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PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS IN INDIA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently suggested the central government for the privatization of public sector banks (PSBs) in India. The increasing level of non-performing assets (NPAs) and declining level of profitability of the PSBs are the most possible reasons for making such kind of suggestion by the RBI. If the government goes for privatization, then the main purpose to facilitate bank credit to the marginal section of the society of the banking nationalization policy formed in 1969 and 1980 may be affected. This may also lead to huge unrest among bank employees of the PSBs. The present study attempts to analyze and compare the performance of the public sector banks (PSBs) and private sector banks (PVBs) in India to reach the need for privatization. The research reveals that numerically, the performance of the PVBs is better than the PSBs from NPAs and profitability perspectives. But there are many social welfare issues of public interest where the PSBs are doing well.

KEYWORDS

RBI, NPAs, central government, public sector banks, private sector banks, profitability, privatization, nationalization, public interest, social welfare.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Presently, the central government of India is very worried about the increasing level of NPAs and declining level of profitability of the PSBs in which the government has more than 50% stake. So, from the banking business, the government has been suffering from losses over the last five years. Though, the works of government cannot be just profit oriented. At the same time, the regulator of the Indian banking sector, the RBI has recently suggested for privatization of the PSBs in India. As a result, the government may think about moving towards the decision of privatization of the PSBs. So, nowadays, this hot topic of privatization is coming under the scanner for discussion with mixed opinions. But, if we, just look into the main objective behind the nationalization of banks in India in 1969 as well as 1980, we could see that was to facilitate bank credit to the marginal section of society which is popularly termed the priority sector lending. Presently, as per banking sector reforms, at least 40% (higher of) the adjusted net bank credit (ANBC) or credit equivalent of off-balance sheet exposure (CEOBE) should be allowed as a credit to the marginal section of the society under the priority sector lending (PSL) scheme in India. Both the PSBs and PVBs have been following the norms of reforms and also doing well under the PSL scheme for society. The current study has tried to analyze the need for the privations of PSBs in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted by many academicians and researchers on different aspects of the privation of PSBs in India over time. Some of them are highlighted below.

Tripathi (2019) studied various pros and cons of the privatization of public sector banks and analyzed the issue through the solution-oriented approach. He found that the privatization of public sector banks may be done to a limited extent on a temporary basis, but more focus should be given to strengthening regulations, governance, norms, and procedures, and improving human resource management of public sector banks.

Agarwal (2022) examined the need and efficiency of the privatization of public sector banks by evaluating and comparing the performance and the NPAs of both public and private sector banks. Finally, he reached a mixed opinion and suggested that the government should frame suitable policies to manage the NPAs of public sector banks.

Garje (2022) tried to show how few private sector banks (20) have been nationalized in the year 1980 and how the central government wants to privatize the same banks, now. He said that the motives behind the nationalization and the privatization seem to be contradictory which has been highlighted by him. He concluded that the strong public sector banks should not be privatized rather they should be given autonomy status like Navaratna status given to strong public sector undertakings.

Sarala (2020) analyzed various issues like the objectives of privatization, the inefficiency of public sector banks, the importance of private sector banks, RBI guidelines for private sector banks, and the impact of financial sector reforms. He found that in the case of privatization, the banking sector will be dominated by a handful of big industrialists. He also revealed that the direction which the central government wants to give to the banking policy is adverse to the objective of nationalization and the constitutional obligation of equitable distribution of wealth.

Keshava (2016) studied privatization, and how it brings benefits and success to the banking sector. He presented that privatization leads to a monopoly which will increase public suffering and reduce the equality and efficiency of the banking sector. It would bring new culture in banking not only for small borrowers but also for small savers.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to analyze the need for privatization of public sector banks in India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 DATABASE: The study is analytical in nature, purely based on secondary data. The data have been collected from the various related research-based articles, journals, and papers published by many researchers over time in India and various annual reports of the RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21.

4.2 METHODOLOGY: The performance of the PSBs and PVBs has been analyzed and compared with the help of three parameters (i) the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%), (ii) the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and (iii) profitability-return on assets (ROA %). The tables, graphs, and statistical tools (correlation test) have been applied to analyze the data to draw logical research conclusions. The processing and analysis of data have been done with the help of ms-excel and statistical package (SPSS-20.0 version).

5. HYPOTHESIS

Six sets of hypotheses have been formulated to achieve the research objective. These are as follows:

H₁ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PSBs

H₂ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs

H₃ There is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs

H₄ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PVBs

H₅ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs

H₆ There is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected from the annual reports of the RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21 have been analyzed below:

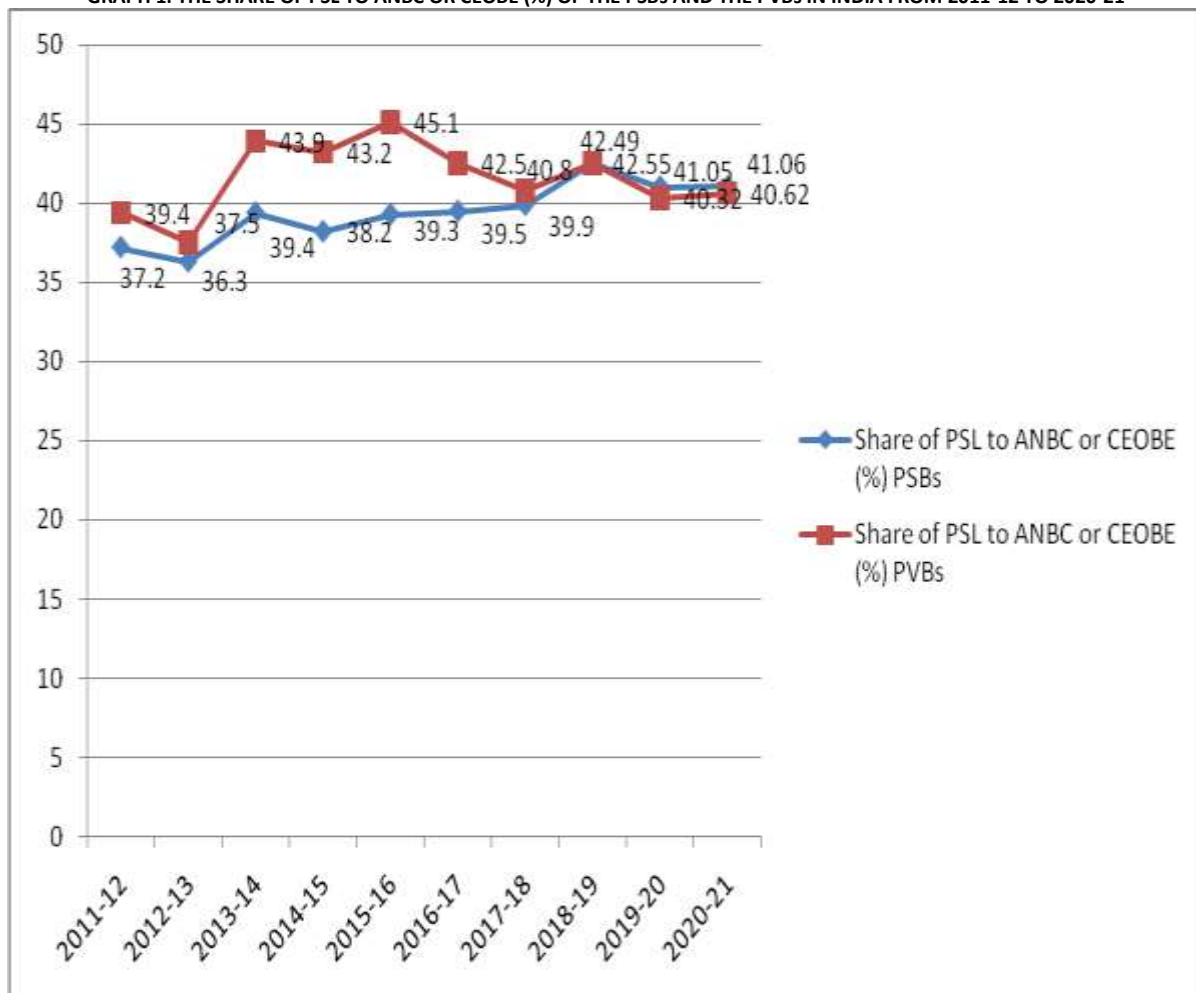
TABLE 1: PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS AND PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS FROM 2011-12 TO 2020-21

Year	Performance of Public Sector Banks			Performance of Private Sector Banks		
	Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	ROA (%)	Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	ROA (%)
2011-12	37.2	1.5	0.88	39.4	0.5	1.53
2012-13	36.3	2	0.78	37.5	0.5	1.63
2013-14	39.4	2.6	0.5	43.9	0.7	1.65
2014-15	38.2	2.9	0.46	43.2	0.9	1.68
2015-16	39.3	5.7	-0.07	45.1	1.4	1.5
2016-17	39.5	6.9	-0.1	42.5	2.2	1.3
2017-18	39.9	8	-0.84	40.8	2.4	1.14
2018-19	42.55	4.8	-0.65	42.49	2	0.63
2019-20	41.05	3.7	-0.23	40.32	1.5	0.51
2020-21	41.06	3.1	0.3	40.62	1.4	1.2

(Source: Compiled by Researcher from Annual Reports of RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21)

Observation: From the above table-1, it has been observed that the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) for the PVBs is higher in the initial seven years from 2011-12 to 2017-18, but the same is slightly lower in the last three years from 2018-19 to 2020-21 in comparison to the PSBs in India. The share of net NPAs to net advances (%) for the PSBs is higher than the PVBs over the last ten years from 2011-12 to 2020-21. The ROA of the PSBs is lower than the PVBs over the last ten years from 2011-12 to 2020-21. Rather, the ROA of the PSBs is negative from 2015-16 to 2019-20. So, in an overall sense, the overall performance of the PVBs is better than the PSBs over the last ten years from 2011-12 to 2020-21.

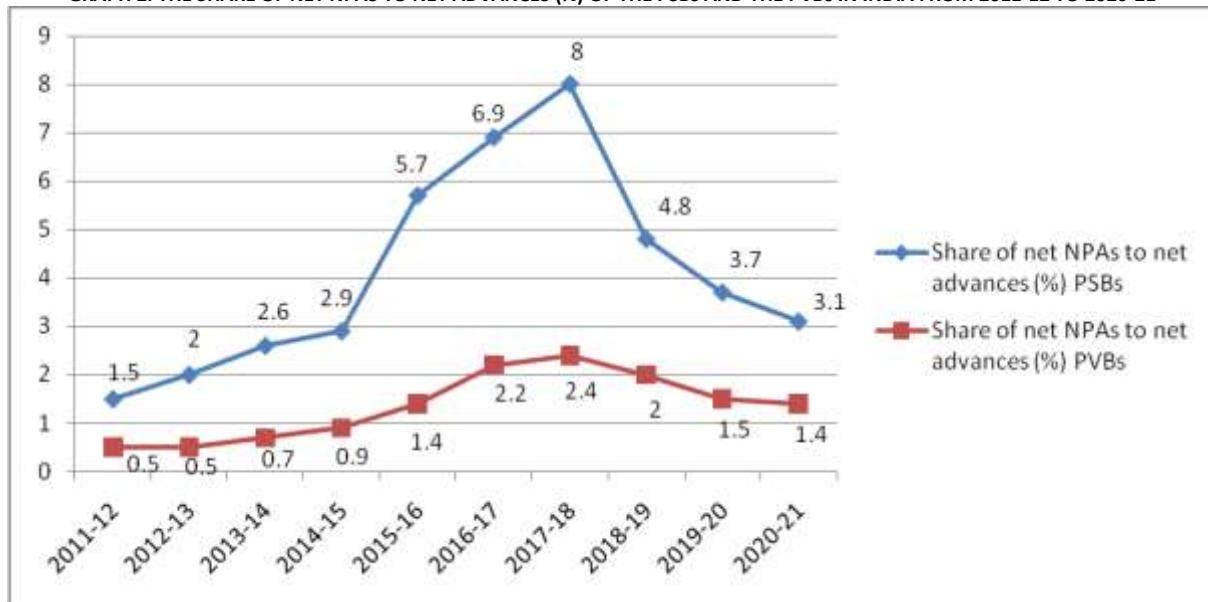
GRAPH 1: THE SHARE OF PSL TO ANBC OR CEOBE (%) OF THE PSBs AND THE PVBs IN INDIA FROM 2011-12 TO 2020-21



(Source: Compiled by Researcher from Annual Reports of RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21)

Observation: From the above graph-1, it has been observed that the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) for the PVBs is higher in the initial seven years from 2011-12 to 2017-18, but the same is slightly lower in the last three years from 2018-19 to 2020-21 in comparison to the PSBs in India.

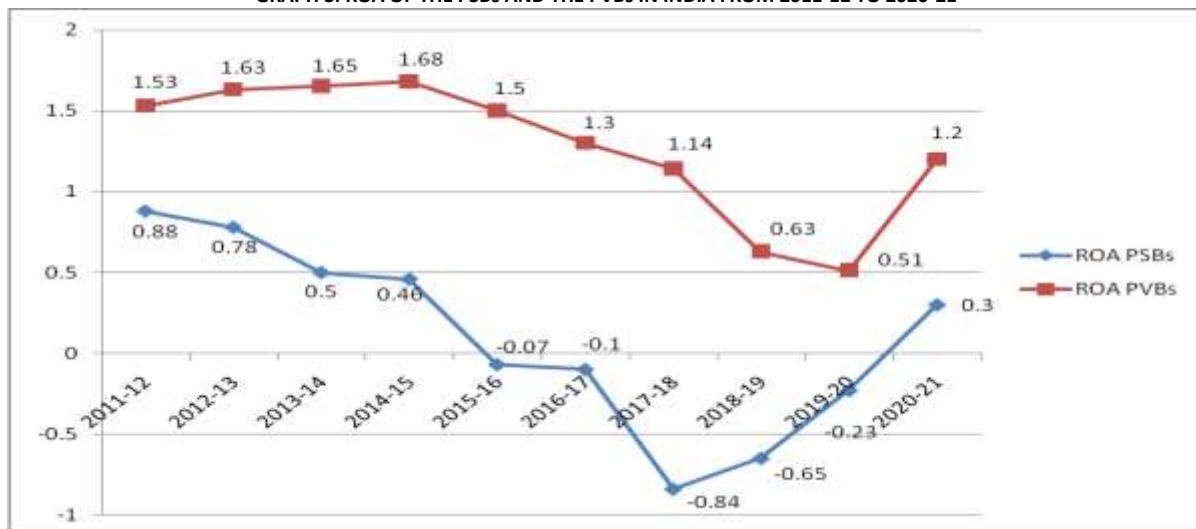
GRAPH 2: THE SHARE OF NET NPAs TO NET ADVANCES (%) OF THE PSBs AND THE PVBs IN INDIA FROM 2011-12 TO 2020-21



(Source: Compiled by Researcher from Annual Reports of RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21)

Observation: From the above graph-2, it has been found that the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) for the PSBs is higher than the PVBs over the last ten years from 2011-12 to 2020-21.

GRAPH 3: ROA OF THE PSBs AND THE PVBs IN INDIA FROM 2011-12 TO 2020-21



(Source: Compiled by Researcher from Annual Reports of RBI from 2011-12 to 2020-21)

Observation: From the above graph-3, it has been seen that the ROA of the PSBs is lower than the PVBs over the last ten years from 2011-12 to 2020-21. Rather, the ROA of the PSBs is negative from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

6.1 Hypothesis Testing-1 Relating to the PSBs

H₁ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PSBs

H₂ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs

H₃ There is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs

TABLE 2: CORRELATION TEST

		Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	ROA (%)
Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Pearson Correlation	1	.428	-.748
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.217	.013
	No	10	10	10
Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	Pearson Correlation	.428	1	-.849
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.217		.002
	No	10	10	10
ROA (%)	Pearson Correlation	-.748	-.849	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.002	
	No	10	10	10

(Source: Compiled by Researcher)

Interpretation: The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.217 which is more than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PSBs.

The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.013 which is less than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong negative correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs.

The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.002 which is less than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong negative correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs.

6.2 Hypothesis Testing-2 Relating to the PVBs

H₄ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PVBs

H₅ There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs

H₆ There is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs

TABLE 3: CORRELATION TEST

		Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	ROA (%)
Share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%)	Pearson Correlation	1	.251	.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.483	.775
	No	10	10	10
Share of net NPAs to net advances (%)	Pearson Correlation	.251	1	-.609
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.483		.062
	No	10	10	10
ROA (%)	Pearson Correlation	.104	-.609	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.775	.062	
	No	10	10	10

(Source: Compiled by Researcher)

Interpretation: The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.483 which is more than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PVBs.

The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.775 which is more than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs.

The Pearson Correlation or P-value of the test at the 5% level of significance is 0.062 which is more than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings from the above analysis are affirmed as under:

1. There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PSBs.
2. There is a strong negative correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs.
3. There is a strong negative correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs.
4. There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) of the PVBs.
5. There is no correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs.
6. There is no correlation between the share of net NPAs to net advances (%) and ROA (%) of the PVBs.

8. CONCLUSIONS

From the above study, it has been found that the credit allowed by the PSBs under the PSL scheme has no correlation with their NPAs. It means that the PSBs' NPAs level has been hiking due to some other reasons. On the other hand, due to the increasing level of NPAs, the profitability (ROA) of the PSBs is being hampered over the years. It has also been observed that there is a strong negative correlation between the share of PSL to ANBC or CEOBE (%) and ROA (%) of the PSBs. It means that the more credit allowed by the PSBs under the PSL scheme will lead to more decline in profitability (ROA) of the PSBs. So, the banking sector nationalization objective is supposed to be one of the obstacles to the low profitability of PSBs. But, the most negative impact on the profitability has been coming from the increasing level of NPAs of the PSBs.

On the contrary, the study shows that there is no correlation at all among PSL, NPAs, and ROA of the PVBs. The PSL of the PVBs is higher and sometimes quite at par with the PSBs. But, the NPAs level is always much lower than the PSBs. The ROA of the PVBs is also always much higher than the PSBs.

As the PVBs are performing very well over the years in those above-mentioned perspectives, the central government wants the PSBs to perform in a similar manner. The government may think that the desired performance may be achieved by the PSBs through privatization. It is not that the government has not taken any steps for the performance improvement of the PSBs. The capital infusion programme has been done by the government so many times to strengthen the PSBs but the results were not up to the expectation.

On the other hand, we should not forget that the PSBs are doing very well in social accountability aspects in India. The Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is one of the superior financial inclusion programmes in India, where PSBs are doing exceptionally well. Apart from that the various aspects of the financial inclusion programme like the opening of zero balance accounts, issue of Ru-pay debit cards, bank branch expansion, availability of more no of ATMs, and availability of good and reliable Business Correspondents (BCs) throughout the nation where the PSBs are doing very well in comparison to the PVBs.

The demand of the time is to reduce the level of NPAs in the PSBs. Now, the government needs to identify the exact reasons for the continuous hiking of the NPAs level in the PSBs. Those reasons should be sorted out properly as soon as possible. That solution will definitely have a positive impact on the profitability of the PSBs. Thereafter; the government may turn back into the banking nationalization policy. Otherwise, the process of privatization might disrupt the public interest, social welfare, and stability.

Finally, it can be concluded that the central government has to think about a lot of technical, financial, and social aspects before making any concrete decision about the privatization of PSBs in India.

9. SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions may be given to the burning issue of privatization of the PSBs in India. These are as follows:

1. The PSBs should improve the quality of management of NPAs.
2. The central government should think and implement the recommendations, proposed by different banking sector reform committees formed over time in India, to reduce the government stake in the PSBs.
3. The human resource management of the PSBs should be improved.
4. The privatization of the PSBs may be a temporary solution. Instead of doing so, the government should strengthen the regulations, governance, norms, and procedures of the PSBs.
5. Above all, the government should always keep in mind the protection of public interest, social welfare, stability, and safety net in the Indian banking sector.

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