primary net enrollment rates were 46% for girls and 58 % percent for boys in 2001. Similarly in terms of literacy rates only 29 % of women were literates in comparison to 75% men. Health indicators also show marked gender gaps as per the same study. In terms of child mortality rates the rate for girls is 24 per 1000 live births whereas the same rate for boys is 15 per 1000 live births (1997-2000). Whereas the maternal mortality rate is 500 deaths per 100000 live births 1997-2000). Economic indicator used by the said study is the labor force participation rate. The women participation rate in Pakistan was only 25% against the 76% for men in 2001-2002.

However the widows are worse than these common women. The woman in our society faces a lot of problem after the death of her husband. The problems faced by the widows include many social, economic, cultural and psychological problems. The widow in our society is bound to experience various dimensions of stress, which invariably constitutes stress level in her life from then on. For example, lack of necessary emotional support and financial assistance at an age when her earning power is gradually on the decline is a source of unending stress for the widow.

In addition to the psychological problems/stress the survey conducted by us also highlighted the health problems of the widows. About 39 per cent of the elderly widows suffered from chronic health problems in this area. The percentage of physical immobility due to chronic illness and old age was found to be consistently higher for women than men in all states of the community. An analysis of their problems found through various research studies, and survey underlines following important problems faced by widows in Pakistan.

- Economic deprivation and insecurity.
- Restricted mobility due to ill-health.
- Physical insecurity.
- Reduction in dignity and self-esteem.
- Loneliness due to rejection.
- Lack of meaningful occupation and leisure activities.
- Lack of facilities for the widow's children's.

As widows, women suffer some of the most severe subjugation of their whole lives. Widowed women are harassed, abused, and denied land and livelihood titles and rights. The widows have to face many kinds of deprivation: economic, social, cultural and emotional. Of all the deprivation the economic derivation is the most harmful. Our study shows that household headed by widows suffer dramatic decline in per capita income and that the mortality risk of widowhood was higher for women than men. Among basic causes of their vulnerability are restrictions on the residence, inheritance, remarriage and employment opportunities of widows.

There are very limited opportunities for widows living in households without an adult male to engage in income-earning activities. Criticized for being dependent, widows are severely restricted by cultural norms in the kind of self-employment they can undertake to reduce that dependency.

BACKGROUND OF UNIVESITY OF SINDH JAMSHORO AND ITS RESIDENTIAL COLONY

The University of Sindh, the second oldest University of the country, was constituted under the University of Sindh Act. No. XVII of 1947 passed by the Legislative Assembly of Sindh. From 1947 to 1951 the University functioned solely as an examining body. However, after its relocation in Hyderabad in 1951, it started functioning as a teaching university in pursuit of fulfillment of its charter and mission to disseminate knowledge; the first teaching department, namely, Department of Education, raised to the status of Faculty of Education later, was started in view of the great dearth of trained teachers in the

country. The departments of basic Science disciplines as well as other departments on humanities side were added by mid fifties.

The development of the present Campus at Jamshoro, about 15 kilometers from Hyderabad on the right bank of River Indus now designated as Allama I.I. Kazi Campus, was started in late fifties. Most of the teaching departments under the Faculty of Science were shifted to the new campus in 1961, with departments under Arts & Humanities following suite in 1970.

The university is built near the Kotri barrage on the highly area of 10,000 acres with a beautiful valley and the parkland on its outskirts. The university has a lively academic town with an outstanding work of architecture. The university town has its own charm, which attracts the outside visitors. There is an attractive set of big buildings studding natural contours of a highly land the Faculty of Arts is located in a huge building, where all the disciplines of humanities and social science are taught.

The Institute of Sindhology, a cultural centre of the university, depicting the socio- cultural development of the province of Sindh, is situated on the super highway, which leads to towards the city of Hyderabad. The other important building on the university town area: Institute of Business Administration the Institute of Chemistry, Institute of Physics and Technology, Department of Botany, Zoology, Geography and Fine Arts, Commerce, Fresh water Biology, Pharmacy, Mathematics, and Statistics. The university town has a very big residential area of the staff and the students. There are (8) big hostels for the students. There are long and small roads, walkways which connect various Institutes, Departments, residences Administrative blocks, Central library, and Hyder Bux Jatoi Sport Complex, whole of the area offers an eye catching landscape with high and low slopes, Transport facilities are available at the campus for the staff and the students traveling to and from the city of Hyderabad. The 150 km long Super Highway connects the University with the Karachi metropolis the capital of Sindh which the main entry pot of trade and Commerce.

The residential Colony for the faculty and staff of the University provides on campus residence to about one third of the employees. Plans are in hand to expand the colony and provide accommodation at the campus to remaining employees. At present there are 71 Bungalows of various types and 389 quarters of A, B, C and D type

which are providing residential accommodation to the officers, teachers, and other administrative staff of the University of Sindh. There are two dispensaries, three Schools, two middle schools and one vocational school for girls, two mosques, one post office, two Banks and one Railway station. Sindh University Residential Colony is located at Jamshoro, District Dadu at the distance about 18 km from Hyderabad City. The Super high way is adjacent to the residential Colony

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim the present study tilts around understanding the socioeconomic status of and various problems faced by widows living in the Sindh University Jamshoro residential colony.

Specific Objectives

- 1. Develop socio-economic profile of the widows live in the University of Sindh, Jamshoro Residential Colony
- 2. Study the problems faced by the widows in relation to their socio-economic condition and educational background
- 3. Find out and analyze the sources of income, their involvement in income generating activities
- 4. Elicit their opinion towards widow remarriage
- 5. Collect knowledge about Attitude of Family and Society towards widows.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was started in May' 2001. The number of widows was ascertained after a thorough household survey of the colony. There were 39 widows in the study area. Because of small number all women were selected for the study purpose thus the sample size is equal to total population i.e. 39. Given the nature of information required, the study was structured using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Qualitative and quantitative survey was conducted on ssocial, economic and psychological conditions of widows living in Sindh University Colony Jamshoro. The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. This study endeavored to develop a fuller understanding of the socio-economic status of widows in our society and their problems. Qualitative data collection was carried out using a comprehensive guideline questionnaire The questionnaire focused areas of including personal biography; economics; health; relationships within the family, community; and expectations. In addition to individual interviews from each widow, the focused groups discussions were also held in order to incorporate the general opinion of the other members of the society, community leaders, social and political activists, pesh-imams and religious clerks about the widows particularly and women generally.

The data collection started with household survey of the entire colony as there was no secondary data available about the number and addresses of the widow households. Only secondary data available from university residential colony was number and types of bungalows and quarters. In the first phase, the household survey was conducted to indentify the widow households.

In the second phase, the detailed interviews on the structured questionnaires were conducted from the 39 widow headed households. The interview was conducted at the home. The normal duration of the interview was about 30 minutes. Questions were asked by the researcher in their regional language and the relevant responses were recorded in the schedule. The researcher followed the free conversational style to elicit relevant information. As majority of widows were illiterate hence information were also collected through observation and discussion methods. A rapport was first established with the respondents with the help of sharing some personal experience and confidence building measures. It was noticed that most respondents were free in sharing their experiences.

DATA COLLECTION

The population of Sindh University Colony consists of around 5550 souls, of which 3050 are male and 2500 are female. The male to female ratio is 55:45. This population lives in 510 housing units of which 71 are bungalows and 439 are quarters.

The category wise household's data along with gender segregated population is displayed in the following table:

Table 1: Household population

Bungalows	Total	Vacant	Male	Female	Total
A-Type	11	1	72	130	202
B-Type	18	2	103	170	273
C-Type	34	1	255	316	571
D-Type	8	1	47	159	206
Total Bungalows	71	5	477	775	1,252
Quarters					
A-Type	45	3	370	263	633
В-Туре	44	2	480	358	838
C-Type	160	-	823	440	1,263
D-Type	190	4	900	664	1,564
Total Quarters	439	9	2,573	1,725	4,298
Grant Total	510	14	3,050	2,500	5,550

Source: Household survey 2001

While the second and third highest number of women is in the second and fourth age group

more precise 62 percent women in the studied area are in the age group of 25 to 44. This finding stresses up the

women.

The

all

respectively.

Of 510 households there are 39 families headed by widows in the study target area. This is almost 7.65 % of total households. And given small population of widows all women i.e. 39 are selected for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

I. Demographic profiles of Widow Households:

Age profile of widows

The table 2 shows the age profiles of 39 women in the study area. The absolute and relative frequencies i.e. number of widows is shown for each age bracket. Six age brackets have been formed on the basis of the information on age. As the table displays that highest number of women is in the third age bracket that is 35-44 with 15 women in it which is 38 percent of the total number.

Table 2: Age profiles of Widows

Age Bracket	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
15-24	5	13
25-34	9	23
35-44	15	38
45-54	7	18
55-64	2	5
65 -74	1	3
Total	39	100

question of remarriage and rehabilitation of these average age of women in the study group is 55.

Source: Household survey 2001

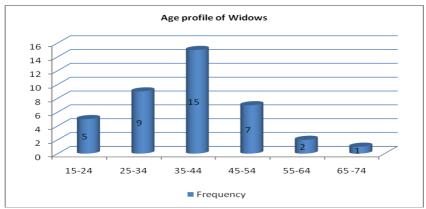


Figure 1: Age profile of widows

The figure 1 above shows a better picture of the ages of widows.

Age profiles of male members of widow HHs

There are 168 male members in the 39 widow households. We have distributed the male members into four different age groups/brackets. The age groups are 0-5, 6-15, 16-30 and 31-50. There are 25, 35, 78 and 30 male members in each age group respectively.

Table 3: Age profiles of male members of widow HHs

Age Group	Male	Relative Frequency (%)
0-5	25	15
615	35	21
16-30	78	46
31-50	30	18
Total	168	100

The highest number of male members is 78 in the age group of 16-30. While 82 percent male members are below 30 years of age. The table 3 and figure 2 below better depict the age groups and their relative positions.

Source: Household survey 2001

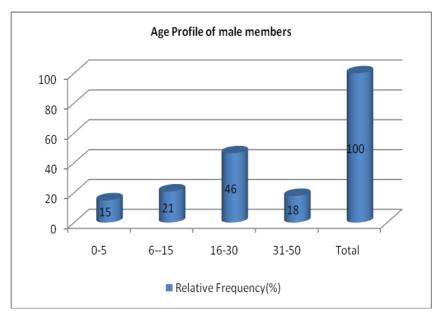


Figure 2: Age profile of male members

The average age of 168 male members is 20.4 years. This shows the dependence of this young population on the widows and which in result shows their vulnerability and lack of support that a relatively older and mature group could provide. This figure also displays that the relatively younger age group means they are not employed economically on one hand and they need financial support for their education, health, clothing and food etc. This fact also bars women from remarrying given the tender age of their children and young groups.

Age profiles of female members in Widow Households in the Study Area

The female members living in the widow households determine the social obligations and responsibilities of women/their mothers. In the 39 widow households in the study area, 166 female members are living. An eye over the age composition of the female population tells the social situation of the studied women/widows.

Table 4: Age profiles of female members in Widow Households

Age Group	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
05	55	33.13
615	71	42.77
1630	13	7.83
31-50	27	16.26
Total	166	100
Source: Household survey 2001		

Of 166 members 126 are girls below sixteen years of age which is 80 percent of the population. Whereas the average age of female population in the households is 13.37 years This not only of age. shows the economic burden of this young group but it also shows the social insecurity that the female population faces in our society. Table 4 and figure 3 depict the ages of female

members of widow households in the study area/

Figure 3: Age profiles of female members



II. Educational Profile of the Widows in the Study Area

Education of Widows

The table 5 and figure 4 describe the findings about the education profile of the 39 widows in the study area. Of 39 women, 30 are educated. 20 widows have primary education while 10 are educated up

to graduation level. The literacy rate for this study population is 77 percent. This is far better than the national literacy rate of 29 percent for women in the year 2001.

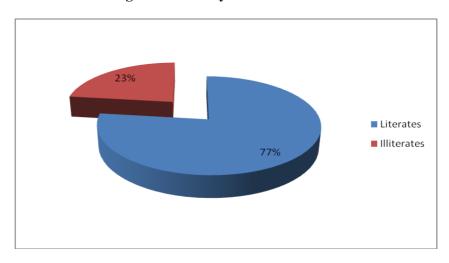
The table 5 and figure 4 describe the findings about the education profile of the 39 widows in the study area. Of 39 women, 30 are educated. 20 widows have primary education while 10 are educated up to graduation level. The literacy rate for this study population is 77 percent. This is far better than the national literacy rate of 29 percent for women in the year 2001.

This may be due to the location of the residential colony of a university and their relationship/marriage to a literate person. Because these women are wives of the employees of the university and some women are themselves government employees as we will see in

Table 5: Education of Widows Education No. of Percentage Widow 51.0 % Primary 20 Secondary 10 26.0 % 0 Graduate Total 39 77 %

employees as we will see in their economic/professional profile.

Figure 4: Literacy Levels of widows



b) Education of Widows' Children

The good finding about the education of children of the studied households is that all school going children (age group 6 to 15) are attending school. Enrollment in different school levels is shown in Table 6 and figure 5. Out of 106 children 25 are receiving primary education which is 24 %, 28 are enrolled in the secondary schools which is 28 %, 36 are getting higher secondary education which becomes 34%, and 15 students are getting graduation level education which is 14 percent of the total.

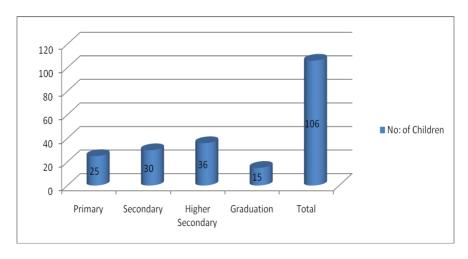
Table 6: Education of Widows' Children

Education Level	No: of Children	Percentage (%)
Primary	25	24
Secondary	30	28
Higher	36	34
Secondary		
Graduation	15	14
Total	106	100
Source: Household survey 2001		

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Figure 5: Education of widows' children



III. Economic and livelihood profile of the Widows in the target area.

In order to analyze the economic profiles of the target widows, the questions were asked about the source of their livelihood and profession. Without the support of the earning male member i.e. the husband, the living standard and the economic wellbeing of the family is determined by the sources of income of the family specially the head of the family that is widow in the present research study.

Source of Employment of widows

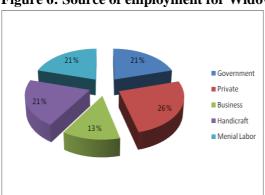
The table and chart below describes the sources of employment of the 39 women. The important finding of research is that all the 30 widows have to work for the economic support of their respective families

Table 7 and figure 6 shows that out of 39 widows 8 are in government jobs which is 21%, 10 have been working in private sector jobs which is 26%, 5 have their own businesses i.e. small tuck shops in their

Table 7: Source of Employment of widows **Employment** No: of Percentage Widows type (%)Government 21 8 Private 10 26 **Business** 5 13 8 Handicraft 21 Menial Labor 8 21 Total 39 100% **Source:** Household survey 2001

houses/quarters which is 13%, 8 widow's are making handicraft which is 21%, and 8 working as household maids/ayahs which is 21% of in this study area.

Figure 6: Source of employment for Widows



This analysis shows that only 21 widows have permanent and reliable source of income which is the government employment. The rest of 79 percent of women have to rely on and to

live with uncertain and meager sources of incomes. Resultantly they have to manage with very small salaries and wages that are earned through daily wage work and other private jobs.

Monthly incomes of widows in the target population

The table 8 and figure 7 below highlight the monthly incomes of the widows. All incomes of 39 women have been distributed into five income groups with the class width of PKR1000.

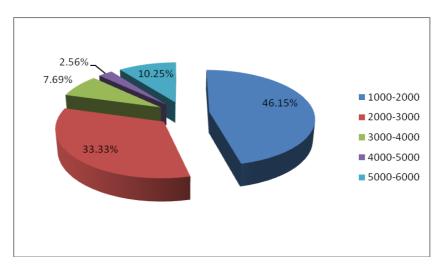
Table 8: Monthly incomes of widows

Income	Widows	Percentage
1000-2000	18	46.15%
2000-3000	13	33.33%
3000-4000	3	7.69%
4000-5000	1	2.56%
5000-6000	4	10.25%
Total	39	100%
Source: Household survey 2001		

The monthly mean income of 39 widows is PKR 2474.3, which is below the poverty line. Within this average 46 percent of women are getting less than PKR 2000 per month. The second lowest income group receiving less than PKR

3000 is 33.33 percent of the total population. Both lower classes/groups of income represent 79 percent of total. There are only 4 women whose incomes ranges between PKR 4000-6000 against the monthly income average of PKR 2474.3.

Figure 7: Monthly income of widows



Widow's Monthly Expenditure in the Study Area

The data in the table and the corresponding diagram represent the calculation of the monthly expenditure of 39 widows in the Study Area.

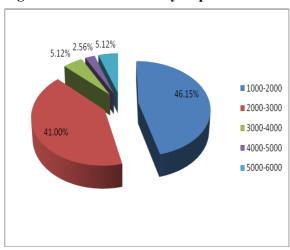
Table 9: Widow's Monthly Expenditure

Expenditure	No: of	Percentage
	Widow	
1000-2000	18	46.15%
2000-3000	16	41.0%
3000-4000	2	5.12%
4000-5000	1	2.56%
5000-6000	2	5.12%
Total=89500	39	100%
Source: Household survey 2001		

The data shows that 18 widows expenditure is in group of 1000-2000, 16 are in group of 2000-3000, 2 widows are in group of 3000-4000, 1 Widow's expenditure is 4000-5000, and 2 widows' are in group of 5000-6000 expenditure

in the study area. This expenditure pattern corresponds to the monthly incomes. The average monthly expenditure is PKR 2294.87

Figure 8: Widow's Monthly Expenditure



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Households Facilities in Widows house in the Study Area

The research study also focused on the available of durable goods in the widows' households. The findings on this aspect of the households paint a bleak picture of the living standards.

Table 10: Household durable Goods

Equipment	Numbers	
Iron	32	
Fan	100	
Television	35	
Refrigerator	4	
Bicycle	10	
Source: Household survey 2001		

Only four families have refrigerators, four families do not have television in this era of media and entertainment. Only 10 families have bicycles. The very expensive but important good like iron is

not available in all households. The table below shows the type and number of households having these goods at household level.

IV. Attitude of Family and Society to Widows Women in the Study Area

Section four of the questionnaire focused on the psychological aspect of the widows. It concentrates on the attitudes of the family and society towards the widows. This attitude was analyzed as per the feelings and understanding of the widows about how they are seen, dealt with and treated by the family and society they live in. The attitude was studied in three categories i.e. good, fair and bad.

Table 11: Attitude of family and society towards widows

	<u>-</u>	
Attitude	No: of	Percentage
	Widows	
Good	8	20.51%
Normal/Fair	10	25.64%
Bad	21	53.85%
Total	39	100.00%
Source: Household survey 2001		

The good attitude in the survey meant the attitude of the family and society which was perceived by the widows as friendly, cooperative and supportive. Fair or normal attitude was one

that was considered by the women as neutral and non-interfering whereas the bad attitude was the one that was discouraging, insulting

and threatening. The following table shows the response of women on the question of attitudes towards them.

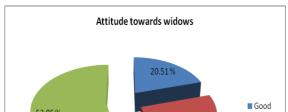


Figure 9: Family and societal Attitude towards widow

53.85% ■ Normal Bad

Only 20.5 percent women said that that the attitude of the family and society was good towards them. Around 26 percent women considered the attitude to be neutral and whereas significant majority of 54 percent women said that the attitude was poor. It is very

problematic situation which determines the psychology of the widows. Due to this widows are victims of physical insecurity, reduction in dignity and self-esteem, loneliness due to rejection.

CONCLUSION:

The findings of the study reveal that the widows in the study area face several problems. The majority of these widows i.e. 62 percent women are in the age group of 25 to 44. This finding stresses up the question of remarriage and rehabilitation of these women. The average age of all women in the study group is 55. The average age of 168 male members of 39 widows is 20.4 years and those of female members 13.37. This shows the dependence of this young population on the widows and which in result shows their vulnerability and lack of support that a relatively older and mature group could provide. This figure also displays that the relatively younger age group means they are not employed economically on one hand and they need financial support for their education, health, clothing and food etc. This fact also bars women from remarrying given the tender age of their children and young groups. Of 39 women, 30 are educated. 20 widows have primary education while 10 are educated up to graduation level. The literacy rate for this study population is 77 percent. This is far better than the national literacy rate of 29 percent for women in the year 2001. Out of 106 children 25 are receiving primary education which is 24 %, 28 are enrolled in the secondary schools which is 28 %, 36 are getting higher secondary education which becomes 34%, and 15 students are getting graduation level education which is 14 percent of the total.

The economic situation is no better. The study shows that only 21 widows have permanent and reliable source of income which is the government employment. The rest of 79 percent of women have to rely on and to live with uncertain and meager sources of incomes. Resultantly they have to manage with very small salaries and wages that are earned through daily wage work and other private jobs. The monthly mean income of 39 widows is PKR 2474.3, which is below the poverty line. This expenditure pattern corresponds to the monthly incomes. The average monthly expenditure is PKR 2294.87.

Only 20.5 percent women said that that the attitude of the family and society was good towards them. Around 26 percent women considered the attitude to be neutral and whereas a significant majority of 54 percent women said that the attitude was poor. It is very problematic situation which determines the psychology of the widows. Due to this widows are victims of physical insecurity, reduction in dignity and self-esteem, loneliness due to rejection

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the findings on various problems and issues following activities and programs are suggested to resolves the issues and problems thereof.

- To provide micro-credit facilities to Widows
- To provide Training Skill to Widow's and her family members
- To provide free education facilities to the children of Widow's women.
- To provide due share to the widow's in Government Food Stamp Program.
- To provide free Medical facilities to widow's women and her Children.
- To improve networks within media, civil society and the government
- To encourage widow to widow bonding and bonding of widows with family,

- To put in place safe guards and safety nets
- To Increase awareness about the plight of widows
- To concentrate on capacity building so that single women would be better equipped to manage their lives and their families
- To recognize the importance of psycho-social counseling, emotional support and empowerment
- To enact adequate national legislation to protect and assist widows, in particular be establishing, or ensuring respect for, their rights to land and inheritance
- To implement long-term assistance programmers that takes into account widows' specific skills and needs, with the aim of helping them to achieve greater self-sufficiency and dignity
- Based on the realization that widowhood is generally stressful for widows, it is hereby recommended that massive and intensive campaign should be mounted nationwide to sanitize people on the need to stop all forms of abuse associated with widowhood.

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