

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS FOR PRIMITIVE TRIBAL GROUPS IN JHARKHAND: CSR INITIATIVES BY TATA STEEL

Ranjana Agarwal

Assistant Professor, Economics at IMT Ghaziabad

Manish Pruthi , Pawan Lodhi & Pallavi Kumar

Students of PGDBM, IMT Ghaziabad

Abstract: Tribals constitute around 28 % of total population of the state of Jharkhand, which is around 8% of total tribal population of India. The primitive tribal group (PTG) constitutes 3.9% of the total scheduled tribe population of India. 9 tribes have been identified as primitive tribal groups in Jharkhand.

As part of CSR initiatives, Tata Steel has undertaken several initiatives. Under the departments of Tribal Cultural Society, TCS, the Tata group is promoting the cause of two Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG), namely Birhor and Savar, residing in Patamda and Jamshedpur blocks, Jharkhand. The main aim to aim of TCS is to create employability.

This paper looks into the CSR initiatives taken by Tribal Cultural Society. The main objective of the paper is to understand CSR activities undertaken by Tata Steel for PTG in Jharkhand. The impact of CSR activities is highlighted. This paper is based on primary data. Data has been collected from 5 villages in Patamda and Jamshedpur blocks in Jharkhand.

Keywords: livelihood options, handicrafts, primitive tribes, training, Savars

1. INTRODUCTION

Tribals constitute around 28 % of total population of the state of Jharkhand, which is around 8% of total tribal population of India. The primitive tribal group (PTG) constitutes 3.9% of the total scheduled tribe population of India. 9 tribes have been identified as primitive tribal groups in Jharkhand.

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⁵ TCS and TSRDC are CSR initiatives working in Rural development. The Tata Steel Rural Development Society (TSRDS), a corporate NGO supported by Tata Steel and the Tribal Cultural Society (TCS), a non-profit organisation promoted by Tata Steel, are both

two Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG), namely Birhor and Savar, residing in Patamda and Jamshedpur blocks, Jharkhand. The main aim to aim of TCS is to create employability.

This paper looks into the CSR initiatives taken by Tribal Cultural Society. The main objective of the paper is to understand CSR activities undertaken by Tata Steel for PTG in Jharkhand. The impact of CSR activities is highlighted. The paper tries to

- a. Understand the lifestyle of PTG and their unique characteristics
- b. CSR activities of Tata Steel for tribals
- c. It looks at the training programme implemented for livelihood options and other initiatives taken by Tata Steel for primitive tribal groups

Methodology

This paper is based on primary data. As very little information is available on PTG, field visits were the main source of information⁶. Information about Birhors and Sabars were obtained by gathering documents from Tribal Cultural Society at the start of the study. Discussions with members of Tribal Cultural society⁷ and visits to Heritage Hall, Tribal Cultural Society gave deep insights into the lives of PTGs.

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data in 5 villages. The study is exploratory in nature. Primary research was conducted using an exhaustive questionnaire to understand the demographics, culture, tradition, means of livelihood, infrastructure and health facilities, etc. of the PTGs. The respondents were mainly the village heads (local sarpanch) and the literate youth of these villages, though men, women, children too were an integral part of our exploratory research. The sample size consisted of 5 villages each having a population, ranging from 100-150. Data was collected in 2nd week of June, 2012. The villages with Sabar population were Dongagaral, Dholkocha, Lorai Doongri. The Birhor villages were Chotabanki and Paatipani⁸.

instrumental in providing sustainable livelihood to the community around its areas of operations. Tata Steel seeks to secure the interests of the marginalized and provides sustainable solutions to their concerns in its operational areas. The Company covers over 800 villages under its social responsiveness initiatives in the states of Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhatisgarh.

⁶ This paper is part of a project, *Study of Primitive tribal groups in Jharkhand*, done under CRICKET, Centre for Research for Rural Innovation, Capacity Building, Knowledge Management, Entrepreneurship and Technology, IMT Ghaziabad. The research team consisted of faculty and MBA students of IMT Ghaziabad. As a part of CSR initiative, TCS funded the boarding and lodging expenses of the MBA students.

⁷ An orientation session was conducted by Ms. Urmila Ekka, Hon. Secretary, Tribal Cultural Society

⁸ The villages Dongagaral, Dholkocha, Lorayi Doongri in Patamda block and Chhota Baanki in Jamshedpur block were covered by Tribal Cultural Centre, Tata Steel. Tata Steel adopted these villages as part of CSR activities since 2008.

Section 2 gives a background of primitive tribal groups, Birhors and Savars. The activities of Tata Steel are given in section 3. Section 4 discusses the lifestyle of tribes by giving a profile of 5 villages where TCS is operating. Section 5 highlights the initiatives taken by TCS for upliftment of primitive tribal groups.

Section 2 : Birhor and Savars – Primitive Tribal groups

Tribal (Adivasi) is an umbrella term for the heterogeneous set of ethnic groups claimed to be the aboriginal population of India. However, It was observed that not all the tribal communities were at the same level of development and in order to foster the same, certain groups were identified for the first time in 1975-76 and thereafter in 1993, who are regarded as the poorest of the poor amongst the STs and were called Primitive Tribal Groups or PTGs (GOI). Identification of PTGs happens keeping intact the following fixed criteria:

- I. Pre-agricultural level of technology
- II. Very low level of literacy
- III. Declining or stagnant population

These Primitive tribes have distinct characteristics. They are vulnerable mainly due to their shyness and being oblivious to the outside world. 75 communities have been identified as PTGs in India. The literacy level of these communities is very low, less than 5 %.

Among the 32 tribes in Jharkhand, nine tribes have been classified as PTG (Primitive Tribe Groups). They are – Asur, Birhor, Birajia, Korwa, Parahiya (Baiga), Sabar, Mal Pahariya and Souriya Pahariya and Bil Kahria. In Jharkhand, the PTG population is just 2.23 lakh as per 2011 Census. They are primarily hunters and gatherers. The livelihood options of these primitive tribal groups are broadly classified as Agriculture, Forestry, Handicrafts and Handlooms.

Birhor and Savars ⁹

Savars constitute .05% of tribal population in Jharkhand. Their population in 2001 was 3014.

The Savars are one of the primitive tribal groups, mainly found in the Singhbhum district of Jharkhand, Midnapur and Bankura districts of West Bengal, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal districts of Orissa. They belong to the Mundari group but their lingua franca is Bengali. Their houses are in linear fashion in the village, erected with bamboo, wood and mud walls.

⁹ The information about these tribes were obtained from primary data collection by visiting the office of Tribal Cultural Centre, Jamshedpur. Displays of tribal art and heritage at Tata Cultural Centre, Heritage Hall, Sonari, Jamshedpur was one of the main source of information.

Savar family is patrilineal and nuclear in structure where in the sons establish their own family. Married daughters leave the house to lead a family with their husbands. The usual way of acquiring bride is by bride-price and through the consent of parents of boys and girls. But marriage by exchange, elopement and love are prevalent. Savars regard death during old age as good because it brings about the transformation of the body and soul of a person. Dharmadevata or Dharmesh and mother Goddess Earth are the important God and Goddess of the Savars.

The Main economic activities of Savars are basketry, collection of minor forest produce, lac cultivation and agriculture. The Savar have the concept of village Panchayat where all heads of family are the members. The village head is called “*Manjhi*” who holds rent free land for his service.

As per 2001 census, Savars occupy 0.05% of the total Tribal population in Jharkhand.

Birhor¹⁰

Birhors constitute .06% of tribal population in Jharkhand. Their population in 2001 was 4057. Birhor people are a tribal/Adivasi forest people, traditionally nomadic, living primarily in the Indian state of Jharkhand. They speak the Birhor language, which belongs to the Munda group of language of the Austroasiatic language family.

Birhor is made up two words, viz. bir (Jungle) and hor (Man) which means, 'man of the jungle' they are people belonging to forests. They belong to the proto - astroloid stock. They consider themselves descendents of the sun. The family is the basic unit of Birhor society. Normally, the family is monogamous in nature. Only in unusual circumstances as widowhood, sterility, is polygamy practiced. The society is patriarchal in nature. They live in groups known as Tandas.

They are divided into 2 subtribes,

- a. Uthlu Birhor who are nomads, hunters, rope makers
- b. Janghi Birhor who are settled agriculturalists.

The supreme God or creator of the world, the **Singibonga** is the divine authority of Birhors and **Devi Mata** is the mother goddess or Earth Goddess. The **Naya** is the Tanda priest and is main mediator between the Birhor and their gods. It is he who decides which god is to be worshipped.

They are mostly landless and earn their living by rope making, hunting, food gathering and fishing. They depend upon forest resources, labour and agriculture. Their population in Jharkhand as per Census 2001 is 4057.

Section 3 :CSR Activities of TATA STEEL under TCS

¹⁰ Apart from displays of TCS, information about Birhors was attained from www.birhore.nic.in and Shukla (2011).

Tribal Cultural Society or TCS, is a non-profit organization, equipped with the expertise and financial resources to make a difference in the lives of marginalized tribal communities. TCS was set up to ensure that the voice of the tribal community did not go unheeded. Empowerment of the marginalized community is TCS's primary aim. The society focuses on three important issues: a. education b. improvement of livelihood opportunities c. preservation of the ethnic identity of the tribal community.

Developmental concerns often have a way of neglecting indigenous people. The cause of locals have been taken up by TCS in its goal of livelihood generation. TCS aims to guarantee livelihood by improving the employability of tribal people. Self-help groups enable TCS to fulfil dreams of running microenterprises. The society arranges for bead and jute handicraft making, paper making, candle making, stone carving classes, etc. TCS also supports numerous local clubs and promotes tribal customs and traditions in an attempt to help tribal children understand their heritage. This programme includes a tribal appreciation programme to promote indigenous value systems.

TCS promotes various initiatives, which include –

- a. The Kati Tournament (Kati is a traditional game played in tribal villages of Jharkhand and Orissa).
- b. The Tribal Culture Centre (TCC) that illustrates the ethnic identities of major tribal communities of Jharkhand.
- c. The Artisans's Hub – a project designed to support tribal artisans and provide them with a stable monthly income.

Initiatives for education of tribal children and youth

Tata Steel has influenced the integration of tribals in the economy in a less obvious and immediate way by promoting the cause of education of tribal children and youth of various ages at different stages in their academic career. They are

- Informally run balwadis (crèches/nurseries) for infants and toddlers.
- Financial assistance and sponsorships.
- Sponsorship of two tribal student every year by TCS at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.
- Project Sahyog helps tribal students to develop self-esteem and plan their future.
- Assistance and support for The Xavier Institute for Tribal Education near Jamshedpur.
- Financial support worth Rs 25 lakhs to more than 493 meritorious tribal students each year since 2004.
- Fifty matriculate students identified every year for coaching that prepares them for higher studies.

In accordance with the Affirmative Action Policy, all Education and Scholarship initiatives benefit the ST/SC community. In 2009-10, a total of 646 students were supported. The Company has set itself a target of supporting 700 students annually by 2012 and will allocate a sum of Rs 4.7 million for these scholarships.

Girl Child - To help underprivileged girl children enter the mainstream of learning a camp school programme was initiated with the help of the Jharkhand Education Project. The nine-month intensive learning course offered to students aged 9-14 makes up for education lost till the 5th standard and qualifies them for admission to class VI. In 2009-10, 200 girl children enrolled in the two camp schools.

Gramshree Mela

This is an event that provides an opportunity for rural people to sell their products directly in major markets. As a platform to link rural craftsmen and women with potential markets and customers, Tata Steel hosted the 17th Gramshree Mela in March 09 in collaboration with Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). In this extremely successful initiative, a total of 209 stalls were put up with artisans displaying artifacts from 20 states of India. The sales have progressed from a mere Rs 6 lakhs in 1992 to Rs 82 lakhs in 2009.

Many artisans from the West Bokaro Unit have been linked with Ambedkar Hastshilp Yojana from where they get skill up gradation training and market linkages in Dokra, Bamboo craft and Terracotta.

Nearly 100 artisans have been insured under Rajeev Gandhi Shilpi Beema Yojna, whereby they can claim medical expenses for Rs. 15,000 per year for self and family members

Sports

The Tribal Cultural Society (TCS) promoted by Tata Steel has been working for the preservation of the rich tribal heritage and culture of the indigenous people in the state of Jharkhand. The tribals have a strong physical built that makes them a natural sportsperson. Many tribal have been successful in establishing themselves in sports and athletics in the past. Jaipal Singh Munda was the captain of Indian Olympic Team in 1928 that won the first Gold Medal for the country in Hockey. Silvenus Dung Dung, Michael Kindo, Manohar Topno, Vimal Lakra etc. have played Hockey for India at Olympics, World Cup, Asian Games or the Asia Cup. There have been several other brilliant sportspersons and athletes from the tribes of Jharkhand. In addition to Sekkor few other traditional tribal games being revived by the Tribal Cultural Society include Kati, Bahu-Chor and Chhur.

TCS as a champion of Birhor and Savars

TCS is promoting the cause of socioeconomic development of primitive tribal groups. In its endeavour to take development among primitive tribal group which is a community basically shy and reticent in nature, TCS piloted a project in four villages of East Singhbhum which was inhabited by the Savars and Birhors. Dholkocha, Dongagaral and Patipani villages of Patamda block and Chota Banki under Jamshedpur block were adopted by TCS.

TCS has been working in close contact with 87 tribal families residing in the adopted villages since 2008. Initiatives have been taken regarding income generation, health & hygiene and education. The aim was to make these primitive tribal groups become economically self reliant by providing them livelihood opportunities.

Section 4: Profile of PTG people where TCS is working

Table 1 : Profile of Villages

S NO. Village	Village	Under	Dominant Tribe	Block/District	No. of families	Literacy level
1	Dongagarh	TCS	Sabar	Pataamda/East Singhbhum	33	Only 1 or 2 literate
2	Chotabanki	TCS	Birhor	Pataamda/East Singhbhum	22	Literate (some upto Class 6)
3	Loraidoongri	TCS	Sabar	Pataamda/East Singhbhum	40	1-2 per family (some upto Class 6)
6	Dholkocha	TCS	Sabar	Pataamda/East Singhbhum	22	Few literate
9	Paatipani	TCS	Birhor	Pataamda/East Singhbhum	16	Only 1 or 2 literate

Source: Primary Survey

An overview of 5 villages under study is shown in Table 1. The majority villages, 3 out of 5 are Sabar settlements while only 2 are Birhor colonies. The size of population ranged from 40 families in Loraidoongri village to 16 families in Paatipaani village. They live in small clusters, average around 20-22 families.

Their literacy level of these tribal groups is very low, only 1 to 2 persons in each village. Exceptions are Chotabaanki and Loraidoongri which are more literate. Loraidoongri has the highest number of literate persons where almost each family has a literate member. Some have studied upto class 6.

Table 2 – Economic profile

S N	Name of Village	Main Occupations	Farming	Land	Outstanding features	Income level
1	Dongagarh	gatherers, farming, broom making	Yes	Landless	Bamboo art	Rs 1200 pm
2	Chotabanki	gatherers, contract farming, rope making	Yes (contract farming)	Landless	rope making, sieve & basket making	Rs. 2000/- per month per couple
3	Loraidoongri	gatherers, farming, broom making	Yes	Marginal farmsupt o 1 hectare)	trained for dokra & bamboo art	Rs.1000 p.m.
6	Dholkocha	gatherers, laborers	No	Landless	Bamboo art	BPL
9	Paatipani	Gathering wood,	No	No	None	BPL

		working as labourers				
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Source: Primary Survey

It is seen most of the families in the selected villages are landless. Only in Loraidoongri, there are marginal farmers. So their incomes are very low. Except for Chotabanki where incomes are Rs 2000 per month, majority of villages have incomes below poverty line. The economic conditions needs radical improvement.

Some farmers have resorted to work as contract labourers for earning their livelihood in Santhal farms. Some others have work on daily wage basis for construction activities under the NREGA scheme, as it gives them higher wages of almost Rs 120 per day. Some villagers of Dholkocha work in the stone crushing units located nearby. Their other occupations are gatherers , broom, pattal and rope making.

The main craftsmanship of people is rope making, baskets making, bamboo art and broom making. They use Kaasi grass for making unique items¹¹.

Table 3 : Infrastructure

S NO.	Village	Literacy level	Infrastr ucture	Wells / Handpump	Electricity	Health facility	Post Office	Drinking Water	Mobiles
1	Dongagarh	Only 1 or 2 literate	Primary & high school	wells – 1 hand pumps - 2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
2	Chotabanki	Literate (some upto Class 6)	Primary & high school, anganwadi, canal,	wells – 1 hand pumps - 2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
3	Loraidunga	1-2 per family (some upto Class 6)	Primary & high school, canal	wells – 1 hand pumps - 1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
6	Dholkocha	Few literate	Primary & middle	wells – 1 hand pumps - 1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

¹¹ *Kasi Grass* and *Baans* are abundantly available in the area. Both are used to make containers, net, pots, etc. *Kasi Grass* is stiffer as compared to other grasses which are used in the handicrafts. This helps in making the handicrafts stronger and better. Also, *Kasi Grass* is available only in this region which gives them geographical advantage of having superior raw material as compared to their peers in other part of the country. The art of making these handicrafts is inherent to them but this art is limited to only making rounds shaped products as per their utility

			school						
9	Paatipani	Only 1 or 2 literate	Primary, middle & high school	wells – 1 hand pumps - 1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Source: Primary Survey

The tribals have been provided houses under govt. schemes¹². In all villages, Birsa Munda Awas Yojana has been a fairly successful scheme in these villages. There are 2 room houses. There are no toilets in the houses. They have to use the fields and waterfalls for bathing and toilet purpose.

Food is distributed under Antodaya scheme where each family gets share of Rice of 30 kg per month.

These villages are located in interior regions. The main roads or highway connectivity is good due to work under *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana*. The scheme, had led to development of roads in this region. These villages are connected through approach roads, some of which are Katcha. The villages are located in the interior and one travels quite a bit to reach these roads. One the way to the villages, one can see signboards, wall writing to spread awareness on health issues. One could see posters related to mosquitoes to prevent spread of malaria.

Electricity connection is almost nonexistent. However, in spite of having electric connection, there is no access to electricity. Wherever accessible, availability is restricted to using it for charging mobiles. Maximum one or 2 bulbs can be lit and mobiles can be charged.

Health facility is available in most of the selected villages. Although PHC exist in most villages, they may not be fully accessible. In the villages under Tata Steel, TSRDC is providing health facilities.

All villages have access to clean drinking water. All villages have at least one well and one handpump. Post Offices are available in all villages while banks are available in seven villages. People have accounts in Banks to access NREGA funds. Mobile connectivity has penetration in around 90% of villages, and is mainly used for listening songs. Many families have a mobile.

It is seen from Table 3 that most of the selected villages have primary and upper primary schools, with *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*. It is seen that primary and middle schools are present in all villages. Accessibility to high schools exists in some villages.

¹² Birsa Munda Awaas Yojana and Siddu Awaas Yojana.

However, inspite of having schools under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, enrolment rate of the PTG is low. It is seen that 70% of enrolment in these schools is non PTG. There is a need to create awareness about education

High dropout ratio is prevalent in every village which was visited. Tribal Cultural Society has adopted 4 villages and putting them in boarding schools. It was noted that the learning abilities of these PTG was fairly good.

Section 5 : Work done by TCS in these villages

TCS has taken several initiatives for promoting the cause of PTGs.

Some of them are mentioned. 12 solar lanterns were installed in the four villages

In the year 2008, every PTG household was provided with a goat. They have been rearing their goats whose numbers has increased. They sell the goat to meet their contingency needs

In April 2010, 4 Women self help groups were formed in these villages and trained in the production of bamboo home usage products

The Sabar and Birhor families started kitchen gardens with support from TCS. They were provided with vegetable seeds

60 adults from PTG villages enrolled in Adult literacy Centres run in the villages. At the end of the programme, 31 community members graduated as literates from the programme

TCS constructed a community shed in Dholkocha village. This shed is being used for meetings and trainings

Medical Assistance

As the population of the primitive tribes is stagnant or declining, special emphasis has been given by TCS on providing medical facilities to the ailing residents of these villages. Besides curative services, awareness level on health isn also raised through health talks on pertinent issues. In the weekly mobile medical clinics held in these villages, 1660 cases were treated in Financial Year 2010-11.

9 of the crtically ill patients from these villages were taken for hospitalisation in Jamshedpur's Mercy Hospital. The entire cost of hospitalisation was borne by TCS

TCS distributed medicated mosquito bed- nets to a total of 40 Sabar and Birhor families in three primitive tribal group villages namely Dongagaral, Dholkocha and Patipani. This step was taken as a counter-measure to check the outbreak of malaria, especially

incidence of cerebral malaria. Villagers were explained method of using medicated bed-nets and encouraged to use it for protection from vector borne diseases.

SPARK – Sabar children Education Initiative

TCS is promoting the cause of education among PTGs. The education of children was never a concern among Sabar and Birhor parents. TCS took up the step to intervene for the education of children from this community. A pilot project was launched in the year 2011 in collaboration with a private residential school.

Faced with years of neglect, parents in the two communities required lot of counselling to finally agree to send their children to the residential schools. Initially, 10 Sabar children were identified in July 2011 from Dongagaral and Dholkocha villages. These children were sent to Holy Cross School at Chowka for residential education.

TCS faced many challenges regarding children's education. The parents had to be convinced about the well being of their children. There were major challenges in acclimatizing children with the new environment of the school. TCS made significant effort to convince the parents as well as acclimatize the children. With time, children got used to going to school and started learning new things. At regular intervals, parents were taken to school to visit their children. The children came back home in holidays and festivals.

The children started picking up in studies. Their all round improvement was clearly visible. They learnt poetry, songs and were able to read and write in Hindi. They looked forward to going back to school after holidays. Parents came forward to send their children to school. The project has now been spread to other villages. Under the project Aakash in year 2012-13, 118 students have been enrolled for residential school education. TCS is bearing the full cost of education.

Training in making handicrafts for sustainable livelihood options

TCS model's basic aim is to provide training for the advancement and welfare of the tribal and to be a platform to market these products by procuring demand from institutions. The revenues minus the cost incurred in ploughed back to the society. The basic aim is to provide training to all the eligible tribal and work as an intermediary in collecting the orders.

The villages where TCS is working and traces of an inherent art and skill set is observed amongst people residing in those villages are selected. Handicraft training programme and initiatives are undertaken.

All of the willing working population are inducted and the training initiative commences. In some places, centres are set up or camps are put up; materials and artisans (or expert trainers) are procured from villages where training already happened.

Training is provided with proper compensation and benefits. Not only wages are paid, but lunch is also provided amongst other benefits. Motive is more of welfare and well being of the tribes.

TCS procures order from various channels like corporates and forwards them to the artisans. The skilled artisans further fulfill the orders given to them occasionally by gathering in a place for a few days.

Marketing Model

The model takes care of the whole community and involves every willing individual but at the same time the procurement of the order system is in consignments. TCS takes responsibility of all of it. Their main clients are PSUs and TATA's other organizations.

In Dongagaral village in Patamda block, there is an SHG called *Bans Kala Sabar Birhor Samiti*. The SHG has been trained in making bamboo artifacts and they are subsequently engaged in its production. TCS facilitates to link their products with the market. In order to expand the production from aesthetic products to utility products, 5 artisans from SHG received training on Bamboo furniture making and finishing from Society for Rural Industrialization, Ranchi in October 2011. The total sale of stone and bamboo artefacts in 2010-11 was Rs 1.75 lakhs (Annual Reports: TCS).

In the year 2011-12, a training on Bamboo Craft was organised for 30 Sabar youth of Gobarghusi, Oppo and Loraidungri villages. This training was to provide them with skill for sustainable livelihood and income.

Conclusion

The work done by TCS for primitive tribal groups has yielded considerable results. The shy and reticent youth of PTG who previously wandered aimlessly have started working shoulder to shoulder with the mainstream population. Social transformations are taking place as a result of CSR initiatives of Tata Steel. Livelihood options are being generated in the form of making of handicrafts. Ethnic goods are being contributed to society.

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