



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Appreciation Programme

Participatory Urban Planning: Making Cities Inclusive of Urban Poor

Module – III

Participatory Urban Planning

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INTRODUCTION

This Module focuses on various distinctive features related to the process of Participatory Urban Planning. Physical planning for urban areas refers to preparation and implementation of participatory plans, irrespective of the scale - master plans/ city development plans/ ward or area improvement plans. While discussing these aspects, a comparative assessment between traditional planning methods and participatory planning techniques is illustrated through case studies. These cases substantiate the theoretical aspects of participatory urban planning, while narrating the scale and experiences in various urban contexts. The module is divided into three units:

Unit One explains participatory planning and its impact on various stakeholders

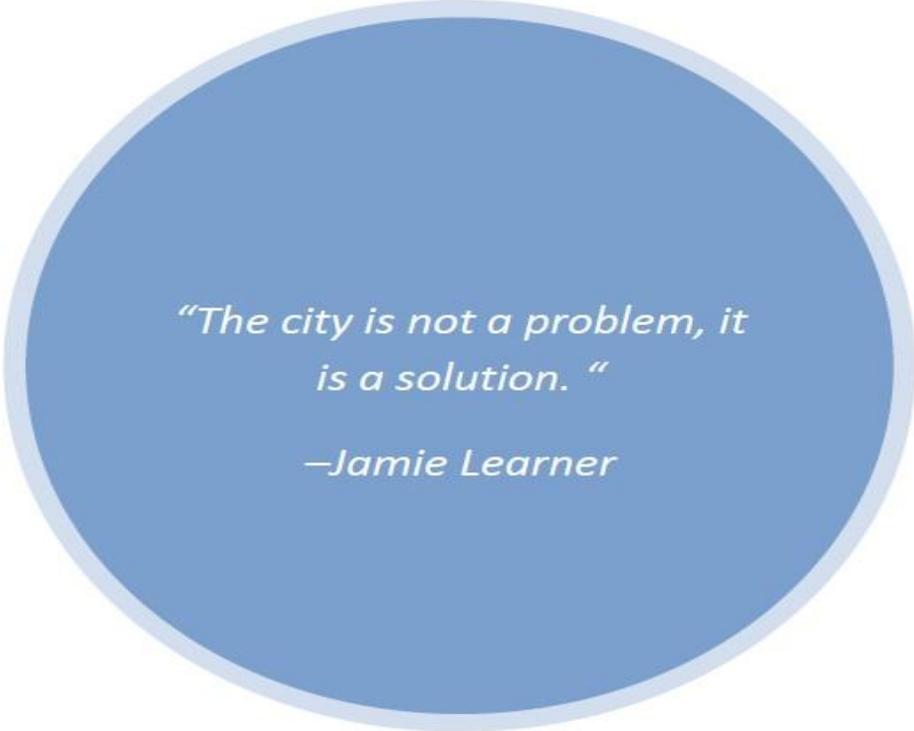
Unit Two focuses on the distinctive features of the participatory urban planning and related difficulties

Unit Three narrates various types of urban plans at different levels depending on the regional variation

OBJECTIVES

This Module has been envisaged with the objective that at the end of the Module the learners will:

- Understand the need of participation in the urban planning
- Be familiar with the types of planning needed at various levels and scales



*“The city is not a problem, it
is a solution. “*

–Jamie Learner

UNIT 1: WHAT IS PARTICIPATION

The Britannica Encyclopedia defines urban planning as the design and regulation of the uses of spaces that focus on the physical form, economic functions and the social impacts of the urban government, as well as the location of different activities within it.

Participation originally defined is only from the perspective of people /citizens' involvement. However, more recently, accountability and responsiveness of institutions and policies has entered the purview of participation to enable good governance.

Participatory planning be broadly be defined as an urban planning paradigm that emphasizes the involvement of the entire community in the strategic and management processes of urban planning or community-level planning processes.

1.1 Overview of Participatory Planning

Participatory planning and involvement of people, encourages their support and ensures a higher level of satisfaction through ownership of the process. It thus, cements better relationship because people continuously review the planning that is undertaken.

Participatory planning primarily involves people, irrespective of whether they are from rural or urban areas, tribal/forest/mountain/coastal communities' specific cultural and social contexts. A number of tools, techniques and methodologies have been adopted and tested over the years by social scientists, international aid agencies and community based organizations working in these areas to make participation of people more effective and inclusive.

Who is a Stakeholder?

A Stakeholder is any person (or group) who gets affected (directly or indirectly/ positively or negatively) by any intervention/ plan/ project/ action or has some interest in the same whether financial, professional, social or any other.

Stakeholders are usually end-users but this may not always be true. For e.g. an expert advising on a city plan may not belong to the city and may not be directly impacted by the implementation of the plan but has a professional interest in its successful outcome and is thus a stakeholder.

Involving stakeholders, helps in building an inherent 'self-correcting-loop' in any plan or project as their interests are rooted in the same. Also, the acceptance and ownership of the end-product/ outcome/ plan is smoother and more holistic, with the full support of the people.

In India, the use of community participation in the planning process began in rural areas, with the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods. While, techniques such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) have also been applied, PRA has generally proved to be more successful. Lessons learnt from these experiences are now applied in the urban context, where community participation is a new addition to the planning process.

Some of the issues faced in the implementation of community participation in urban areas are:

- **Inadequate capacity and lack of Civil Society/ NGOs in urban areas**

Rural areas have always had strong support from NGOs and CSOs, extended to health, education and village planning to infrastructure projects and water management.

In contrast, urban areas have not been witness to NGOs focus on urban development issues as their primary cause. Urban civil society has only just diversified its domains towards supporting communities in areas of basic services, planning, housing for urban poor and social accountability of local governments.

- **Lack of historical and politically created spaces for participation**

Historically, rural areas have had a mature system of grass root governance. However, urban areas face a lack of functional local governments and in the past, there was no such spaces for people to collectively discuss or demand issues from local governments. In 1994, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act suggested the formation of Ward Committees and *Mohalla (area) Sabhas* in all cities, to serve the same purpose as their rural counterparts. Yet to date, there is no city in India, which is a successful example for formation and functioning of these platforms.

- **Cultural, social and economic heterogeneity**

When compared to rural and tribal populations, urban communities are extremely heterogeneous in their composition. Migration is one of the factors responsible in bringing people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to live in proximity to each other. The same is true for those people hailing from different economic classes. Such scenarios present issues related to planning and physical development of these parts of the city, as its inhabitants exhibit varying demands and affordability. Therefore, an equitable provision of services and a plan that is satisfactory to all citizens becomes difficult and there is no common platform for these varied groups to collectively articulate for better services.

- **Urban planning practice traditionally top-down and non-inclusive**

The traditional planning process has mainly focused on technical efficiency and economic feasibility of plans, rather than their social acceptance. This had led to 'expert- driven' plans with little value attached to local knowledge. It is only where it is mandatory (as per the Town Planning Act), that citizens are only invited to give their suggestions. In addition, there is a dearth of successful examples of people's participation or knowledge about participatory practices in urban areas.

- **Inefficiency of local government in planning and service delivery**

Despite the clear listing functions of ULBs in the 74th CAA, inadequate decentralization of funds, functions and functionaries (the three F's) has rendered them incapable of carrying out effective urban planning or service provision. The multiplicity of agencies at state level results in ambiguity of roles and a subsequent lack of accountability and transparency of government functionaries. The unavailability of updated data for proper planning, decision-making and inadequate strategies for building capacities of elected representatives, has rendered the service delivery system inefficient. .

- **Inadequate policy attention to urban areas, urban poor and people's participation**

The JnNURM is the first of its kind central government scheme, exclusively launched, for urban areas. Before this, cities have survived on foreign aid, state/ centre supported infrastructure projects or private investment. These projects were mostly for metropolitan areas and no schemes existed that holistically targeted an urban area.

- Have you witnessed any urban development project requesting the participation of its beneficiaries?
- In what ways can heterogeneity in a community be overcome to reduce multiplicity of interests?
- Have you been a part of any public participation process for any project/ policy review?

The issue of urban poverty has also been overlooked and poor people residing in slums or squatter settlements have been pushed into peripheral regions. JnNURM, has drawn attention towards provision of basic services to the urban poor, as well as citizens' participation in developing city plans. However, as JnNURM is time bound and extends to only 65 cities, a more permanent legal framework is required that lays down the details of participation and focuses upon the poor and the marginalized.

- **Apathy of People**

Many urban residents feel that they do not belong to the city and are merely there for occupational reasons. This creates apathy towards concerns of urban development and poverty, compounded by a deep mistrust of local governments. This situation is changing, with more people being brought up in cities and developing a sense of belongingness, connectivity and rootedness.

UNIT 2: PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION: ADDING VALUE TO URBAN PLANNING

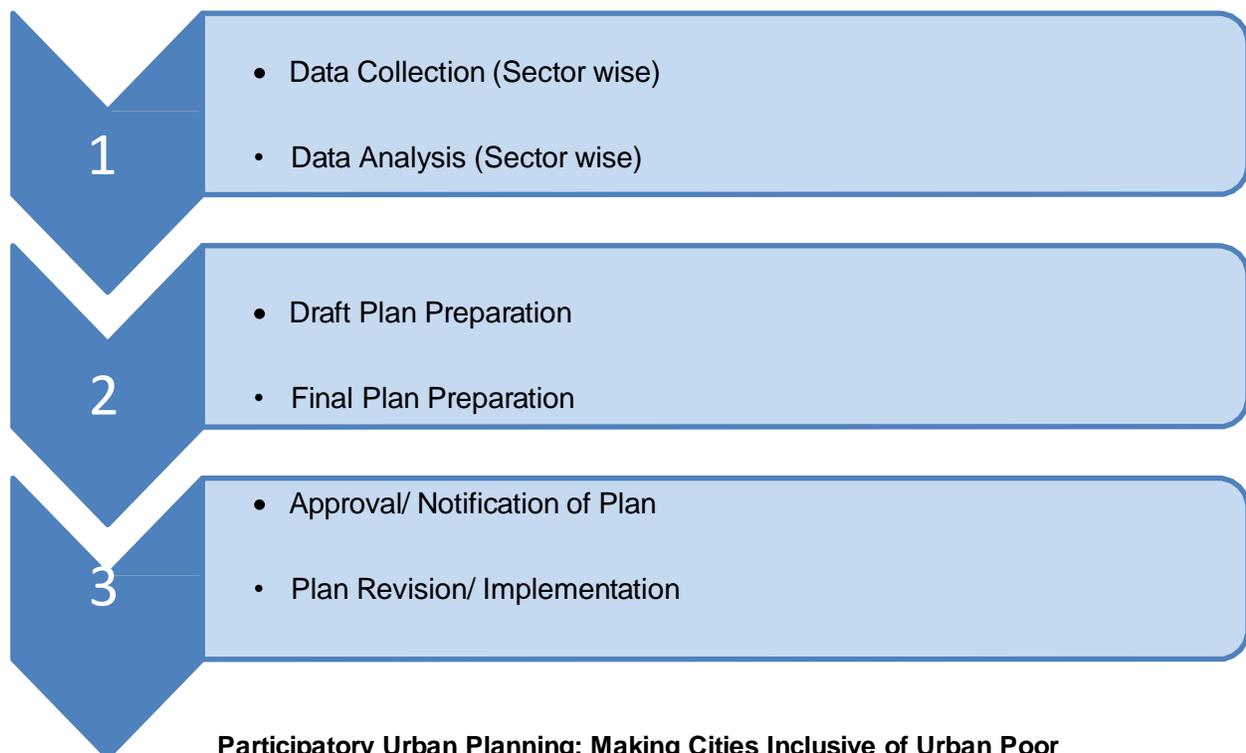
In the conventional urban planning process, principles of good governance are rarely considered. The remedy lies in promoting participatory urban planning, where all citizens collectively decide the future of the city, as it affects their own future.

The JnNURM envisages, in its guidelines, that all City Development Plans (CDPs) should follow participatory processes and intensive consultation with the citizens, as pre-requisite for approval of the plan. Although, it is the first government initiative to promote participation in city planning, this aspect of the scheme is advisory and not mandatory.

Its methodology primarily includes 'Stakeholders' Consultation', which is a very important tool for people's participation. However, the participation, more often than not, is superficial, involving only a few influential people.

2.1. Methodology of Participatory Planning

Planning for a city follows a simple process:



Environment Building is one of the most important steps to ensure participation at all stages. It aims at making every citizen / stakeholder aware of the process of plan preparation and provides options and spaces where they can freely voice their opinion about the plan. Environment building for planning can be built with the help of pamphlets, mass media and by providing contact information of the planning team. It also implies that people have to be educated on the steps of planning, which requires the participation of the stakeholders as well. ULBs have to be appraised on the same and need assistance in reaching out to people.

Inclusive and participative city planning can be challenging to achieve, but it offers an ideal opportunity to implement processes that make planning responsive to the needs of multiple stakeholders, with particular focus on the poor and marginalised members of society. For 'Environment Building' and 'Stakeholders' Consultations', that are more effective, the following points must be considered:

1. On site presence of planners and local partners

While preparing a plan for a city, it is essential for the planners to have a local site office. This has an impact on inclusion of contextual nuances and area specifications. Local CSOs and citizen leaders must be identified and engaged from the beginning. This assures that there is continuity of the process and implementation of the plan has wider local acceptance.

2. Orientation of elected representatives and municipal officials on participatory urban planning and 74th CAA

It is important for any city plan that the ULBs, local politicians and CSOs are aware of the various components of the 74th CAA, their roles and functions, the postulates of JnNURM and other governmental schemes and responsibilities. Thus, having meetings and workshops to orient them becomes crucial.

3. **General meetings with citizens about status of city**

It is critical to hold meetings, in *maidans*, *mohallas*, schools, community centres for citizens, to highlight their concerns regarding planning. Use of innovative information and communication technology to visually represent the problems being faced by the people, will prompt them to better articulate their demands. Sharing of case studies from neighbouring areas can enhance this process.

4. **Specific Sector/ Area wise meetings with citizens**

Meetings must be held sector/area wise, to ensure complete geographical coverage. Human resources in terms of technical knowledge and expertise in areas like water supply, sanitation, transport etc. need tapping. Utilizing existing social and religious groups, colleges, chambers of commerce etc. for this purpose would help achieve better results.

5. **Ensuring holistic participation (especially that of urban poor and women)**

Groups traditionally excluded from mainstream political debates need to be brought to the forefront in matters of city planning. These include *dalits* and the urban poor. Women from various sections of society find themselves excluded due to patriarchal attitudes, and those from lower castes, doubly discriminated against due to caste biases. . Having an inclusive group would bring out problems, previously been regarded as secondary or even lost due to lack of participation of some groups. .

6. **Ensure partnership between people, civil society, local government and technical experts**

Participatory planning should receive inputs from technical experts, development professionals and community representatives. Architects, planners, urban designers and other experts must interact directly with the people.

Technical expertise, which recognises the issues, faced by the poor and marginalised, changes the power equation in their favour. People from better-off economic backgrounds may include ideas such as

Technical accuracy married to people's voice gives a participatory yet realistic urban plan. If either of these is missing the plan is bound to be lop-sided.

A good illustration of this is the story of a community that was demanding a water pipeline in their area. However, the municipality was asking them to shift to another area, if they wanted better services. This issue escalated into a huge misunderstanding with the people in the community feeling very mistrustful of the local government. Local CSOs also added fuel to the situation by criticising the government as corrupt and unresponsive. The problem needed a technical solution, as the settlement was partially situated on hard rocky land, through which water pipelines could not be drilled. A planner and geologist intervened, a compromise solution was reached and in-situ resettlement was carried out to make water available for every family.

for airports and shopping malls, even when their town still lacks proper basic services of water and sanitation. Educating people about the inequitable distribution of resources through holistic data, maps, analysis and technical expertise can be useful in assessing the priority of people's needs and rationalising the equitable distribution of limited resources.

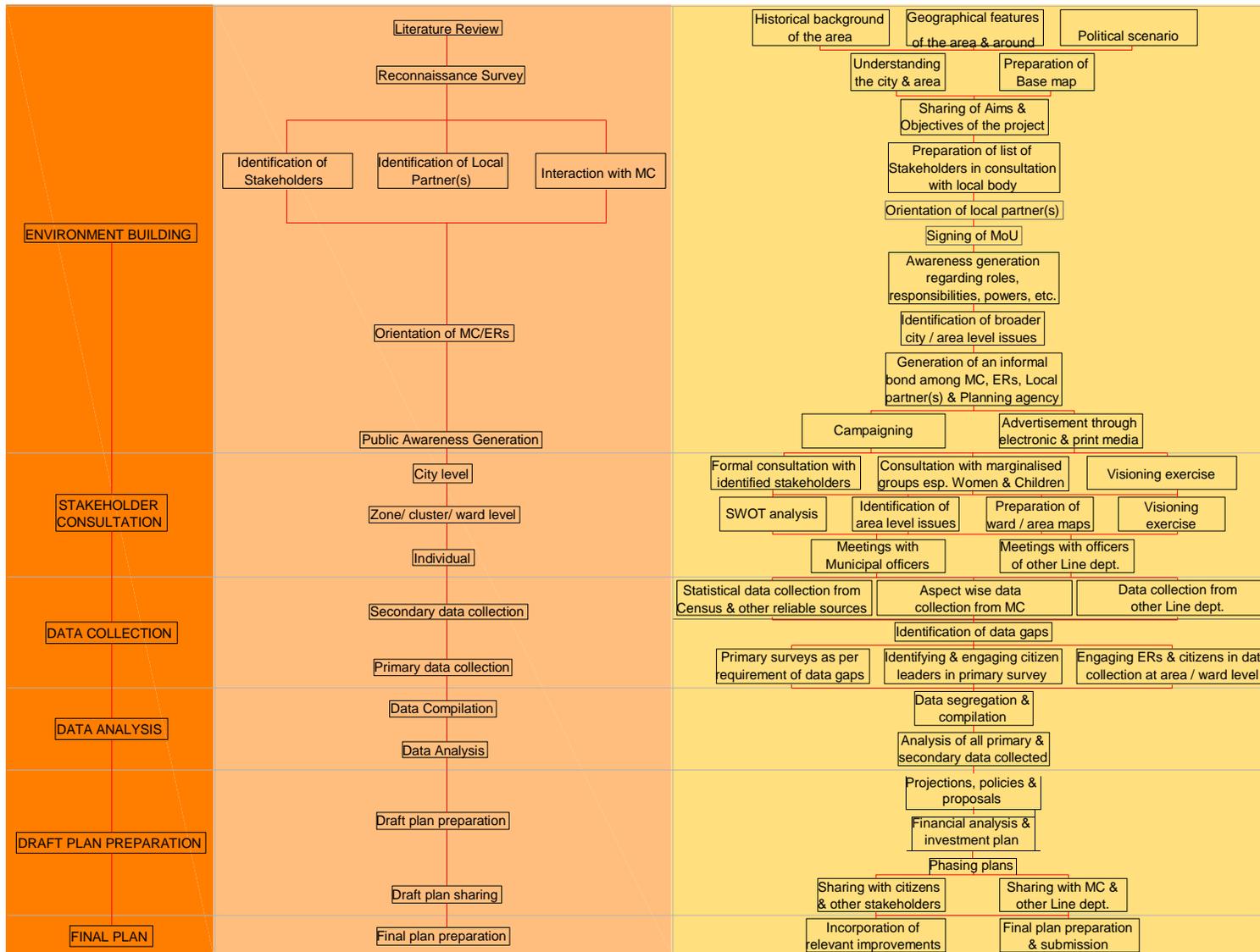
(g) **People's participation at all stages of plan preparation**

People's participation should not be restricted to the initial stages of discussion of issues but also during the process of formulating solutions.

This would create a sense of ownership, motivation for an efficient implementation of the plan, and overcoming apathy towards the process. Public discussions would increase the pressure on local governments to meet the demands within the stipulated time.

- What methods would prompt the interests of marginalized groups in a target community to come forth?
- Do you think liasoning with government officials is of any importance in the participation process? Why/ Why not?

Methodology of City-Level Participatory Plan Preparation



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UNIT 3: DIFFERENT TYPES OF URBAN PLANS

3.1 Regional Plan

A region is a spatial unit whose identity is based on primary parameters, such as:

- geographical similarity (hilly region)
- similar language (states of India)
- administrative units (National Capital Region – NCR of India)

Regional planning envisages the creation of interrelated settlement systems, including

- rationale for location of new towns and rural settlements
- proportional development of existing urban and rural areas
- optimum development and location of industry
- agricultural production, and
- other sectors

Moreover, regional planning envisages the improvement and conservation of the natural environment based on effective and sensitive utilization of natural, material, technical and labor resources. In India, regional plans are created only for more prominent regions like Delhi and Mumbai in the form of District Plans and their implementation has been limited to the policy level.

3.2 Master Plan

A master plan is a statutory city scale plan, governing the physical, economic and social development of the city. Master plans generally consist of land use plans and are broken down into smaller units of Zonal Development Plans and Area Development Plans, based on the planning zones into which a city is divided. They are created, for a twenty-year period, with a provision for revision every five years. Master Plans may take up to five years to be prepared and have a lot of scope for effective participation of people. However, lack of interest of the development authorities and the people, has resulted in a mere land use plan that is too technical and unintelligible for the common denizen.

3.3 City Development Plan

A City Development Plan (CDP) needs both a perspective and a vision for the future development of a city. Perspective shifts around the different pieces of the situation or circumstances, to see the picture; but vision is what the picture was intended to be.

Therefore, a CDP must:

- present the current stage of the city's development
- set out the directions of change
- identify thrust areas
- suggest alternative routes, strategies, and interventions for bringing about change
- provide a framework and vision, within which projects need to be identified and implemented.

Most importantly, it must establish a logical and consistent framework for evaluation of investment decisions. A CDP is thus a short-term infrastructure investment plan for a city with a period of 5 years, which is contained within the JnNURM.

3.4 Zonal Development Plan

Zonal development plans are the next level hierarchical policy plans after the master plans, which detail out the broad objectives of the master plan, in comparatively smaller regions. It incorporates the guidelines and proposals of the master plan without deviating far from its primary goal of development. Unlike master plans, these zonal plans are prepared for shorter terms with more focus on detailing.

- What are the types of development plans prevalent in your city? What is the role envisaged to be fulfilled by each of these plans?
- What type of plan in your city plays a statutory role and which plans only provide perspective vision?

SUMMARY

This Module gave us an insight into the issues related to the participatory urban planning. The nature and composition of urban areas is different from rural areas, with urban areas demonstrating regional, as well as demographic variance. Therefore, development planning for urban areas must address all the issues in a balanced manner, so that the needs of all the stakeholders are satisfied. This Module helped us understand the intricacies related to the development and implementation of the planning for urban areas.

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