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Reimagining Learning: NEP 2020 and The Role of Assessment in Incorporating Ancient Indian Knowledge System

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Abstract

The educational environment in India is facing a significant transformation, which is being driven by the rapid social change, the rapid advancement of technology, and the increase in the requirements of skills and knowledge to operate in the modern economy. Within this dynamic environment, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is pre-empted with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in the synthesis of the modern pedagogical paradigm that promotes the creation of holistic, flexible and future-ready learning frameworks. This paper analyses the pedagogical applicability and viability of ancient Indian pedagogical philosophy based on Vedic and Buddhist philosophies in accordance with modern educational systems like the NEP2020 and National Credit Framework (NCfF). Based on an extensive overview of the academic literature, the paper will follow the development of teaching-learning processes of the Gurukul system to modern, technology-enhanced studies, with the overlapping with the experiential, collaborative, and inquiry-based models of education. It is especially focused on collaborative learning as a mediator between cultural wisdom and contemporary skill development as well as on the importance of formative and summative assessment in developing deep learning, creativity, and learner autonomy. The thesis, furthered in this paper, is that the combination of IKS with interdisciplinary, digitally-assisted pedagogy has the potential to improve ethical reasoning, critical thinking, employability, and cultural awareness. It concludes that a critical combination of tradition and innovation can be cultivated through mindfulness and based on inclusive practices of assessment and re-skilling of the faculty, which can produce an environment of adjustivity, equity, and global competitiveness.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System; National Education Policy 2020; Collaborative Learning; Holistic Assessment; Experiential Pedagogy.*

There is a vast change that is happening in the field of education catalysed by societal change, technological advancement and the demand of skill and knowledge based economy. Within this panoramic change, the Indian education system clubs ingenious traditional education with modern creative pedagogy. The ancient Indian knowledge system which is deeply connected with the preachings of Vedic and Buddhist knowledge has been revived as per the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) thereby evoking the values of cultural roots (Sharma 2024). The Indian knowledge system is acknowledged by National Education Policy (NEP 2020) in terms of collaborative learning and the policy encourages experiential learning thus over 8000 higher education institutes integrated IKS into their curriculum (Singh and Ahmad). The article explores the sustainable and relevant aspects in pedagogy in connection with the ancient Indian knowledge system, their evolution along with modern substitutes, the benefits of collaborative learning and the importance of formative and summative assessment, within this integrated new policy of education. The observation is aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) and National Credit Framework (NCrF)—creating an adaptable and innovative learning eco system that is future ready.

The ancient Indian knowledge encompasses the amount of knowledge and understanding that has been created and a must throughout generations. Its diversity in terms of disciplines

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include astronomy, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, literature, the world of religion, art, including dance, music is linked with the ultimate aim of man's existence to attain self realisation. Initially, it has been transmitted through oral traditions and artistic representations, and most importantly, the ancient knowledge system believed in stories with meaningful values.

Literature Review

Abundant scholarly discourse has highlighted the pedagogical value when embedded with ancient Indian teachings, has capacity to stimulate cognition, and fosters in the disciplinary knowledge, and stimulates learners to generate connection with various knowledge domains. In the study Need of Bhagavad Gita Concepts in the Present System of Education, the scholar has commenced some methods for life skill education, such as conversation, method, question, answer, method, demonstration, and contemporary or rational analysis and finally learning by doing techniques (Ranganatha). The study entitled, Ancient Indian Education: Its Relevance and Importance in the Modern Education System findings suggests that the ancient learning system based on Vedas helps to calm the mind and improve learning (Mishra and Aithal). Incorporation of Indian Knowledge system as a subject helps to foster holistic development also since its embedded with cultural contexts helps students to identify with the rich heritage of our nation (Pandey 2024; Mandavkar 2025). With the advancement of multimedia, the re- visualisation of ancient tales, specially from the Mahabharata, through the lenses of modern media has pedagogical potential to identify varied perception and learn critical leadership and management lessons (Pillai 2024), reinforcing the addition of Indian Knowledge system in the curriculum as an appreciable resource. The paper Transforming Teacher Education through NEP 2020: A Curriculum Perspective studies the new curriculum that fosters multilingualism and overall development and its findings suggests that the use of modern tools will help to improve the quality of teaching by enhancing the teachers' quality (Nath). The scholarly study, Integrating Indian Knowledge System in Education: A Study of Government Reforms, observes that the modern tools of teaching and learning when combined with traditional knowledge promotes "informed knowledge" that values cultural values and makes the learner competent for modern day challenges (Vageeshan and Kamalakar).

Heritage and Educational Value of Ancient Learning Systems

In the ancient tradition, i.e. the Gurukul Parampara Guru used a practical learning system based on oral and thinking which stands at par with the modern day educational process where the teacher guides the learners to find, use, evaluate, and finally create (based on blooms taxonomy). Hearing, thinking, and then meditating with the three main processes of instruction and to learn any language the process is LSRW — Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. All these assertions imply that a lot of modern educational systems resonate with the ancient structure.

During the early Vedic literature period, Sutra education was imported that was more inclined towards practical education. Analytical knowledge such as mathematics, astronomy, even physiology, reach the peak in the works of philosophers and scholars like Panini, Kautaliya, Shankaracharya, Patanjali Agastya Munni, Charaka and Sushruta for medicine and so on the list. The mode of teaching was mainly vocational training based on practical and application. And the proposal of national education policy also highlights integrating

vocational education, — thereby making the learner capable of higher employment along with regular education.

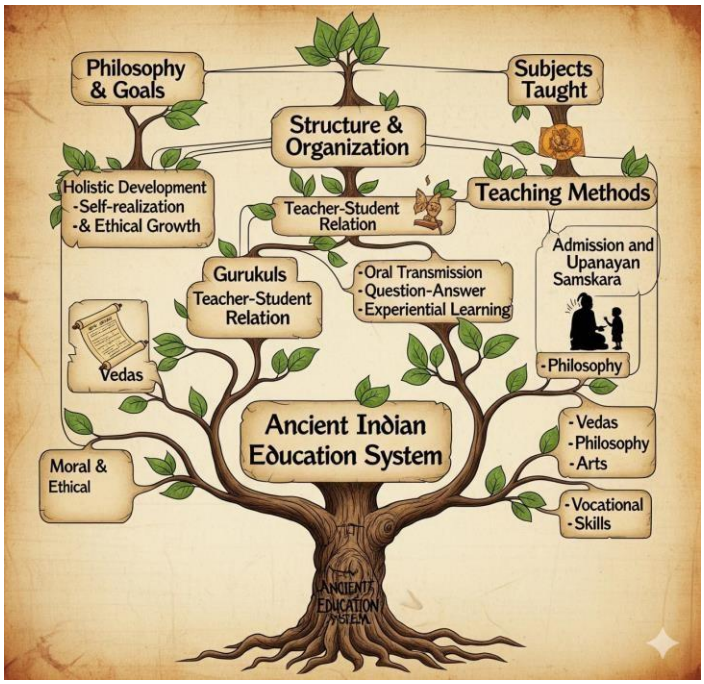

Figure 1- Generated through Gemini AI depicts that ancient knowledge system that resonates with NEP 2020.

Evolution and Substitution in Teaching Learning Process

In the early Rigvedic period, the priest class provided vocational training for the masses. The learners had to practise celebrity and be knowledgeable with eighteen Vidhyas, which includes six Vedangas, 4 Vedas, 4 Upavedas, Mimansa, Nyaya, Purana and Dharmashastra. Thomas Babington Macaulay notable, British historian, and the member of the supreme council of India in the 1835 stressed on the need of change in Indian education policy, thereby promote English as a medium of instruction in place of the traditional Sanskrit or other vernacular Indian languages in his minutes advocated for a system, stressing English to be taught to the selected upper class Indians thereby made an attempt to disseminate knowledge to the general public (Mandavkar 2025). Though this attempt sparked a lot of controversy with Indian intellectuals, the same educational framework continues to be in effect. Western formal schooling took over colonial and post-colonial mode of education, especially in terms of its specialisation, curriculum design, and the compartmentalisation of various disciplines. Also, a notable factor is education was then not considered as a means for employability but for refinement and spiritual growth and progress.

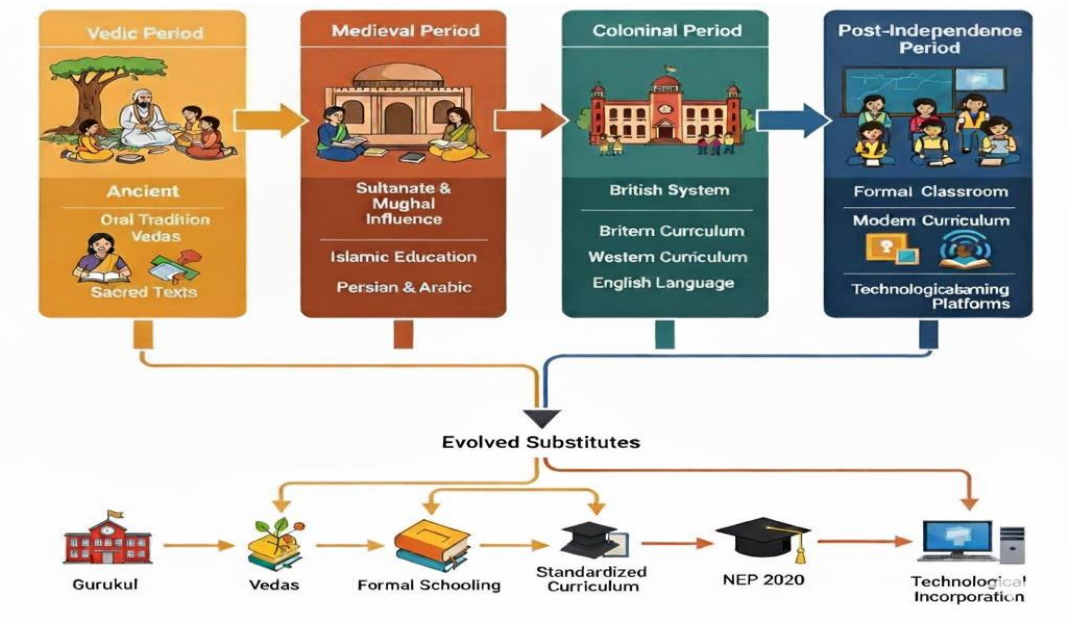

Figure 2- Generated through Gemini AI depicts the timeline of education system from ancient Gurukuls to contemporary mode of learning embodying technological flexibilities

The four distinct historical periods illustrate the foundational practices followed in India. The Vedic period laid the groundwork for skills and knowledge imparting through oral tradition. Within the gurukul system the sacred knowledge was deeply immersive. Significant shift due to the Sultanate and Mughal influence - Islamic education pattern was seen during the medieval period. Later under colonial rule, western curriculum was introduced. Formal schooling system following British curriculum and usage of English language became fundamental altering indian learning structure. Post independence marks the progress of the fundamental teaching and learning system with National Education Policies — modern curriculum, technological aids and skill enhancing practices. Aim is to harmonise the age-old valuable Indian knowledge with modern and global educational standards with hands-on technological aids and platforms (Puri).

The Shift

Ancient knowledge i.e. the Gurukul Pratha, aimed primarily on character building and overall personality formation, whereas in the National Educational System, focus is on the holistic growth and psychomotor areas targeting cognitive enhancement (Rout and Sahoo). The basic pattern in the ancient learning system was listening carefully from the tutors probing through real life application and reflecting on their own thoughts and actions, while in NEP, focus is on experiential learning based on inquiry and optimum exploration through discussion. Information is widely accessible to all, thus refining the information is the aim. Now the learners need not have a tutor to teach but more to guide and give right insight leading to inquiry and quest. This also implies that the tutors in ancient knowledge system were teachers (Gurus) who help a predominant position with their laid rules and regulations, which now has transformed into mentors or facilitators who should be capable to urge, inspire and encourage self-discipline, self guidance and motivate the learners to set their goals and strive towards achieving the same — stressing on autonomy in the process for the learner skills (Gupta et al.). The commonality is cultivation of skills in the learners based on their potential.

Skill based education is now no longer a buzzword. With the incorporation of National Educational Policy (NEP), skills are the prime requisite to bridge the gap between the academics and job market. The policy stresses on vocational training and practices which helps to boost the creative side of each and every student. For everyone has some potential that may be hidden sometimes unknown. With rigorous outpour opportunities the talent brims out resulting in identification and utilisation of the right choices. The curriculum allots flexibility and aims for a holistic development of the learners, to be able to stand at par with the age-old tested ancient Indian teaching and learning system. Yet, the policy has to achieve its fullest form. Mostly due to:

1. Lack of proper clarity in teaching in new context
2. Understanding hurdles in terms of the various baskets of courses offered.
3. Ambiguity in proper selection of the courses by the tutors as well as by the learners.
4. Reluctance in adapting change within the system
5. Shortage of skilled faculties
6. Social stigma
7. Unavailability of proper infrastructure, generally due to funding issues
8. Research gap in identifying the gap between academic and corporate requirements.

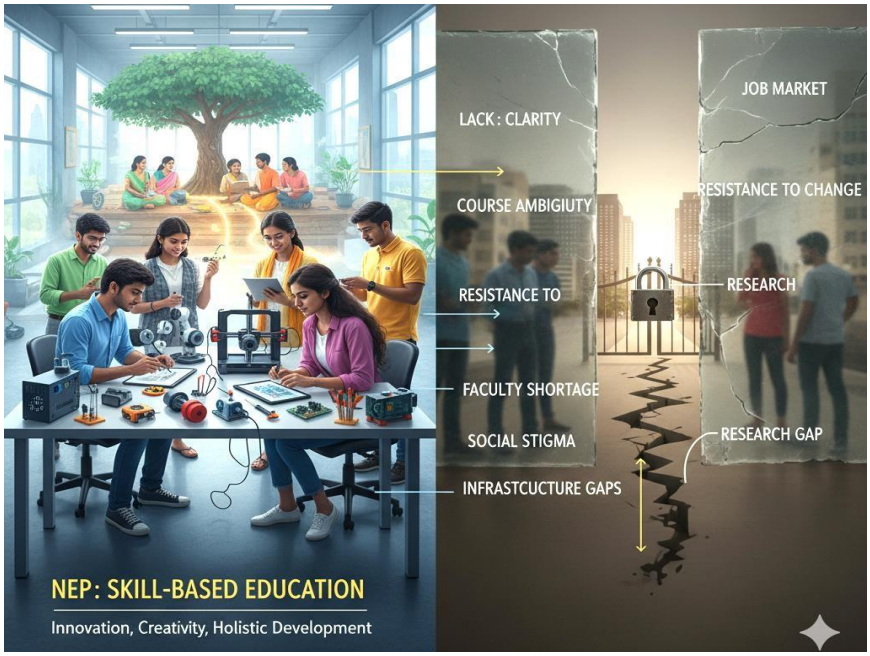

Figure 3- Generated through Gemini AI depicts the gaps between academics and industrial needs

National Educational Policy stresses on holistic learning however the most crucial aspect in the advent stage especially is holistic assessment within the collaborative teaching learning process. The limiting of rote process of learning and guiding towards experiential learning keeping the light of ancient Indian learning system lit bright on the path of the modernised strategies and skills is the call of the hour. Curriculum upgradation and re-skilling of the

mentors to enable them to identify, interpret and guide or impart traditional knowledge in a vital manner. The change should welcome along with the plurality within the content that highlights diversity and has evolved through the test of time.

The intertwining of collaborative approach with cultural insight is the mandate shift to be considered. In such a scenario, assessment is not merely about the evaluation but acts as a vital catalyst to perceive and incorporate learning (Assessment for learning). The prime focus diverts towards self- identification and realisation along with ethical and moral insights that helps to foster the culture of probing that acts as the ground to cultivate balance. More than ever before the emphasis on understanding, analysing to apply is the fundamental requirement. In the process evaluation stands as a pillar to motivate the learner towards creating or developing skill that echoes with the learner's potential. The higher education Institutions with centres or cells devoted to the Indian Knowledge System, that fosters cultural awareness, aim to create employability and ensure proper transfusion of knowledge to the learners would help in the outreach for further research and dissemination of knowledge.

In the digital advanced era, curriculum has to be revised to include formal, informal and physical elements for better learning. A lot of education models, focus on blended and collaborative learning that integrates digital access, thereby delivering enhanced education, foundational literacy, numeracy, employability, and entrepreneurship need to be the vision for a balanced and enhanced educational outcome. The digital storage of academic credits, that is academic Bank of credit ABC-ID, which allows flexibility for learners to complete their graduation and post graduation with multiple exits is a positive feature that can help the above said outcome.

However, delay in decision-making, the ability to change, student, teacher ratio, quality of education and infrastructure stands as a barrier. Assessment strategies that focus on dual approach should pave the way for three ways:

- Assessment for learning - formative assessment
- Assessment of learning - summative assessment and
- Assessment by learning - outcome oriented, enhancing creativity (Blooms taxonomy)

The assessment interwoven with collaborative and culturally relevant pedagogy, becomes a catalyst for learning transcending the role of an evaluating mechanism. The facilitators should be trained thoroughly with diverse assessment tools for welcoming the change for good (Abbasi). Alongside, activities like peer feedback, buddy analysis, co- generated rubrics and reflective activities incorporated in traditional and culturally embedded learning enhances and improves engagement and contextual knowledge. By encouraging experiential practises and prioritising self realisation along with moral development and significantly reducing rote learning pattern, leading towards encouraging questions, thereby reflecting with ethical grounding rhythms, beautifully with practical learning.

Gradually, the method of teaching has seen to be turned practical and in the modern times to the faculty inspires the students in the process which is very much like the ancient period where the student is motivated to research, to apply to evaluate, and to create. The earlier focus was basically on character formation and personality development. The basic process was to hear from the gurus to probe over it and to meditate in the earlier period. Guru enjoyed

a very predominant place. The rules of contact and discipline were inseparable and knowledge was imported in the Gurukuls, in the academic institutions namely Parishads and also by involvement in conferences (Sammelans). The same system is the primary way for learning even today, with a slight change of time and space. Earlier one had to be in the conference or be present in the class for knowledge seeking. With technology facilitating learning without the hurdle of time and space is the biggest advantage. Learner can be at the comfort of his own surroundings and be in his own willing time slot, on a finger click can be able to procure content of his requirement. All he needs is a device and internet connection of any form. Today even conferences are conducted in a hybrid making the knowledge gaining and sharing process beyond space. Validation, proper inputs and insights are just a click away. Knowledge is now available in abundance. It now breeds similarity with the buffet system of dining — the real task is to choose what is needed and what is not. Judicious analysis is the hurdle that needs attention.

Call of the Hour - Collaborative learning for Knowledge Efficacy

The 21st century seeks knowledge that is useful in terms of employability: call for vocational skills is what the NEP also advocates. It is admirable to remember that the Gurukal system had this same mode of learning though the purpose was self reflection thereby attaining self reliance. The effect of maya is undeniable in our lives and all seek a better lifestyle. This educational shift across the world witnessing such transformative modification as the outcome of societal ships, technological process and the demand of knowledge driven economy is more a bane than a boon. In such a scenario, the incorporation of the ancient Indian knowledge system, which delves with Vedic and traditional philosophies induced in ethical discernment and critical thinking that emphasises holistic progress aids progressive knowledge assessment process filled with deep cultural enrichment that meets the global requirement. The key element of collaborative learning is that:

- The student situates as the key person who core structures, knowledge through group activities, dialogues, place, debate, and the like

- Collaborative learning across diverse educational context is substantial in:

  - developing critical reasoning,

  - motivation,

  - social and emotional intelligence along with - deep cognitive development and - helps in knowledge retention.

- It aids in bringing integrity, inquiry, leadership, and value based teaching learning partially restores the principles of ancient Indian knowledge resonating with NEP 2020.

- It serves as a great medium in terms of research across diverse education context and structuring knowledge

- Leads to a great and diverse exposure of perspectives within groups, bringing alive the concept of global citizenship-Vasudeva Kutumbam

● It also helps to force an innovative problem solving context when blended with disciplinary boundaries

● Collaborative learning that is interdisciplinary rekindles vital competencies like communication, creativity, empathy, and team building

● Also, such pedagogical synergy helps the learners to cultivate skills like analytical adaptability, problem solving skills, that suits to navigate complex challenges of realities.

The collaboration of educational doctrines with Indian traditional contexts holds paramount importance in shaping knowledge based practices. Discussion on Significance and Effectiveness Measures

Educational context, when intertwined with cultural and traditional wisdom becomes imperative for perpetuating cultural identification. The preservation of cultural identity is one of the significant factors for reimagining learning incorporating ancient knowledge. Apart from holistic development and practical wisdom, promotion of value based ethical and harmonious principles along with development of critical enquiry and probing, Bharatiya Gyan Parampara leads to a more equitable, harmonious and compassionate society.

● The (smriti) memory based and (shruti) sacred and eternal based context of learning diversifies knowledge that is for integral and external development.

● The intellectual capacity of a learner gets more grounded with traditional values like empathy, emotional balance and spiritual awakening.

● Collaborative education approach also helps in nurturing all phases of a learner's being.

● Also, with practices such as yoga and meditation the learners learn to stay grounded and make them capable of achieving inner equilibrium, thereby giving way to holistic progress. Strategies that can be incorporated includes:

● Designing and assessment task that involves Indian ancient text that is integrated with group projects that may be evaluated through some crafted rubrics which reflects both cognitive and ethical aspects

● Providing crafted criteria for reviews and self assessment that will help nurturing reflective and collaborative capabilities

● The stories that help with interdisciplinary aspects and problem

Design assessment tasks involving ancient texts integrated with group projects, evaluated through jointly crafted criteria reflecting both cognitive mastery and ethical insight.

● Implement ongoing formative assessments such as peer reviews and self-assessments, nurturing reflective and collaborative competencies.

● Align assessments with interdisciplinary problem-based learning activities relevant to real-life contexts, adhering to NEP's experiential education mandate.

- Use digital platforms for formative feedback and learner progress tracking, enabling adaptive, inclusive education paths (Raval 40).

The digitalisation of knowledge has brought a paramount amount of information easy and handy to the seekers. The learners are mounted with a large amount of information. The real challenge in the teaching and learning process is to make the learners filter the content and information. It is a common situation to stay hooked on social networks while using a device even along the academic premise. The urge to watch some videos or reels is so instilled even in toddlers that many parents hand a device to the kid to feed. Device is inevitable integration and instead of making them stop, the real task is to teach and guide the generation to use it time bound and wisely.

Conclusion

It is the synthesis of information and entertainment, or as it is more often called, infotainment, which is a defining mechanism of the transmission of the huge heritage of ancient Indian traditions of epistemology to the modern world. Using the vast coverage of the digital and social media, infotainment does not only preserve the cultural heritage and intellectual traditions, it also makes complex fields, like ancient science, medicine, Ayurveda, Vedanta philosophy and Yoga available to the audience through lively, culturally engaging stories that fit perfectly into the current life. These mediated modes of knowledge sharing consequently increase accessibility, at the same time attracting diverse learner groups, in particular, digital natives, through the combination of multimodal pedagogies visible, auditory, and interactive to achieve holistic understanding. In addition, the cyclical quality of the infotainment process fosters a lasting interaction and reflective investigation and is effectively converting passive consumption to a proactive process of knowledge building.

Based on the principles of Jnanaya (general knowledge), Vijanaya (applied science), and Jivanadarshana (philosophy of life), the principle offers a sound system that directs the students through gradual development by choosing the path of experiential learning and practice, acute observation, systematic experimentation, and analytical rigor. The given triadic model, in its turn, fosters a harmonious combination of intellectual sharpness, practical skills and moral judgment, thus developing a holistic educational paradigm.The Integration of ancient Indian knowledge system with a collaborative and interdisciplinary pedagogy definitely will be enriched with the help of formative and submitted evaluation methods. The visual age not only enhances comprehension of complex inter relations, but also serves the educators to include practical curriculum, models, and innovative instructional manuals. These efforts offer a culturally grounded and future ready knowledge system. National Education Policy and other relevant frameworks, rendering towards a holistic approach will help the learners to be equipped with intellectual, ethical and adaptive agility, which is the call for the contemporary global scenario. Nevertheless, this integration must be observed with caution and inclusivity, for it requires more than agency or policy endorsement. A mindful embracement of tradition with innovation, the educators and policy makers can craft an enriched educational future with global skills.

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