



## ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PREFERENCE FOR WATTA-SATTA MARRIAGE IN KAMBOJ COMMUNITY OF MALEWALA VILLAGE IN SIRSA (HARYANA)

Dr. Sunil Kumar<sup>1</sup> and Naveen Malik<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Supervisor, Assistant Professor, Department of sociology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (Haryana)

<sup>2</sup> M.A. (Sociology), JRF Research Scholar, Department of sociology Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (Haryana)

### ABSTRACT

Not only in India, but around the world people led by social, political, cultural and economic reasons to marry their children in Watta-Sattamarriages. These marriages are relied on an alliance between two families and need an investigation to explore the socio economic background, main reasons of this custom as well as functional aspect of this very custom. This paper provides an insight into understanding the possibility of bride exchange among two families in Watta-Sattamarriage custom prevailing in Indian society and its associated mutual threat of vengeance. The sample of the present study comprises 60 married male and females Kamboj respondents from 30 households. SPSS techniques has been applied to gauge direct relationship between variable.

**KEYWORDS:** Watta-Satta marriage, custom, Kamboj, Exchange.

### INTRODUCTION

Watta-Sattais a traditional form of marriage in which two families exchange their daughters and bring brides/daughters in laws for their sons. There is a vision behind these marriages is that if four persons will be married off simultaneously, it will reduce the financial expenditure cost as well as built strong relationship for both of the families. Often it is found that if a person malfeasance with his wife then such behavior will be done by his brother in law against his sister. Double Rishta is the beauty of Watta-Sattamarriages which ever provides security for both families and on the other hand it is a double edged sword, which ever destroys both the two families. An Exchange marriage has been practiced in all over India, china, all over Middle East, Africa, and America subarctic and Australian aboriginals. Exchange marriage is known as Berder in Turkey, Badal in Jordan and Palestine and WattaSatta in India and Pakistan.

Watta-Sattais a marriage alliance of a women and man from one household which are married to a women and man from another household. Watta-Satta comprises the mutual exchange of possessions and remained successful in discouraging dowry system as both parties are in a position of equality. There is a vision behind Watta-Sattamarriages are to marry four persons at the same time that will reduce the financial expenditure cost for both of the families<sup>1</sup>. If any couple have only daughters and no one of their son can be born from the first wife, the later provides the other women (as a second wife) to her husband in the exchange of her daughter, since it is pre requisite for a family in



<sup>1</sup> Personal interview with Harjinder, resident of village Malewala, and district Sirsa, 14 April 2018, born in 1974, undergone watta-satta custom.

Indian patriarchal society to have a boy to sustain as well as to get salvation.<sup>2</sup>



If any family have an eldest girl and they could not find a suitable match even after tried a lot, finally they have to resort *Watta-Satta* exchange marriage<sup>3</sup>. Along with the ignorance of rights in women in Indian rural male dominated societies, mothers are also embroiled in maintaining the bargaining powers in favor of their son instead of their daughters and daughters-in-laws. If parents could not find a suitable match for their son in Pundaan (arrange marriage), they have to opt for *Watta-Satta* exchange marriage to fetch a daughter in law for their son in the exchange of their daughter and behind this, *Double Rishta* is resorted as a protective armor called the mutual threat of reciprocity<sup>4</sup>.

Exchange marriages make the marital relation cheerful between associated families as well as sometimes, it generates a disturbance in one family which leads to pandemonium in associated in-laws family and this enmity fills poison in the relation of both families. Due to which constant anxiety and highly stressful atmosphere remains in the relationship and effects of which affects the children negatively and their socialization gets affected<sup>5</sup>.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature which aims to explore the socio-educational profile of the respondents where *Watta-Satta* marriage is practiced, to identify the reasons and functional aspects of *Watta-Satta* marriages.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

Rana Riaz Saeed (2005) stated about the phenomenon of *Watta Satta* where girls are considered burden on family since it is difficult to find a suitable match for them. Nourishment of the very custom is dowry nuisance. A mutual safety guard works (*Quid Pro Quo*) behind this custom functionally, to maintain *Double-rishta* for both of the families. There are contradictory views Male and female upon this custom as male ruminates that *Watta-Satta* is functioning safeguard by providing married stability for both brides whereas female states that custom is negotiable and can depreciate relation between families and escalate the rate of women assault and divorce. Tsega Endalew (2006) divulge that gumuz, Bantu, tiv and mubti people have been caught up in sister exchange marriage since they consider that sister exchange is an original form of marriage practiced by their ancestors. Sister exchange is characterized by a highly value ritual, deep rooted in ideas of honor and the exchange of a sister for a wife is the benchmark of a wider configuration of production and economic exchange based on reciprocity. Paul Bonannan (2009) reveals that both economic exchange and marriage exchange are practiced as a form of exchange in Tiv Communities. Exchange marriages are called trading values / women trading and they usually obtain wife in the exchange of a cows or brass rods. Tiv do not exchange their daughter to fetch wives, if anyone do so, censured by society. It can be concluded that tiv people follow sister exchange marriages severely as it is instilled in their veins. Edouard Conte (2010) describes that *Watta-Satta* marriages are away from individual choice and comprise one third of all marriages. *Watta-Sattais* relied on reciprocal risk of vengeance that

<sup>2</sup>Personal interview with Sumitra mother in law of Rajrani, Village Malewala, district Sirsa, 15 April 2018, bom 1964, did exchange married to provide a second wife for his father.

<sup>3</sup>Personal interview with Wife of Amandeep, Village Malewala, and district Sirsa, 15 April 2018, bom 1988, married in *watta-satta* custom.

<sup>4</sup> Personal interview with Bhagwani Devi w/o Ramesh Chander, Village Malewala, and district Sirsa, 14 April 2018, bom 1970, married in *watta-satta* custom.

<sup>5</sup>New Horizons in Criminology by Bames and Teeters (1959)

control husbands behavior against bride and protects the welfare of women. It is an old-fashioned feature of so called oriental societies which organizes the action from two sets of parents. Exchange marriage is so strong that it can transform non kin into kin, if any discord or divorce occurred in one house often obliterate the other associate house.

Lauren Goldsmith and Angela Acosta (2011) reveals that *Watta-Satta* is exactly a giving and taking of brides within two families comprise one third of all marriage, deep rooted in conventional area of Pakistan usually lead females in a marriage which she never wanted. The vary custom has been associated with illiteracy, obligatory, early marriages, domestic abuse and HIV/AIDS infection among women. Alan H Bittles (2012) stated that *Watta-Satta* marriages helps to organize the actions of two sets for concerned families, each of whom seek to protect the well-being of their daughter by preventing any probable violent actions by their son-in-law but after the marriage they can pressurize only the behavior of their own son. The function of *Watta-Satta* union for both families is to reduce the hazard of alienation, domestic violence and minimize the adverse effects of mental pressure on brides. Marianne Caron and Lisa Dilllon (2013) stated that exchange marriage establish an alliance marked with the share of family home and exchanges of food and children. Crossed exchange marriages comprises exchange their daughters for a daughter-in-law to save their dowry expanses as well as to retain their land holding.

Gilbert Herdt (2014) reveals that, sister exchange marriage has given a smaller amount of respect rather than infant betrothal in Sambia tribe of New Guinea but it is more common in the community. Man has to arrange their sister to get wives and if an individual does not like the women which would be his wife in exchange, he can refuse to marry and negotiate to the third party to manage a wife for him. Elizabeth Yarrow, et. all. (2015) unveils that *Watta Satta* means to 'give and take' or quid pro quo comprise the marriage exchange of a brother-sister, or uncle-niece pairing across two households. The couples of both families may be promised from a young age, or even prior to birth, but usually not marriage until they achieved the age of puberty. These marriages are used to preserve the system of reciprocity and liability across two families. It is an insurance mechanism to avert domestic abuse and violence for both the brides. *Watta Satta* marriages are common amongst poor families, perhaps because they do not afford dowry for marriage. Within *Watta-Satta* marriages the relative age of the bride and groom is not considered very important as the important thing is to provide a bride in exchange.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The present study consists of the universe of thirty households and sixty respondents those have married under *Watta-Satta* marriage custom. For this purpose snowball sampling technique has been tapped and data is collected from the respondents through interview schedule and bifurcated into three parts such as socio-economic background, reasons and functional aspects of *Watta-Satta* marriage. An advance statistics technique like SPSS has been used to present the data in comparable form.

**Hypothesis:** Less educated people are more inclined to *Watta-Satta* marriages.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

As per the table 1 only 5% respondents obtained their education upto graduation and post graduate and rest of the 20% ,41.66%, 8.33% and 11.66% respondents comprising male and female obtained their education upto primary, middle, matric and secondary respectively. 13.33% of total respondents are illiterate whoever married off under *Watta-Satta* marriage.

Table 2 unveils that near about 46.66% of total respondents are in the age category of 20-30, 28.33% of the respondent were 31-40. Table 3 busted that majority 71.66% respondents hails from joint families those opt for *Watta-Satta* marriages and rest of 28.33% are associated with nuclear families. Only 3 respondents those educated upto post-graduate are from joint families. Income is directly related to education. Income of a man is proportionate to his education. Majority of the respondents 93.33% are engaged in agriculture activities and their monthly income is below 10000. Shockingly only 6.66% are

working in secondary or tertiary sector (Table 4). As per the table 5 reveals that majority 91.66% were married above age of 18 shows that their parents kept the law in mind while marrying them. Only 5 respondents out of 60 were married in the age of under 18. One more reason behind this is that parents wait for arrange marriage/*Pundaan* and their children crosses the age of eighteen. Table 6 reveals that 40% of total respondents wants to marry their son under arrange marriage/ *Pundaan*. Optimistically 36.66% of the respondents left the decision to marry their son on time and condition will determine. Only 23% of the total respondents want their son to marry under *Watta-Satta*. Table 7 unzip the fact that 43.33% of the total respondents agreed to marry under *Watta-Satta* as they were lacking of economic means such as govt. job and agriculture land, 35% found it as a balanced relation for both of the families and 18.33% respondents found this marriage system most suitable at the time of their marriage. Only 3.33% respondents are married under *Watta-Satta* custom as their parents were had died and they got married by their relatives.

**Table No 1 Education Level of the Respondents and Gender of the respondents**

Education Level of the Respondents	. Gender of the respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Illiterate	2	6	8(13.33%)
Primary	7	5	12(20%)
Middle	10	15	25(41.66%)
Matric	3	2	5(8.33%)
Secondary/10+2	6	1	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	1	2	3(05.00%)
Total	29(48.33%)	31(51.66%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 2 Education Level of the Respondents \* Age of the Respondents.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Age of the Respondents				Total
	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	
Illiterate	2	0	3	3	8(13.33%)
Primary	3	6	3	0	12(20%)
Middle	12	8	5	0	25(41.66%)
Matric	3	1	1	0	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	6	1	0	0	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	2	1	0	0	3(05.00%)
Total	28(46.66%)	17(28.33%)	12(20%)	3(5%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 3-Education Level of the Respondents \* Respondents family type.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Respondents family type		Total
	Joint Family	Nuclear Family	
Illiterate	7	1	8(13.33%)
Primary	7	5	12(20%)
Middle	16	9	25(41.66%)
Matric	4	1	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	6	1	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	3	0	3(05.00%)
Total	43(71.66%)	17(28.33%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 4-Education Level of the Respondents \* Monthly income of the respondents.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Monthly income of the respondents			Total
	Below 10000	10000-15000	Above 20000	
Illiterate	8	0	0	8(13.33%)
Primary	12	0	0	12(20%)
Middle	23	2	0	25(41.66%)
Matric	5	0	0	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	7	0	0	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	1	0	2	3(05.00%)
Total	56(93.33%)	2(3.33%)	2(3.33%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 5- Education Level of the Respondents \* Age at marriage of Respondents.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Age at marriage of Respondents		Total
	16-18	Above 18	
Illiterate	2	6	8(13.33%)
Primary	2	10	12(20%)
Middle	0	25	25(41.66%)
Matric	0	5	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	1	6	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	3	3(05.00%)
Total	5(8.33%)	55(91.66%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 6-Education Level of the Respondents \* Choice of the Respondents to Marry their Son**

Education Level of the Respondents	Choice of the Respondents to Marry their Son			Total
	Arrange marriage/Pundaan	Arrange Marriage Within Watta Satta	time and condition will determine	
Illiterate	5	2	1	8(13.33%)
Primary	7	2	3	12(20%)
Middle	9	6	10	25(41.66%)
Matric	3	1	1	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	0	3	4	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	0	3	3(05.00%)
Total	24(40.00%)	14(23.33%)	22(36.66%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 7-Education Level of the Respondents \* In your opinion what the reasons for Watta Satta marriage practice.**

Education Level of the Respondents	In your opinion what the reasons for Watta-Satta marriage practice				Total
	Most suitable at that time	lack of economic means land, job security	Demise of Parents	Balanced Relation	
Illiterate	2	1	0	5	8(13.33%)
Primary	2	5	2	3	12(20%)
Middle	6	13	0	6	25(41.66%)

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Matric	0	2	0	3	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	1	5	0	1	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	0	0	3	3(05.00%)
Total	11(18.33%)	26(43.33%)	2(3.33%)	21(35%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 8-Education Level of the Respondents \* Do you think that *Watta-Sattais* to be chosen to reduce economic burden between the parties to marriage.**

Education Level of the Respondents	. Do you think that <i>Watta-Satta</i> is to be chosen to reduce economic burden between the parties to marriage			Total
	Yes, Marriage of four Person at one time to minimize marriage cost	No, such parameter is not associated	Less Relatives, Less marriage expenditure and more time to work	
Illiterate	3	3	2	8(13.33%)
Primary	6	6	0	12(20%)
Middle	11	12	2	25(41.66%)
Matric	3	2	0	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	2	5	0	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	2	1	0	3(05.00%)
Total	27(45%)	29(48.33%)	4(6.66%)	60(100.00%)

Table 8 reveals that 45% of the total respondents admit that marriage of four person at the same time reduce economicburden of marriage over both of the families, in support of this 6.66% said that if there will less relatives/relation then the expenditure on marriage will be reduced and family members can devote more time to their work. Table 9 unveils 90% of the respondents are strongly disagree the fact that *Watta-Satta* marriages are associated with illiteracy and only rest of the 10% are in the favor. But according to table that 65% respondents got their education upto eighth standard only, contrary the fact.

**Table No 9-Education Level of the Respondents \* Do you agree that *Watta Satta* marriages are associated with illiteracy.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Do you agree that <i>Watta Satta</i> marriages are associated with illiteracy		Total
	Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Illiterate	3	5	8(13.33%)
Primary	0	12	12(20%)
Middle	3	22	25(41.66%)
Matric	0	5	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	0	7	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	3	3(05.00%)
Total	6(10.00%)	54(90.00%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 10-Education Level of the Respondents \* Do you agree that Watta Satta has remained successful in discouraging dowry system in comparison to open marriage.**

Education Level of the Respondents	Do you agree that <i>Watta-Satta</i> has remained successful in discouraging dowry system in comparison to open marriage			Total
	Yes	No	The Person with Same Status, gives the same to his daughter	
Illiterate	2	4	2	8(13.33%)
Primary	1	8	3	12(20%)
Middle	7	10	8	25(41.66%)
Matric	1	1	3	5(8.33%)
Secondary/10+2	1	2	4	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	2	1	0	3(05.00%)
Total	14(23.33%)	26(43.33%)	20(33.33%)	60(100.00%)

Table 10 reveals that majority of 43.33% respondents think that there is not any relation with *Watta-Satta* marriage in reduction rate of dowry, 23.33% respondents agree that *Watta Satta* has remained successful in discouraging dowry system in comparison to open marriage. Shockingly 1/3 respondents think that the person with same status, gives the same to his daughter. Majority 98.33% respondents admit that there is no relation of child marriage with *Watta-Satta* custom. (Table 11)

**Table No 11-Education Level of the Respondents \* Do you agree that Watta-Satta marriage practice leads to child marriages?**

Education Level of the Respondents	Do you agree that <i>Watta-Satta</i> marriage practice leads to child marriages?		Total
	Disagree	Strongly Disagree, as it is decided at the time of marriage	
Illiterate	0	8	8(13.33%)
Primary	0	12	12(20%)
Middle	0	25	25(41.66%)
Matric	0	5	5(8.33%)
Secondary/10+2	0	7	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	1	2	3(05.00%)
Total	1(1.67%)	59(98.33%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 12--Education Level of the Respondents \* As per you Watta Satta marriage practice is helpful to maintain Double Rista as an indicator of check and balance within families?**

Education Level of the Respondents	As per you <i>Watta-Satta</i> marriage practice is helpful to maintain Double Rista as an indicator of check and balance within families?			Total
	Yes	No, it can destroy two families	Its depend on the pre-Socialization of family	
Illiterate	8	0	0	8(13.33%)
Primary	11	0	1	12(20%)
Middle	18	3	4	25(41.66%)
Matric	4	0	1	5(08.33%)



Secondary/10+2	2	1	4	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	3	0	0	3(05.00%)
Total	46(76.66%)	4(6.66%)	10(16.66%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 13-Education Level of the Respondents \* Have you ever feel difficulty to perform Double Rishta?**

Education Level of the Respondents	Have you ever feel difficulty to perform <i>Double Rista</i>		Total
	Yes, in beginning	No, Never as brother visit frequently	
Illiterate	0	8	8(13.33%)
Primary	0	12	12(20%)
Middle	7	18	25(41.66%)
Matric	0	5	5(08.33%)
Scondary/10+2	0	7	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	3	3(05.00%)
Total	7(11.66%)	53(88.33%)	60(100.00%)

Table 12 divulge that majority 76.66% of the respondents preferred that Watta-Satta marriage practice is helpful to maintain Double Rista as an indicator of check and balance within families, only 6.66% respondent opted contrary . Rest 16.66% thinks that it depends on the pre-socialization on which they have to lead their happy married life. Table 13 displays that majority 88.33% respondents believe that that do not have any problem with *Double Rista* but it is a disguise gift because brother often visited their *Sasural*.

**Table No 14-Education Level of the Respondents \* Do you agree that Watta-Satta marriage practice is helpful to preserve the culture and identity of community?**

Education Level of the Respondents	Do you agree that <i>Watta-Satta</i> marriage practice is helpful to preserve the culture and identity of community?			Total
	Yes	Not any association to culture but an obligation for marriage	Can't Say	
Illiterate	2	5	1	8(13.33%)
Primary	3	9	0	12(20%)
Middle	10	15	0	25(41.66%)
Matric	2	2	1	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	3	4	0	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	1	1	1	3(05.00%)
Total	21(35%)	36(60%)	3(5%)	60(100.00%)

Table 14 shows that majority 60% respondents thinks that Watta-Satta is not interrelated with culture and identity of Kamboj community, it is only an obligation for marriage, 35% of the respondent are agree that *Watta-Sattam* marriage practice helpful to preserve the culture and identity of community. 5% respondents are not in situation to answer. Table 15 divulge that 63.33% of the respondents stated that they



did not have any prior information that they would be married off within Watta Satta custom and 26.66% respondents had prior intimation regarding their marriage. Only 10% of the respondents stated that the decision of marriage under Watta-Satta or Pundaan is taken on the time of marriage fixation. Table 16 reveals that majority of 60% respondents did exchange marriage due to lack of financial resources or lack of agriculture land and 30% out of total respondents choose exchange marriage due to family pressure. Only 3% respondents resorted Watta-Satta due to lack of physical attraction, to provide sound economic background for both families respectively.

**Table No 15-Education Level of the Respondents \* Is there remains, any prior intimation to the couples that they would be married off within Watta-Satta custom?**

Education Level of the Respondents	Are there remains, any prior intimation to the couples that they would be married off within Watta Satta custom?			Total
	Yes	No	In our society marriage is fixed on timely situation	
Illiterate	1	7	0	8(13.33%)
Primary	3	9	0	12(20%)
Middle	9	13	3	25(41.66%)
Matric	0	4	1	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	2	3	2	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	1	2	0	3(05.00%)
Total	16(26.66%)	38(63.33%)	6(10%)	60(100.00%)

**Table No 16-Education Level of the Respondents \* In your opinion what are the circumstances or any pre-estimation, which prompt respondent to marry within Watta-Satta?**

Education Level of the Respondents	In your opinion what are the circumstances or any pre-estimation, which prompt respondent to marry within Watta-Satta?				Total
	Lack of economic resources	Family/R relative Pressure	Lack of physical effectiveness/ attraction	To provide sound economic background for both families	
Illiterate	5	2	0	1	8(13.33%)
Primary	6	5	1	0	12(20%)
Middle	18	6	1	0	25(41.66%)
Matric	2	2	0	1	5(08.33%)
Secondary/10+2	5	2	0	0	7(11.66%)
Graduate & Post Graduate	0	1	1	1	3(05.00%)
Total	36(60%)	18(30%)	3(5%)	3(5%)	60(100.00%)

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In *Watta-Satta*, one brother and sister are married off to another pair from another family. *Watta-Satta* custom is disliked by many people, but it is prevalent among those who had come to India from Pakistan at the time of partition or the people who have been running this tradition for a long time in the rural and urban sphere of the country due to many reasons such as sometimes did not match the same economic status family for their children, if found more suitable match with sound economic background and lack of physical attraction etc. According to the data obtained from universe, the percentage of people

aged 20-30 is still close to 50% in those who prefer to arrange marriage with in *Watta-Satta* custom. Majority of *Watta-Satta* marriages are being occurred in joint families. Shockingly more than 90% those married of under *Watta-Satta* custom are engaged in agriculture activities and their monthly income is below 10000, only 6.66 % are working in secondary or tertiary sector. Good news has revealed for the Indian society that *Watta-Satta* custom is against child marriages. Interestingly while understanding the importance of education; people express their desire to decide their children marriage after consulting with them. Only 23 % of the total respondents want their son to marry under *Watta-Satta*. Most of the people opted for this marriage due to the lack of financial resources, some of them had found this system as a balanced relationship at that time because of their sister was also being married at that time and some found themselves helpless in front of their relatives because their parents had died. Majority 45% of the total respondents admit that marriage of four people at one time reduce economic burden of marriage over both of the families, these marriages are also tapped to decrease the periphery of their relationship to give more time to agriculture and its associated activities. More than 50% admit that there is not any association in *Watta-Satta* marriages and reduction in the rate of dowry. *Watta-Satta* is like a two-edged sword that can keep you safe as well as harm. Majority 76.66% of the respondents preferred that *Watta-Satta* marriage practice is helpful to maintain *Double Rista* as an indicator of check and balance within families. Majority 90% of the respondents are strongly disagree the fact that *Watta-Satta* marriages are associated with illiteracy But according to result obtained from table that most of the respondents are illiterate or only educated upto the eighth standard, so the statement busted that the root cause of *Watta-Satta* marriages are less education and poverty.

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