

## **“A Comparative Study Of Psychosocial Stress, Health And Satisfaction With Life Among Professional And Non-Professional Women”**

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### **Abstract**

In today's globalized society, women must fulfill the dual roles of career builders and housewives. Consequently, given the current circumstances, research on psychosocial stress, health, and life satisfaction among employed and housewife women are desperately needed. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the pattern of psychosocial stress that affects the health among employed or housewives. The study also aimed to compare the life satisfaction level of employed and housewives. In the present research, sample was drawn from the population of Gorakhpur city government service employed and housewives (i.e., graduate employees and graduate housewives respectively) from urban areas by using purposive sampling technique. The total participant's size taken for the study was eighty (80) out of which 40 participants constituted of employed and 40 constituted of housewives. The self-administered questionnaire included questions related to socio demographics and three validated scales; the Psychosocial Stress Questionnaire was developed by A.K. Srivastava (1995) to assess primary components of psychosocial stress, to measure health of employed and housewives health Questionnaire developed by the researcher and satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin (1985). Participants' scores were evaluated and analyzed after using statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, one way ANOVA. The results indicate that employed women scored higher for personal relation in comparison to housewife. Similarly, employed women scored higher for responsibilities stress, as well as health related problem, social status related problems and psychosocial stress total in comparison to housewife. Finally, it may be said that employed women become stressed out when the responsibilities of their jobs become too much for them to handle. They also experience stress from trying to juggle their families and careers.

**Keywords:** psychosocial stress, life satisfaction, employed women, housewives

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, women must fulfill the dual roles of career builders and housewives in a globalized society. There have been significant socio-cultural shifts in Indian society, which are seen in the areas of health, education, technology, awareness, and women's empowerment. Higher education made it easier for women to find profitable job in the modern era. These days, more women are pursuing careers in non-traditional fields like engineering, management, science, and technology as well as traditional fields like teaching and nursing. Conversely, housewives who work do not receive any sort of compensation similar to that of hired women. This study was done to find out if housewives or working women are content with their everyday lives and to look at the pattern of psychosocial stress that impacts their health. Numerous studies have shown that the dual roles that employed women play place a great deal of pressure on them and negatively impact their health and well-being because marriage and work both add complexity to a person's life (Williams et.al. 1997; Singh & Singh, 2006).

Everyone talks about stress these days. Its main victims include not just high pressure CEOs but also laborers, slum dwellers, working women, businesspeople, professionals, and even kids. Because of the growing complexity and competition in living standards, stress is an unavoidable part of life. In today's world of rapid change, no one is stress-free, and no career is stress-free. Stress arises for everyone, regardless of the context—family, work, school, company, organization, or any other social or economic activity. "Hans Selye" presented the idea of stress to the biological sciences for the first time in 1936. According to Pascal (1992), stress is the perception of a situation in which one's demands are not being met. Stress is a natural aspect of modern life and will probably only get worse as things get more complicated. The idea of role—which is defined as a person's place within a system—carries a lot of weight. As a result, stress in general and work-related stress in particular have grown commonplace in modern society and have drawn a lot of attention recently. Stress is a topic that is difficult to avoid. There will always be stress in daily life. Numerous factors might contribute to stress, including employment

### **Psychosocial Stress**

A cognitive assessment of the issues involved and the available solutions leads to psychosocial stress. Though psychological The definition of stress is an imbalance between the expectations that are placed on us and our capacity to handle them. When we feel a threat in our life, we experience psychosocial stress. Unsettling things that have happened to you recently can lead to psychosocial stress. An earthquake or hurricane that recently occurred in your neighborhood, or an unexpected health issue that affects you or a loved one, are two examples of these stressful contemporary events. According to the National Institutes of Health (1977), acute psychosocial stress might happen if you have a horrible disease or if a loved one passes away in an accident. Notable occurrences like being pregnant, getting split up, or getting divorced can also cause significant psychological strain. Even though you're stressed up right now because of what's going on in your life, things that happened in the past might still have an impact on you. A paper titled "Field-Deployable Tools for Quantifying Exposures to Psychosocial Stress" from the Initiative Exposure Biology Program was published in 2006. It highlights the significance of questioning individuals about life experiences that may have had a stressful effect on them, such as abuse, bullying, violence, or trauma like a war or earthquake.

Working women's mental health and wellness may be impacted by psychosocial stress, given the demands of their jobs. When the responsibilities of their jobs become too much for them to handle, women become stressed. Apart from mental health issues, women often experience continuous stress, are homemakers or employed, and may experience physical health issues such musculoskeletal disorders or cardiovascular disease. Frequently, persistent issues rather than isolated incidents are what lead to psychosocial stress. Since 1977, physicians have assessed people's experiences and emotions using a set of questions known as the Modified Life Events Section of the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview. It inquires about situations like conflict, prejudice, violence, disease, or poverty that might lead to persistent stress. Chronic psychosocial stressors encompass familial issues as well, such as taking care of an unwell parent or disabled kid. Any perceived threat to our social standing, social esteem, respect, and/or acceptance within a group, as well as threats to our sense of self-worth and threats over which we feel powerless, can all be considered sources of psychosocial stress. The body may experience a stress reaction in response to any of these dangers. These stressors can be among the most exhausting to cope with because they can lead to feelings of alienation and lack of support. Coping may become more challenging as a result.

For ages, women have been expected to prioritize the needs of the family over their own in order to achieve the ideal roles of perfect mother and wife. When a woman deviated from the norm, spoke her mind, or decided to work outside the home, her spouse was held accountable for not treating her well. The perception of working women has, however, significantly shifted in recent years as a result of social mobilization, migration, the rise in the number of professional women in the workforce, etc. As a result, the researcher contends that in addition to working women, homemaker women also face obstacles both within and outside the house. Additionally, their role has evolved. Along with being a mother, wife, and caregiver for the household finances, homemaker women also do many roles. In addition to the stress of being unemployed, a woman who is well qualified but is not working outside the home for whatever reason may feel as though her skills are not being fully utilized.

Women's health is different from men's in many special ways. Women's health is a prime example of population health, which is described as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" by the World Health Organization (2016). Many organizations contend for a more inclusive definition that includes women's general health, better stated as "The health of women," as women's reproductive health is frequently considered as the exclusive focus. The disparities are intensified in developing nations where women face additional challenges and have fewer opportunities in terms of health.. Throughout their lives, about 25% of women will encounter mental health problems. Compared to men, women are more likely to experience anxiety, sadness, and psychosomatic problems. Depression is the most common disease burden worldwide. Women experience depression twice as frequently as men do in the US. Depending on a woman's marital status, her husband's help around the house, her parental status, her attitude toward work, and the specifics of her job, employment can have a positive or negative impact on her physical and mental health ( Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989; Marks & MacDiarmid, 1996; Moen et.al, 1992). Studies have indicated that women's physical health may benefit from paid work (Hibbard & Pope, 1991; Walderon & Jacobs, 1988). Despite the possible increased demands, work outside the home has been linked to improved psychological health (Barnett & Baruch, 1985) and mental and physical health (Repetti et al., 1989). An examination of the research clearly shows that work-related stress alone may not be sufficient predictor of health risk in women employed outside the home; it's possible that the interaction of the multiple roles that the women occupy is relevant to the health benefits or risks of employment acting as a mother, employee, and wife. These findings may have a positive overall impact on global well-being (Pietromonaco, Manis & Forhardt-Lane 1986).

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is the cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole. Research indicates that characteristics such as race, socio-economic status, marital status, education, and social involvement, as well as level of self-esteem, presence or absence of depression, and locus of control may influence life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a predictor of longevity

and psychiatric morbidity, with a dose response relationship evident between life dissatisfaction and all-cause disease, injury, and mortality. In addition, life satisfaction is related to other health predictors such as favorable self-reported health, social support, and positive health behaviors. One could argue that improved physical health is necessary for a higher quality of life. Individuals may find satisfaction in one area of their lives but not in another; it should be noted that some people may be extremely dissatisfied in one area of their lives while being quite content in other areas. Furthermore, because of the influence of a certain domain, an individual may be content in other areas of their lives yet unsatisfied overall in others (Diener, 1984).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Survey was conducted of a representative sample of working and non-working mothers in Tehran in 1998. Four main explanatory factors were examined (personal well-being, socio-demographic, work and work-related, and social-life context variables) alongside a range of mental and physical health outcome variables. Unlike in the West, where women's paid work is generally associated with better health, statistically significant differences between working and non-working women were not found in Tehran. It is argued that this is a result of the counter-balance of the positive and negative factors associated with paid work, such as increased stress on one hand and self-esteem on the other. Iranian society's particular socio-cultural climate has contributed to this finding, with its dominant gender-role ideology; the priority and extra weight placed on women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, and the remarkably influential impact of husbands' attitudes on women's health (Ahmad, 2009). Bhattacharjee et al. (1983) studied on family adjustment of married working and non-working women. In his research finding he concluded that a woman's adjustment, whether employed or not, is a function of her own personality traits, expectations, and perceptions combined with those of her spouse and family members. Multiple Classifications. Analyses on responses from women explained, that full-time housewives are more dissatisfied with their lives than women employed outside the home. Housewives who had wanted a career were more personally dissatisfied than housewives who had never wanted a career. The career-oriented housewives were the ones who expressed greater personal dissatisfaction than employed women (Townsend & Patricia, 2002).

A Survey of Modern Living, examined self-esteem, psychological well-being, and physical health Women. Results indicate that working women had higher self-esteem and less psychological anxiety than housewives. Working women also reported better physical health than housewives (Coleman, & Antonucci, 1976).

Ferree (1976) and earlier studies by other authors have argued that women with jobs outside the home are generally happier and more satisfied with their lives than are full time housewives. It was concluded that both work outside the home and fulltime housewifery have benefits and costs attached to them; the net result is that there is no consistent or significant differences in patterns of life satisfaction between the two groups.

Balaji (2014) studied various factors (such as the size of the family, the age of children, the work hours and the level of social supports) which could lead to work family conflict and the stress undergone by women employees. He concluded that married women employees experience work family conflict due to the number of hours worked outside the home, flexible or in flexible working hours, size of the family and number of dependants of the family. These factors have severe consequences for the psychological distress and wellbeing of married working women.

Job-related stress factors are adverse working conditions such as excessive noise, extreme temperature or overcrowding (McGrath, 1978), role ambiguities, conflict, overload and under load (Arcold et al, 1986). Explored stress management techniques used by working women are sleep and relaxation, exercise, time management, diet and yoga (Upamany 1997). The research study has reported that supportive work and family policy, effective management, communication, health insurance coverage for mental illness and chemical dependence, and fixed scheduling of work hours were effective in reducing job burnout (Lawless, 1991). Work and family are two important parts of a person's life and both are closely related (Ford et al., 2007). Since an increasing number of women are entering the work force and pursuing careers (Sevim, 2006), they have to balance the competing demands of both workplace and family life (Bickasiz, 2009). Employed are working for longer hours and taking more work at home (Dawn et al, 1999). This situation results in a greater amount of stress for employed. In the present study, there is an important need to find out the pattern of psychosocial stress between employed and housewives and to see the effect of psychosocial stress on working and housewives on the basis of their life satisfaction. Satisfaction with one's life is the ultimate goal of all females, yet it seems to remain so elusive. Women have been, and continued to find satisfaction with their lives.

### Research question:

1. Has there been any change in the pattern of psychosocial stress, Health and life satisfaction among Employed and Housewives over the period of time?

**Objectives:**

1. To find out the pattern of psychosocial stress between employed and housewives.
2. To compare the life satisfaction level of employed and housewives.
3. To compare the health related issue between employed and housewives.
4. To investigate whether psychosocial stress has any effect on life satisfaction among employed and housewives.

**METHOD****Research Design:**

In the present research, sample was drawn from the population of Gorakhpur city government service employed and housewives (i.e., graduate employees and graduate housewives respectively) from urban areas by using purposive sampling technique.

**Participants:**

The total participant's size taken for the study was eighty (80) out of which 40 participants constituted of employed and 40 constituted of housewives.

**Inclusion criteria:**

- Respondents who are graduate or having higher educational qualification.
- Employed and Housewives mothers living with their spouse.

**Exclusion criteria:**

- Those who are suffering from psychiatric/psychological problems.
- Those who are living in joint family.

**Measuring Tools:**

A set of three measuring tools has been used. Brief descriptions of these measures are given below:-

**Psychosocial Stress Questionnaire:**

This questionnaire was developed by A.K. Srivastava (1995) to assess primary components of psychosocial stress, i.e., pressure, tension, anxiety, conflict, frustration, depression etc. Perceived psychosocial stress emerges due to certain circumstances like physical and psychological problems, failure, constraints, demands, role conflict etc. There were 42 items in the questionnaire which mark out seven dimensions of psychosocial stress. These are:

1. Tense or strained interpersonal relationship
2. Excessive/demanding responsibilities/liabilities and expectations of others
3. Economics constraints/extra economic burden
4. Marriage related problems
5. Health related problems
6. Adverse social situation
7. Perceived or imagined threats to social and economic status or prestige.

**Health Questionnaire:**

To measure health of employed and housewives health Questionnaire developed by the researcher. It has six dimensions i.e. Physical Health, Social Health, Emotional Health, Mental Health, Environmental Health, Spiritual Health. Each dimension consists of 10 items. And these dimensions calculated from very unhealthy to very healthy.

**Satisfaction with Life Scale:**

Hindi adaptation of satisfaction with life scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin (1985) used in this study. This scale had five items which assess life satisfaction in global manner. The responses were made on a seven point scale ranging from strongly agree

(7) to strongly disagree (1). The psychometric properties of the scale were found good. The retest reliability was 0.82 (after two months) and coefficient alpha was 0.87.

**Procedure and Data Analysis**

First of all, proper rapport established with the participants. Then the purpose of the study revealed before them and their consent sought. Responses taken from employed women as well as housewives with the help of the above measuring tools. After that mean, SD and one-way ANOVA statistical analysis were done.

## RESULTS

This section of results includes comparative analysis of the studied variables. To know the mean differences between groups (employed and housewife) among different dimensions of psychosocial stress one way ANOVA was calculated.

**Table 1- Means and SDs of dimensions of Psychosocial Stress as a function of groups**

Psychosocial Stress & Dimensions	N	Groups	Mean	SD
Personal Relation	40	Employed	4.22	2.33
	40	Housewife	2.60	2.32
Responsibilities Stress	40	Employed	4.52	2.59
	40	Housewife	2.65	2.22
Economical Problem	40	Employed	4.10	3.63
	40	Housewife	4.05	2.22
Marriage Related Problem	40	Employed	1.70	3.15
	40	Housewife	2.30	2.42
Health Related Problem	40	Employed	4.65	4.37
	40	Housewife	2.95	2.35
Unfavorable Problem	40	Employed	5.70	5.21
	40	Housewife	5.27	4.06
Social Status Related Problem	40	Employed	5.30	3.71
	40	Housewife	3.52	3.12
Psychosocial Stress Total	40	Employed	30.22	16.30
	40	Housewife	23.40	14.51

Table-1 shows the mean comparison between groups for different dimensions of psychosocial stress. The one way ANOVA was found to be significant [ $F(1, 78) = 9.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ] and mean (4.22) shows that employed group scored higher for personal relation in comparison to housewife group (2.60).

**Table 2 Summary of One-Way ANOVA for Psychosocial Stress with its dimensions**

Psychosocial Stress & Dimensions	SS	df	M S	F
Personal Relation	Between Groups	1	52.81	9.70**
	Within Groups	78	424.57	
Responsibilities Stress	Between Groups	1	70.31	12.052**
	Within Groups	78	455.07	
Economical Problem	Between Groups	1	.05	0.004
	Within Groups	78	879.50	
Marriage Related Problem	Between Groups	1	7.20	0.911
	Within Groups	78	616.80	
	Between Groups	1	57.80	

Health Related Problem	Within Groups	78	963.00	4.68*
	Between Groups	1	3.61	
Unfavorable Problem	Within Groups	78	1704.37	1.65
	Between Groups	1	63.01	
Social Status Related Problem	Within Groups	78	920.375	5.340*
	Between Groups	1	931.61	
Psychosocial Stress Total	Within Groups	78	18580.57	3.911*
	Between Groups	1		

Moreover, responsibilities stress found significant at  $p < .01$  level, health related problem found significant at  $p < .05$  level, social status related problem found significant at  $p < .05$  level and psychosocial stress total found significant at  $p < .05$  level also (table 2).

Further, to know the mean differences between groups (employed and housewife) among different dimensions of satisfaction with life one way ANOVA was calculated.

**Table 3 Means and SDs of Satisfaction with Life as a function of groups**

Satisfaction with Life	N	Groups	Mean	SD
	40	Employed	54.05	12.50
	40	Housewife	56.80	10.11

Summary of ANOVA has been presented in table 4. Result shows that the satisfaction with life of both groups of women has not reached the significant level.

**Table 4 -Summary of One-Way ANOVA for Satisfaction with Life with its dimensions**

Psychosocial Stress & Dimensions	SS	df	MS	F
	Between Groups	1	151.25	1.17
Satisfaction with Life	Within Groups	78	129.31	

Moreover, to know the mean differences between groups (employed and housewife) among general health with its dimensions one way ANOVA was calculated.

**Table 5- Means and SDs of dimensions of General Health as a function of groups**

General Health & Dimensions	N	Groups	Mean	SD
Physical Health	40	Employed	25.10	8.01
	40	Housewife	28.50	5.34
Social Health	40	Employed	29.47	11.32
	40	Housewife	30.22	5.73
Emotional Health	40	Employed	26.05	6.84
	40	Housewife	27.17	5.68
Environmental Health	40	Employed	26.70	5.97
	40	Housewife	26.32	7.12
Spiritual Health	40	Employed	31.00	5.60
	40	Housewife	32.07	5.88
Mental Health	40	Employed	27.50	5.47
	40	Housewife	30.60	5.68
General Health Total	40	Employed	165.70	27.35
	40	Housewife	210.50	235.53

Table-5 shows the mean comparison between groups for different dimensions of general health. The result revealed that physical health was found to be significant [F (1, 78)

= 4.98,  $p < .05$ ]. Further, mental health was also found to be significant [ $F(1, 78) = 6.1, p < .05$ ] (table 6).

**Table 6- Summary of One-Way ANOVA for General Health with its dimensions**

General Health & Dimensions	SS	df	M S	F
Physical Health	Between Groups	1	231.2	4.98*
	Within Groups	78	46.4	
Social Health	Between Groups	1	11.25	.140
	Within Groups	78	80.5	
Emotional Health	Between Groups	1	25.31	.639
	Within Groups	78	39.63	
Environmental Health	Between Groups	1	2.81	.065
	Within Groups	78	43.24	
Spiritual Health	Between Groups	1	23.1	.70
	Within Groups	78	33.03	
Mental Health	Between Groups	1	192.2	6.1*
	Within Groups	78	31.17	
General Health Total	Between Groups	1	40140.8	1.42
	Within Groups	78	28111.5	

## DISCUSSION

The major objective of the present study was to find out the pattern of psychosocial stress between employed and housewives. The results revealed that employed women scored higher for personal relation in comparison to housewife. Similarly, employed women scored higher for responsibilities stress, as well as health related problem, social status related problem and psychosocial stress total in comparison to housewife. Women experience stress when the demands of their job are excessive and greater than their capacity to cope with them. In addition, they feel stress to balance their job and family together. They have to balance the competing demands of both workplace and family life (Bickasiz, 2009). Employed women are working for longer hours and taking more work at home (Dawn et al, 1999). This situation results in a greater amount of stress for employed women.

The other objective of the present study was to compare the health related issue between employed women and housewives. Result shows that housewife scored higher for physical health in comparison to employed women. Further, in the case of mental health housewife scored higher in comparison of employed women. The same results found by Nathawat & Mathur, (1993) Pope & Hibbard (1991) and Walderon & Jacobs (1988). According to their suggestions, women's physical health may benefit from having a job. Furthermore, improving psychological, mental, and physical health (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Repetti et al., 1989) has been linked to the possible increased demands of working outside the home. Some claim that women may not gain from all work situations in terms of health. High job expectations, low work-related social support, and bad workplace conditions were linked to worse health at baseline and more functional decreases throughout a four-year follow-up period, according to a prospective research of 21,290 female registered nurses. Furthermore, Engel (1988) observed both American and Japanese stay-at-home moms feel they can't be happy in this role full-time. However, Japanese women firmly think that working as a wife or mother has a negative impact on marriage and the development of children, and that a wife or mother shouldn't work while her husband wants her at home or when the family has a child in school or adolescence. Women in America are increasingly confident that women can manage the responsibilities of both the home and the workplace. For working women and housewives/mothers, family stress appears to be a strong predictor of wellbeing (Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1998). Women who work and those who stay at home are known to differ from one another, and as such, they need different forms of support in order to successfully fulfill their respective duties. The most common sources of stress for working women are work, kids, and housework; for housewives, the most common sources are children, money, and other obligations (Canam, 1986).

## Delimitations:

The present study is confined to women of Gorakhpur city only As we are very much aware that researches in

behavioral sciences are a continuous process because human behavior always undergo change with the change in environment of psycho-socio-cultural milieu and their subsequent influence on individual and social behavior and moreover, individual or group behavior are generally the result of the conjunctive impact of both social environment and psycho-social make-up of individual or the group.

In view of the above contention, there has always been pit-falls in any research investigation; hence, the present study also bears several limitations if such aspects are properly taken care of his future then very significant piece of research work can be created. An important limitation of the present study is that it only studied relatively a small sample group drawn from Gorakhpur city only, so, it is suggested that for more reliable and greater generality larger and varied sample group be studied. Moreover, it is also suggested here that women's perceived reactions on psychosocial stress, life satisfaction level and health related issues must be studied undertaking numerous others socio-demographic variables like socioeconomic background, rural/urban background and caste systems of different religions because these variables seems to be more relevant so far as women's perception on psychological well-being are concerned. Last but not the least, it is to be mentioned here that there may be some other aspects, which may be fruitful to be undertaken in such future investigations. However it must be kept in mind that researches have never any end where last line can be drawn and beyond that no further researches are required..

### **Implications of the study**

Stress has become a worldwide issue in modern times. Due to the rising rivalry in all spheres of life, people are under stress since they all desire greater pleasure. Numerous studies conducted in recent years have shown that women are beginning to work in a wide range of occupations. In order to manage stress in daily life, one might learn to relax and enjoy life, as career women often experience stress at work. A variety of approaches, including as mindfulness breathing, yoga, and meditation, are effective for most women in managing their stress. Stress can lead to deadly illnesses in women, such as hypertension and cardiovascular disorders. Particularly working women, they are the main victims.

The study highlights the relationship between different levels of psychosocial stresses and its impact on women's satisfaction of life. The findings provided a base/module for researchers to develop various coping strategies for employed women and housewives to cope with psychosocial stresses. It will also contribute to social and psychological researcher concerning women work related issues and highlight the importance of various factors necessary for their health. Hence, the study may have significant implications to the society, family members and women as well.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Based on the acquired data and its interpretations, the following findings have been distilled: Finally, it may be said that working women become stressed out when the responsibilities of their jobs become too much for them to handle. They also experience stress from trying to juggle their families and careers.

1. In the Gorakhpur region of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, where the current study was conducted, it was discovered that housewives had superior health conditions than their working counterparts. 2. The findings showed that working women performed better on personal relationships than housewives did. 3. Similarly, compared to housewives, employed women scored higher overall for psychological stress, health-related problems, and problems connected to social status. 4. Based on current research, it can be said that women who work outside the home must adjust to many new social norms. As a result, their jobs cannot improve their overall quality of life by providing them with more fulfilling experiences than those available to traditional housewives, which would empower women. Therefore, it is recommended that we refrain from addressing the unfavorable parts of women's labor, even though all women are accountable for managing domestic chores. Therefore, family counseling is required to provide them with constructive guidance from psychologists and other behavioral scientists in order to create a friendly atmosphere in the home and to be involved in outside activities that support a higher and healthier standard of life. It is also implied that males should take responsibility for women in all areas of their lives and give it their all to ensure that they are happy and fulfilled in life.

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