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An Empirical Study on Economic Independence and Family Well-Being Among Women Entrepreneurs in Karnataka

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***Abstract*—Women entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital pathway for women to gain economic empowerment and bring about social change in developing countries. Even though there are increasing numbers of women participating in business, they still experience barriers to economic empowerment through financial access, training and education and sociocultural barriers which can affect their economic independence and family well-being. The purpose of this study is to identify the major factors affecting the economic independence of women entrepreneurs in select districts in Karnataka, and assess how women entrepreneurship affects family wellbeing and quality of life. The study used a descriptive research approach, and it gathered the data from 473 women who own small businesses (micro-enterprises) in the selected eight districts of Karnataka by employing a purposive sampling strategy. The findings reveal that both Family Support (Mean = 3.632), and Self-Confidence and Resilience (Mean = 3.558) were the most prominent factors to influence Economic Independence. In terms of the impacts on family wellbeing, those which had the greatest impact included improved Financial Stability (Mean = 3.584) and Educational Support (Mean = 3.564). Through a process of factor analysis, it was determined that there were five main factors that explained 46.69% of the total variance in the study. Additionally, these same results indicated that Financial Access and External Support were the two dominant factors. Finally, through a one-way ANOVA, it was shown that there were significant associations between several demographic characteristics and each of the different dimensions of Entrepreneurship. Multiple regression analysis confirmed that all five factor components significantly predict family well-being ($R^2 = 0.578$, $F = 128.141$, $p = 0.000$) and personal empowerment ($R^2 = 0.616$, $F = 149.654$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, there is a need for enhanced training, financial access and institutional support in order to strengthen the economic independence and family outcomes of women entrepreneurs in Karnataka.**

Index Terms*—Women entrepreneurship, Economic independence, Family well-being, Personal empowerment, Micro enterprises, Karnataka.

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has contributed to driving growth and innovation for many years and is changing the way we look at economic development. The focus on women entrepreneurship has become an increasingly important area of research and study. In addition to contributing to overall economic activity; female entrepreneurs also help families improve their economic position by advancing gender equity and developing local communities. Economic independence is an essential result of females becoming involved in entrepreneurial opportunities and it defines an individual's capacity to generate income, administer finances, and direct personal financial resources independently of other people (Muhammad et al., 2021). There is evidence demonstrating that women who possess economic independence tend to support education, health care, and the general well-being of their families through investing in these areas thus having a multi-generational positive impact on society as a whole.

Global rates of female participation in entrepreneurship have continued to rise over time. Women now account for nearly one third of all entrepreneurial activity globally (Nguyen et al., 2025).

In India, women owned business accounts for almost 20 to 22% of the overall number of small-scale and medium scale enterprises. The majority of these operate on an extremely low level of capitalization at the micro-unit level (Bora, 2025). Therefore, the State of Karnataka provides a rich regional case study environment for assessing the dynamics of women's entrepreneurship. As a state that is considered to be amongst the most advanced industrial and technologically developed states within India, it also represents one of the largest potential bases from which entrepreneurs can develop their businesses. The expansion of self-help groups and microfinance institutions, combined with growing support for entrepreneurs from the Government, have created opportunities for women to begin participating in entrepreneurial ventures. This is especially true for women that live in rural or semi-rural environments. Although there are now many more opportunities for women to participate in entrepreneurship than there were previously, women's participation in entrepreneurship continues to be limited by formalized financial systems, technological capabilities and market access (Jaitly & Thangallapally, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the role of women in entrepreneurship and supporting households through maintaining their business on digital platforms (Taoan Ge et al., 2022).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women entrepreneurship is an important factor for promoting economic growth, providing financial services to all people, and supporting positive changes in society. Studies conducted by Ashalatha & Amruthavarshini (2025), Mamatha & Mutyala (2024), and Kumari & Singh (2024) highlight how financing opportunities, education, entrepreneurial abilities, and support from institutions are all very influential when it comes to ensuring the economic self-sufficiency of female entrepreneurs. As well as this, studies conducted by Kumar & Divya (2021) and Agarwal & Dwivedi (2017) demonstrate that both financial knowledge and availability of funds can have a substantial impact on whether or not a woman entrepreneur can successfully start up her own enterprise, and whether she can continue to operate it. There has also been a great deal of research into the relationship between demographic characteristics and women entrepreneurship. Studies by Abebe & Kegne (2023), and Ahmetaj et al. (2023) show that factors such as age, level of education, marital status, and previous business experience all greatly influence the amount and quality of entrepreneurial activity.

Research on the institutional and policy aspects have also received a considerable amount of attention. Elumalai (2024) and Mahmood & Reddy (2024) emphasize the importance of government backed plans, microfinance schemes and training for empowering women as entrepreneurs. Nath & Varalakshmi (2024) further argue that providing women with both financial resources (microfinance) and entrepreneurial skills can greatly increase their economic independence. As reported by Maharaja et al. (2024); and Prashanti & Siddappa (2023), research studies have demonstrated that women entrepreneurship can positively impact the welfare of their families through increased household income and subsequently better quality of life; greater access to education; and health care services. Although, as Arya et al. (2017) reported that economically independent women have higher propensity to educate children and improve their family wellbeing. Desai and Chaudhri (2024), also identified that entrepreneurship has improved decision making and social status of women with respect to their families. There is still need for an integrated study which assesses the determinants of economic independence for women, and how they affect family wellbeing in Karnataka.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the focus on women's entrepreneurship has increased due to its role as an engine for both economic and social changes. However, despite an increase in female participation in entrepreneurial ventures, many women led businesses are still operating at the micro level. Many woman entrepreneurs also experience ongoing barriers to their business' ability to grow and sustain itself including; no or limited access to formal funding options, little or no training in how to run a business successfully, very little or no exposure to markets, and cultural or societal barriers that limit their choices. Government programs aimed to help stimulate women's entrepreneurship have been implemented in order to give them greater financial freedom. However, there is some uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of these programs, especially when it comes to providing financial independence in regional areas like Karnataka.

At the same time, the entrepreneurial activity of women is connected with the welfare of families, as a result of supporting household expenditures for education, health care and the overall standard of living by their income. The difference shows that it is necessary to analyze what has an influence on the economic independence and how much women's entrepreneurship contributes to the wellbeing of family and quality of life in some districts of Karnataka.

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the key factors influencing economic independence among women entrepreneurs in Karnataka.
2. To examine the impact of women entrepreneurship on family well-being and quality of life.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research methodology has been applied for this investigation into how women entrepreneurs have attained economic independence and how their families have benefited from these achievements in selected districts of Karnataka. An overall of 473 women running micro-enterprises completed a structured survey. Participants were chosen based on a purposeful sampling strategy which took place throughout eight districts; i.e., Bengaluru, Mandya, Mysore, Ramanagara, Kolar, Tumakuru, Chikballapur and Chamrajnagar. Sample size determination was conducted via Cochrans Formula for samples taken from unknown populations at a 95% Confidence Level with a Margin of Error of 5%. The Demographic Profile indicates that 33.2% of the respondents belonged to the 36 – 45-year-old range, 80.5% of the respondents were married and 31.3% held an Undergraduate Degree. Content Validity of the Questionnaire was demonstrated using Lawshe's Method by obtaining validation from Seven Experts. Descriptive Statistics, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Factor Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression were used for Data Analysis Using SPSS Version 23.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No.1: Key Drivers of Economic Independence

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family support played a key role in my entrepreneurial decision	3.632	1.292
Self-confidence and resilience support my entrepreneurial success	3.558	1.298
Financial responsibility towards my family motivates my entrepreneurship	3.548	1.290
Spousal or partner support is important for my business success	3.539	1.293
Personal savings were important for starting my business	3.537	1.290
My business generates sufficient income for financial independence	3.526	1.299
Training and skill development help in growing my business	3.516	1.291
Setting clear goals improves my business performance	3.514	1.289
Effective financial management strengthens my business sustainability	3.512	1.288
Reinvesting profits is essential for business growth	3.511	1.287
Access to loans and financial services supports business expansion	3.508	1.289
Government schemes and support contribute to my economic growth	3.505	1.291
Average Score	3.519	1.289

Table 1 reveals that among the key drivers of economic independence, ‘Family support’ recorded the highest mean score of 3.632, indicating that familial encouragement plays a pivotal role in women’s entrepreneurial decisions. ‘Self-confidence and resilience’ ranked second (Mean = 3.558), followed by ‘Financial responsibility towards family’ (Mean = 3.548) and ‘Spousal or partner support’

(Mean = 3.539), emphasizing the family-centric motivations driving women's economic independence. 'Personal savings' (Mean = 3.537) and 'Sufficient business income' (Mean = 3.526) highlight the importance of financial self-reliance. 'Training and skill development' (Mean = 3.516), 'Goal setting' (Mean = 3.514), and 'Financial management' (Mean = 3.512) reflect the role of business competencies. 'Reinvesting profits' (Mean = 3.511), 'Access to loans' (Mean = 3.508), and 'Government schemes' (Mean = 3.505) recorded comparatively lower but still moderate scores. The overall average of 3.519 indicates a moderate to high level of agreement regarding economic independence drivers.

Table No.2: Effects of Entrepreneurship on Family Well-Being and Quality of Life

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
My business has improved my family's financial stability	3.584	1.288
My business helps support my family's educational needs	3.564	1.282
My children have better access to quality education due to my business income	3.556	1.286
My business income improves access to healthcare for my family	3.552	1.289
Entrepreneurship has strengthened my family's financial security	3.548	1.290
My business reduces my family's dependence on external financial support	3.545	1.289
My business has improved my family's diet and lifestyle	3.542	1.290
Entrepreneurship allows me to contribute equally to family finances	3.529	1.281
Entrepreneurship has enhanced my family's standard of living	3.527	1.282
My income allows my family to save and plan for the future	3.524	1.287
My business has improved our housing and living conditions	3.523	1.281
My business has improved my family's mental well-being	3.522	1.283
Average Score	3.531	1.284

Table 2 indicates the impacts of women's entrepreneurship on the well-being of their families. The 'improved financial stability' was given the highest average of 3.584, indicating that in-house income has an immediate and direct effect on household economic safety/financial stability. 'Supporting the family's educational needs' (Mean=3.564) and 'better access to quality education for children' (Mean=3.556) show that women who are entrepreneurial consider education to be one of the most important factors when it comes to making investment decisions. 'Access to better healthcare for myself or other members of the family' (Mean=3.552) and 'Financial Security' (Mean=3.548) also demonstrate additional positive influences from being entrepreneurial. 'Reduced dependence on others for financial support' (Mean=3.545), 'Improving health and wellness through dietary changes/lifestyle choices' (Mean=3.542), and 'Contributing equally to the family finances' (Mean=3.529) show how empowering entrepreneurship can be. Although lower than some of the previous averages, 'Enhancing our family's standard of living,' 'Planning for savings/future plans', 'Improving our housing situation' (Mean=3.523), and 'Improving my mental wellbeing' (Mean=3.522) all averaged at comparative moderate levels. An overall average of 3.531 demonstrates a moderate to high level of impact of entrepreneurship on the wellbeing of a woman's family.

Table No.3: Impact of Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
My self-confidence as an entrepreneur creates a positive family environment	3.596	1.282
My financial knowledge helps manage household finances effectively	3.593	1.284
My independent decision-making improves family decision balance	3.588	1.283
My resilience helps my family handle challenges better	3.569	1.281
My communication skills reduce misunderstandings within my family	3.567	1.280
My success increases my family's aspirations and confidence	3.565	1.281

My entrepreneurial role inspires my children to be goal-oriented	3.562	1.277
My role motivates family members to pursue education and careers	3.562	1.280
My problem-solving skills help address family issues efficiently	3.561	1.279
My control over life helps my family face challenges confidently	3.560	1.278
My personal growth reduces conflicts and improves family harmony	3.559	1.282
My success builds a sense of pride and identity in my family	3.558	1.282
Average Score	3.562	1.279

Table 3 depicts that 'Self-confidence creating a positive family environment' recorded the highest mean of 3.596, followed by 'Financial knowledge for household management' (mean = 3.593) and 'Independent decision-making' (mean = 3.588). 'Resilience' (Mean = 3.569), 'Communication skills' (Mean = 3.567), and 'Family aspirations and confidence' (Mean = 3.565) highlight how entrepreneurial competencies positively influence household dynamics. 'Inspiring children to be goal-oriented' and 'Motivating family members for education' (both mean = 3.562) underscore the intergenerational effects of women's entrepreneurship. 'Problem-solving skills' (Mean = 3.561), 'Control over life' (Mean = 3.560), 'Reduced family conflicts' (Mean = 3.559), and 'Pride and identity' (Mean = 3.558) further validate the empowering impact of entrepreneurship. The overall average of 3.562 indicates that personal empowerment has a moderately high impact on family outcomes.

Table No.4: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Key Drivers of Economic Independence

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.849
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1110.146
	df	153
	Sig.	0.000

Table 4 presents the KMO and Bartlett's test results. The KMO value of 0.849 indicates a high level of sampling adequacy, confirming the data is appropriate for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant (Chi-Square = 1110.146, df = 153, p = 0.000), indicating the presence of adequate correlations among the variables. Factor analysis extracted five distinct components explaining 46.69 percent of cumulative variance: Financial Access and External Support (21.92%), Income Generation and Self-Reliance (6.77%), Networking, Mentorship, and Skill Development (6.22%), Family Motivation and Financial Management (6.05%), and Community Support and Business Reinvestment (5.74%).

Hypothesis H_{01}: There is no significant association between the demographic variables and the dimensions of women entrepreneurship impact on family outcomes.

Table No.5: One-Way ANOVA – Demographic Variables and Dimensions of Women Entrepreneurship

Demographic Variable	Key Drivers of Economic Independence		Family Well-Being and Quality of Life		Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Age Group	2.448	.046*	2.647	.033*	2.312	.057
Educational Qualification	4.487	.012*	5.102	.000**	12.068	.000**
Marital Status	0.142	.868	3.254	.039*	3.267	.039*
Monthly Household Income	2.770	.027*	2.782	.026*	2.991	.019*
Work Experience	2.599	.036*	2.621	.034*	2.602	.035*
Years of Business Operation	2.602	.035*	3.798	.023*	0.570	.685
Family Type	4.635	.010**	5.569	.004**	15.444	.000**

*Note: *Significant at 5% level, **Significant at 1% level. N = 473*

Table 5 presents the consolidated ANOVA results, which examine the association between demographic variables and the three key dimensions. The educational qualifications of women have a very high association in each dimension, specifically an extremely high association for both family well-being ($F = 5.102$, $p = .000$) and personal empowerment ($F = 12.068$, $p = .000$). The family type has a very high association with all dimensions as well. Specifically, it is very high for personal empowerment ($F = 15.444$, $p = .000$) and family well-being ($F = 5.569$, $p = .004$). Monthly household income and work experience show significant associations with all three dimensions, confirming that economic and experiential factors influence entrepreneurial outcomes. Marital status significantly affects family well-being and personal empowerment but is not a key driver of economic independence ($p = 0.868$). Age group shows significant effects on key drivers and family well-being but not on personal empowerment ($p = 0.057$), indicating that different age groups may experience varying levels of economic independence and family dynamics. Years of business operation significantly influence key drivers and family well-being but not personal empowerment ($p = 0.685$). These results indicate that demographic characteristics differentially influence the dimensions of women entrepreneurship impact on family outcomes, and therefore the null hypothesis is partially rejected.

Hypothesis H_{02}: There is no significant linear relationship between the components of Key Drivers of Economic Independence and the Impact of Entrepreneurship on Family Well-Being and Quality of Life.

Table No.6: Model Summary and ANOVA for Family Well-Being and Quality of Life

Model	R	R²	Adj. R²	Std. Error	F	Sig.	D-W
1	.761	.578	.574	6.533	128.141	.000	1.424
Model	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	27344.232	5	5468.846	128.141	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Five Factor Components of Key Drivers of Economic Independence

b. Dependent Variable: Impact of Entrepreneurship on Family Well-Being and Quality of Life

Table 6 indicates that the five factor components of key drivers are significant predictors of family well-being and quality of life. The model produces a strong correlation coefficient of $R = 0.761$ and $R^2 = 0.578$, meaning that 57.8 percent of the variance in family well-being is explained by the five predictor components. The adjusted R^2 of 0.574 confirms model stability. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.424 indicates no serious autocorrelation. The ANOVA results confirm the model is statistically significant ($F = 128.141$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table No.7: Regression Coefficients for Family Well-Being and Quality of Life

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	70.091	0.300		233.339	.000
Financial Access and External Support	4.489	0.301	.449	14.928	.000
Income Generation and Self-Reliance	3.960	0.301	.396	13.170	.000
Networking, Mentorship and Skill Development	3.866	0.301	.386	12.857	.000
Family Motivation and Financial Management	2.278	0.301	.228	7.577	.000
Community Support and Business Reinvestment	1.401	0.301	.140	4.660	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Impact of Entrepreneurship on Family Well-Being and Quality of Life

Table 7 presents the regression coefficients. Financial Access and External Support emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.449$, $t = 14.928$, $p = 0.000$), followed by Income Generation and Self-Reliance ($\beta = 0.396$, $t = 13.170$, $p = 0.000$) and Networking, Mentorship, and Skill Development ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 12.857$, $p = 0.000$).

Family Motivation and Financial Management (β = 0.228, t = 7.577, p = 0.000) and Community Support and Business Reinvestment (β = 0.140, t = 4.660, p = 0.000) also contribute significantly. All five components are statistically significant predictors of family well-being.

Hypothesis H_{03}: There is no significant linear relationship between the components of Key Drivers of Economic Independence and the Impact of Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family.

Table No.8: Model Summary and ANOVA for Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family

Model	R	R²	Adj. R²	Std. Error	F	Sig.	D-W
1	.785	.616	.612	6.302	149.654	.000	1.773
Model	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	29717.111	5	5943.422	149.654	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Five Factor Components of Key Drivers of Economic Independence
b. Dependent Variable: Impact of Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family
Table 8 shows that the five factor components are also significant predictors of personal empowerment and growth within family. The model demonstrates a strong correlation (R = 0.785) with R^2 = 0.616, indicating that 61.6 percent of the variance in personal empowerment is explained by the predictors. The adjusted R^2 of 0.612 confirms model adequacy. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.773 indicates no autocorrelation. The ANOVA results are statistically significant (F = 149.654, p = 0.000). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table No.9: Regression Coefficients for Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	65.698	0.290		226.729	.000
Financial Access and External Support	4.275	0.290	.423	14.737	.000
Income Generation and Self-Reliance	3.824	0.290	.378	13.184	.000
Networking, Mentorship and Skill Development	4.532	0.290	.448	15.622	.000
Family Motivation and Financial Management	2.702	0.290	.267	9.317	.000
Community Support and Business Reinvestment	1.491	0.290	.147	5.139	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Impact of Personal Empowerment and Growth on Family
Table 9 reveals that Networking, Mentorship and Skill Development emerges as the strongest predictor of personal empowerment (β = 0.448, t = 15.622, p = 0.000), followed by Financial Access and External Support (β = 0.423, t = 14.737, p = 0.000) and Income Generation and Self-Reliance (β = 0.378, t = 13.184, p = 0.000). Family Motivation and Financial Management (β = 0.267, t = 9.317, p = 0.000) and Community Support and Business Reinvestment (β = 0.147, t = 5.139, p = 0.000) also contribute significantly. Notably, Networking, Mentorship and Skill Development replaces Financial Access as the strongest predictor for personal empowerment, indicating that support-oriented and skill-building elements are more critical for women's personal growth than financial factors alone.

VI. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics indicate that the key drivers of economic independence received a moderate to high average mean of 3.519. Family support (Mean = 3.632), self-confidence and resilience (Mean = 3.558), and financial responsibility towards family (Mean = 3.548) were the leading drivers. Among the effects of entrepreneurship on family well-being (overall mean = 3.531), improved financial stability (mean = 3.584) and support for educational needs (mean = 3.564) recorded the highest means. The impact of personal empowerment on family (overall mean = 3.562) was highest for self-confidence, creating a positive family environment (mean = 3.596); financial knowledge for household management (mean = 3.593); and independent decision-making (mean = 3.588). Factor analysis confirmed the multidimensional nature of economic independence drivers, with the KMO value of 0.849 and five extracted components explaining 46.69 percent of total variance. The ANOVA analysis revealed that educational qualification and family type have the most significant associations with all three entrepreneurship dimensions. Monthly household income and work experience also showed significant effects across all dimensions, while age group, marital status, and years of business operation demonstrated selective significance.

The regression analysis demonstrated that the five factor components collectively explain 57.8 percent of the variance in family well-being ($R^2 = 0.578$, $F = 128.141$, $p = 0.000$), with Financial Access and External Support being the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.449$). The second regression model indicated that 61.6 percent of the variation in personal empowerment is accounted for by the same predictors ($R^2 = 0.616$; $F = 149.654$; $p = 0.000$) with Networking, Mentorship and Skill Development being the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.448$). These findings show that targeted programs designed to increase access to money, skills training and networking opportunities can have a large impact on enhancing family well-being and empowering women as entrepreneurs within Karnataka.

6.1 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of this study, policymakers and financial institutions are encouraged to provide formal credit and financial services to a greater extent to women micro-enterprise owners; as indicated by the regression analysis, financial access was found to be the most important factor in explaining family well-being. The government is urged to develop an integrated program that provides microfinance along with training/education and mentoring opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs since both social networks and mentors were found to contribute significantly to their personal empowerment. Family support systems should be officially recognized through awareness campaigns, as both family and spousal support were found to have the greatest impact on economic independence. In addition to extending digital literacy programs across Karnataka's rural and semi-urban areas, district-level entrepreneurship development centers must also be established to provide training, market linkage opportunities, and mentorship for women-run microenterprises.

VII. CONCLUSION

The current research study found through empirical studies that there were many interrelated factors to drive economic independence for female entrepreneurs in Karnataka. Those most influencing this independence were family support, self-confidence, financial responsibility, and spousal support. Factor analysis supported a multidimensional model of the independent driving factors and identified five distinct dimensions or component factors. The results from ANOVA indicated that demographic factors (educational qualification & family type) influenced entrepreneurial outcomes. Regression analysis also indicated that all five component factors were statistically significant predictors of both family well-being ($R^2 = 0.578$) and personal empowerment ($R^2 = 0.616$). The impact of these findings on the role of women's entrepreneurship as an important driver of both personal and familial economic well-being and overall quality of life is evident. When women entrepreneurs have the necessary financial resources; institutional support; education or skill development opportunities; and family encouragement to succeed financially, the benefits of their success will be realized at the level of the household rather than simply at the level of the individual. In terms of policy, this research supports the need to develop targeted intervention programs designed to address all aspects of women's economic self-sufficiency (financial, social, and institutional) by providing support mechanisms that allow for the creation of sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurial systems within Karnataka.

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