

Female Attitude towards Education in Rural Maharashtra

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to find out the awareness and attitude of female towards education. This study was limited to female of all age groups in Taradgavhan village of Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra State. The sample size was 121 females of all age groups. Information was collected with the help of interview schedule. Result represents that most of the respondent's mothers are strongly inclined towards education and employment of their daughter but still restrictions are imposed in house like the daughter- in -laws should not be educated and age of girl's marriage should be after eighteenth. Result also indicated that most of the female in this village have knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Key Words: Education, Attitude, Opinion, Employment

Introduction

Literacy is an important indicator of socio-economic and cultural development. Sen (1995) has shown that literacy has instrumental as well as intrinsic significance in the dynamic process of development. In fact, literacy is the foundation of all other developmental processes. Basic education is the key to building human capital, the vital ingredient in building a nation (Haq and Haq, 1998). The education is valuable to the freedom of a person in at least five distinct ways, intrinsic importance, instrumental personal roles, instrumental social roles, instrumental process roles, empowerment a distributive roles. Thus, basic education and literacy have several valuable features for the enlistment of the society, community and people at large. (Sen, 1995). Female education is an important means of social transformation. In India there is a disparity in literacy between male female as well as between rural and urban

areas. Rural female are more deprived from education. The reasons are female's attitude towards education of their daughters.

Studying the belief of mothers, Sharma (1999) found that a mother wants their daughters to be educated and professionally sound, because they feel that they themselves could not get such an opportunity. The most forefeel profession for daughter was 'teaching' as mothers believe that only education and employment can enable a girl to be free from the shackles of the drudgery at home. Even the would be mothers – in – law wish their daughters –in-laws to be employed, as they believe it would be beneficial in avoiding 'jhak-jhak' (Squabbles) (Sharma, 1999). Khan and Noor (1984) found that this has been considerable change in the attitudes, values and actual performance of rural women in the field of education.

Maharashtra has performed improvement in literacy level. In literacy Maharashtra occupies the fifth position (77.37 percent) among the states. The state has experienced maximum increase in literacy in the last decade. Despite an overall higher level of urban literacy, the increase in rural literacy is even more impressive, with the gap between rural and urban literacy rate declining. The rural literacy has increased by 15.32 percent and the urban literacy by 6.56 percent. Another important feature worth noticing is that the total numbers of literate are increasing much faster than the total population with an increasing share of females in total literate compared to the male. This trend is faster in the rural areas than the urban areas. However, within the state there is disparity among regions and between male and female. Marathwada-Vidarbha region is the poor performer.

Methodology

To collect the data regarding female literacy 121 samples (100 percent household of village Taradgavhan) have been selected. Well structured, pre tested questionnaire have been used to collect the data. Data have been analyzed with the help of cartographic method.

Objectives

- ❖ To analyze the regional imbalances in literacy in Maharashtra state.
- ❖ To analyze the socio economic situation of female in village.
- ❖ To observe female attitude towards education.
- ❖ To see their knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Improvement in female literacy in Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, there is significant improvement in female literacy. In 1931 only 2 percent female were literate, which increased to 67 percent in 2001. After 1981 the literacy among female increased rapidly. In Maharashtra there is more awareness for spread of female education due to efforts made by social reformers like Maharshi Karve and Mahatam Jyotiba Phule.

The literacy scenario of Maharashtra

According to 2001 census the literacy rate in Maharashtra is 77.27 percent. In spite of the overall figures, analysis of the literacy data reveals certain problems. For instance, male literacy is 86.27 percent and female literacy is 67.51 percent. Similarly, large variation in literacy can be seen among districts and between men and women (Table No. 1)

Table No. 1 Male - female literacy gap 2001

Districts	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Gap	Districts	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Gap
Maharashtra	86.00	67.51	18.49	Parbhani	79.63	53.02	26.61
Gr. Mumbai	91.56	81.12	10.44	Bid	80.70	54.52	26.18
Mumbai	90.23	81.38	8.85	Nanded	80.44	54.35	26.09
Thane	87.06	73.10	13.96	Osmanabad	69.02	56.89	12.13
Raigarh	86.15	67.75	18.40	Latur	71.54	59.40	12.14
Ratnagiri	85.89	65.72	20.17	Buldhana	86.93	64.07	22.86
Sindhudurg	90.26	71.23	19.03	Akola	88.91	73.43	15.48
Nashik	83.65	64.35	19.30	Amravati	88.91	75.73	13.18
Dhule	81.40	61.39	20.01	Yavatmal	84.09	62.52	21.57
Jalgaon	85.91	64.30	21.61	Wardha	87.18	72.45	14.73
Ahmadnagar	85.70	64.35	21.35	Nagpur	90.18	77.42	12.76
Pune	88.34	71.89	16.45	Bhandara	88.97	67.82	21.15

Satara	88.20	68.38	19.82	Chandrapur	82.94	62.89	20.05
Sangli	86.26	66.73	19.53	Gadchiroli	71.86	48.07	23.79
Solapur	81.99	59.84	22.15	Hingoli	80.17	51.17	29.00
Kolhapur	87.47	66.02	21.45	Nandurbar	66.16	45.18	20.98
Aurangabad	84.89	60.09	24.80	Washim	85.44	60.57	24.87
Jalna	79.40	49.04	30.36	Gondia	89.61	67.58	22.03

Source: Census of India, 2001.

It is clear from the table No.1 that few districts such as Greater Mumbai and Mumbai Suburb have more than 80 percent literacy. However, others like Nandurbar, Gadchiroli and Jalna have less than 50 percent female literates in 2001. Among three districts Nandurbar and Gadchiroli districts are having higher proportion of scheduled tribe population, which is 65.5 percent and 38.3 percent respectively.

The Marathwada region is one of the most neglected in the development of education not only in Maharashtra but also in India. In Marathwada region worst performer consist of five districts namely, Nanded, Latur, Bid, Osmanabad, Parbhani, and Hingoli.

Disparity in male- female literacy

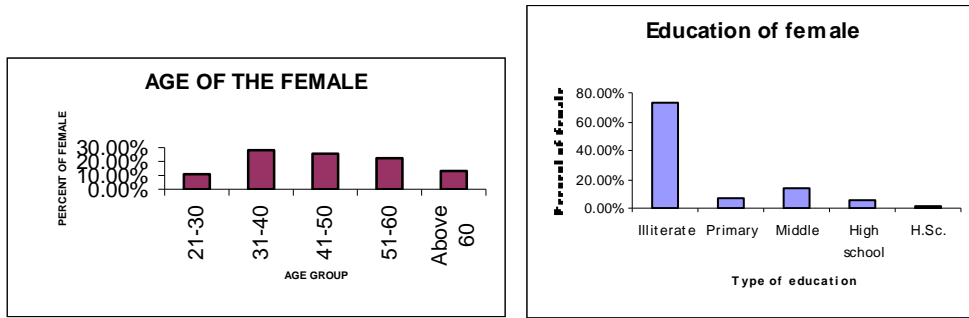
Education of women has a major impact on the overall development of a society. The problem of literacy among women in Maharashtra is not uniform. Some district like-Greater Mumbai, Mumbai suburb, Thane, Sindhudurg, Pune, Nagpur, Wardha and Amravati have a favorable literacy rate compared with the districts of central Maharashtra.

A district-wise comparison of Gender gap in literacy shows that Mumbai has lowest disparity (8 %), followed by Greater Mumbai suburb (10 %) and Osmanabad (12 %). The highest disparity is observed in Jalna where it works out to more than 30 percent.

Gender gap in literacy indicates the status accorded to women in the society. If there is higher rate of disparity between men and women in literacy, it shows that women in that region are severely neglected. Socio, Cultural, Economic, Political and attitudinal problems are responsible for female illiteracy problem. An attempt has been made to analyze female attitude towards education of their children as well as overall social change.

Figure No. 1

Figure No.2



Age of the female

In Taradgavhan age wise distribution of the female indicates that 28.10 percent of the females are in the age group of 31-40 years. The second group is 41-50 years it accounts for 25.62 percent. The third group that is 51-60 years it accounts for 22.31 percent of the female, the fourth group is above 60 years and fifth is 21-30 accounts for 8 percent respectively. This clearly indicates that almost three-quarters of the respondents are from mature age group that is 30-60 years and mothers of grown up and young children.

Education attainment of the women respondents

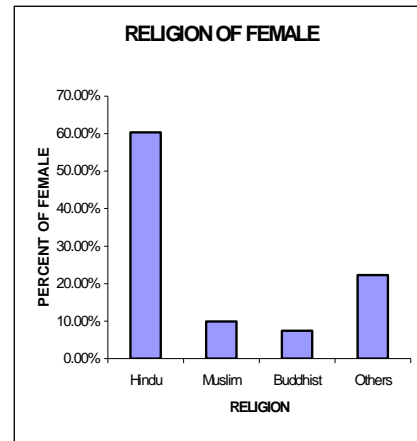
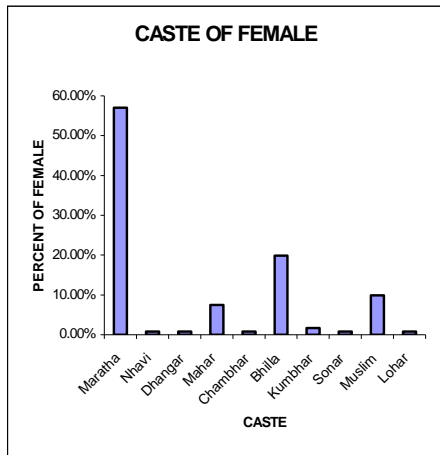
Above table shows the literacy of female of Taradgavhan. There are 72.73 percent female are illiterate. In educated female 7.44 percent females are literate up to primary level. 14.05 percent women are educated up to middle, 4.96 percent women educated up to high school and only 0.83 percent educated up to H.Sc. because of their very poor educational qualifications. One can expect a lack of awareness of education among them. And most important aspect is no one female, is educated up to G/PG. This shows that parents didn't give importance to the education of girls. Most of the female when they were in age of learning stage and their family members didn't give that much importance of education, now they realize that they would have taken education.

Educated mothers have a better motivating influence on the child to go to school; can provide better pre-school education at home; prefer better quality schooling for their children and the choice of careers for them.(Bhat, Sharma, 2005).

Caste and Religion of the women respondents

Figure No. 3

Figure No. 4



Above diagram shows that in this village 57.02 percent females are belongs to Maratha caste. Women belonged to Bhilla's are 19.83 percent, Muslim's are 9.92 percent, Mahar are 7.44 percent, Kumbahr's are 1.65 percent and Nhavi, Dhangar, Sonar, Lohar are account are 0.83 percent each. This village is monocaste like other villages in western Maharashtra it is dominated by Maratha caste.

Thus the respondent women's are belonged to all the religions and had very limited education. Above graph reveals that as many as 60.33 percent 'Hindu' religion is dominated in Taradgavhan village. The respondents belonged to the Hindu religion, followed by Muslims, Buddhists and other religion.

Figure No. 5

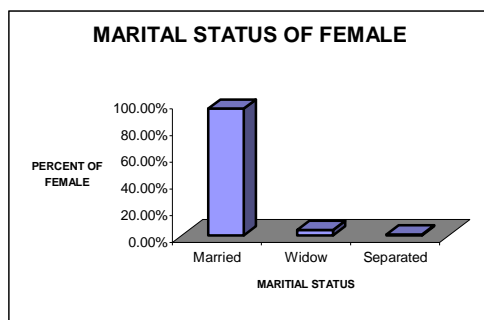
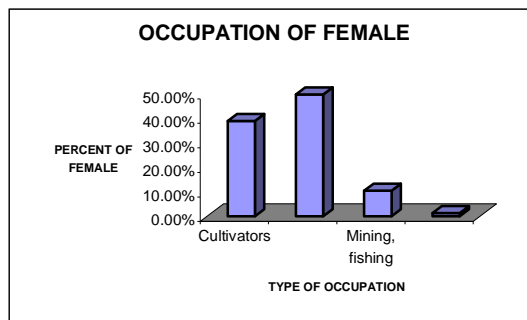


Figure No. 6



Marital status of the women

In Taradgavhan out of total respondent as many as 95.04 percent female are married, 4.13 percent are widow and 0.83 percent is separated. Though marriage is universal in India, most of the female are married.

Occupation of the female

As far as the education of the females, is connected over 50 percent work as a laborers; two fifths work as cultivators. 10 percent work as mining, fishing workers and over 40 percent as other workers. The majority are thus places in low paid, manual jobs requiring handwork. On account of the hardship they are suffering in the workplace their attitude towards education has changed.

Table No. 2 Acceptance of educated daughter- in -laws by women

Opinion	Total No	Percentage
Yes	44	36.36
No	77	63.64
Total	121	100

Table 2 shows that 63.64 percent women are not ready to accept educated daughter-in-laws because they think that if the daughter-in-law is educated she will not obey their ethics and denied to do household course. Also they feel that education is the barrier for procreation, child bearing and caring.

In north India, village elders lament that young educated wives are insufficiently submissive to their mother – in- law and are less likely to brook the kind of social restraints that the strict tradition requires. An educated daughter-in-law has considerably more power than an uneducated woman in her husband's home: she sets the standards for dress, and for the education of children, and she is admired for the sophistication that accompanies her education. (Mandelbaum, 1974; Minturn, 1984).

There are clear-cut evidences, which show that, the total benefits from education multiply when schools open their doors to girls and women. In addition to being more production in market work, educated women have smaller families; fewer of their children die in infancy; and, the children who survive are healthier and better educated. Educated women are also better equipped to enter the paid labour force, which is critical to the survival of the many female-headed household in developing countries (World Bank, 1993).

Middle –class girls are now educated largely as a concession to a superficial social change in the views of Nabar and an educated wife has become a “necessary appendage” (Nabar 1995,) at least a BA degree is needed to get a good match. But women also have to be careful with education. They always look for a better educated husband than they are (Kapur, 1973), and man in return don’t want a wife which is better educated than they are, as we also found in a study about marriage rules in Gujarat (Eckensberger et al. 2001). That means, however, that it is a risk for women to be “too” educated, because if she is, she must look for an even more educated man. In addition she will be quite old for marriage and less proposed grooms are available because the majority of them will be already married. But also in low castes it can be dysfunctional for women and girls to be well educated. As Dube says, it has been found that parents may even restrict the education of girls to avoid a situation in which the daughter refuses to do the traditional occupation of her caste, because in that case, it will become very difficult for them to marry her to an appropriate family. “Not formal education, but the capacity and willingness to do traditional work tends to make girls useful in the husband’s family” (Dube, 1996,). Restriction of education can be seen as marriage strategy in this context.

Table No. 3 Women want to participate in politics or not

Opinion	Total No	Percentage
Yes	62	51.24
No	59	48.76
Total	121	100

The analysis of the data from the chosen samples indicates that about 51.24 percent of female are interested to participate in politics. But impressive proportion, which is 48.76 percent female, doesn’t want to participate in politics. Reasons are like fear, dislike, unawareness, male domination etc. This again indicates that lack of education leads lack of empowerment of women.

Table No. 4 Opinion about social change and education

Opinion	Total No	Percentage
Yes	119	98.35
No	2	1.65
Total	121	100

From the discussion with various individuals it is understood that as many as 98.35 percent females believe that through education, social change can be brought. With the help of education evils like, castism, dowry, and female discrimination of the society can be removed. Education can change the attitude of the people towards above evils. They feel that, socio-economical behavior and attitudinal change can be possible through education. Only 1.65 percent females don't agree with above opinion because they are too old.

Table No. 5 Female's opinion about their education and change in society

Opinion of female	Total No	Percentage
Yes	34	100
No	00	00
Total	34	100

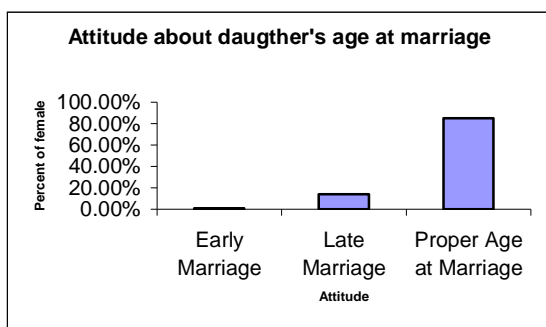
In this village only 27 percent females are literate. All of them fill that because of their education, they themselves, their home, society, village has changed. It is because she earns that much ability to teach others. She understands properly what is wrong and what is right, and most important thing is she thought she could speak and act for her better survival due to education.

Table No. 6 Opinion of educated female about quality of work

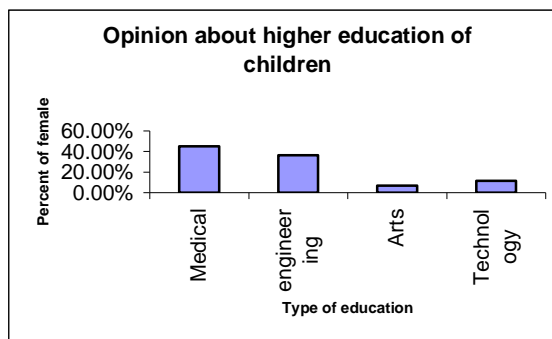
Opinion of female	Total No	Percentage
Yes	29	85.29
No	5	14.71
Total	34	100

In Taradgavhan village, out of educated women 85.29 percent female's fills that education improves their work. It means if she is educated she got better job as well as better salary and she can't tolerate any harassment at work. She can't do extra work without salary, she accept accurate payment at right time. Only 14.71 percent female do not fill that education improves their work. Again it is observed that primary educated female had this opinion. There is positive correlation between education and positive attitude about quality of work.

Graph No. 7



Graph No. 8



Above graph shows the attitude of respondent females towards age at marriage of daughter. Only 0.83 percent female wants early marriage and 14.05 percent female have positive opinion about late marriages. They wanted to give higher education to their daughters and 85.12 percent females believe that marriage should occur at proper age at marriage that is after 18 years because they know the law and regulations. Also due to media they understand the ill effects of early marriages.

Table No. 7 Opinion about dowry

Opinion	Total No	Percentage
It is right	14	11.57
It is wrong	107	88.43
Total	121	100

As per above table it has been found that as many as 88.43 percent of the respondents replied that dowry system is totally wrong or bad. It is ill evil of Indian society. Also they said

that in order to remove this evil from the society, we have to act against it. According to them there is no security of life of the daughter in case of dowry marriages. Only 11.57 percent female think that this system is good. This shows that even after 60 years of independent still there are females, who support dowry system. It can be changed through education and job opportunities for girls.

Opinion about higher education of children

In Taradgavhan village, majority of respondents want to give higher education to their children. 45.15 percent female want to give medical education to their children because health is vital need of human life. There are 36.41 percent female want to make their children engineering graduates. 6.80 percent and 11.65 percent women wants to give education i.e. arts and technology respectively. It means the trend is towards technical education rather than traditional education.

Though 73 percent female are illiterate but they wanted to give more importance to higher education of their children. They think that they may be illiterate but their children should take higher education for the development of themselves, society, village and nation.

Table No. 8 Knowledge about family planning / contraception and HIV/AIDS

Knowledge Contraception	Total	Percentage	Knowledge about HIV/AIDS	No Of Household	Percent of Population
Yes	82	67.77	Yes	111	91.74
No	39	32.23	No	10	8.26
Total	121	100	Total	121	100

In this village out of total respondent's female, 67.77 percent females are having knowledge about family planning. Out of this some are illiterate but having knowledge about family planning. In case of source of information they are giving credit to media and medical practices. And only 32.23 percent female are not familiar with family planning measures. This shows that in this IT development era more than one forth women don't have information about family planning and contraception. It is due to lack of campaign government and NGO

should give more importance to the awareness of family planning and contraception among rural female.

In this village 91.74 percent female having knowledge about HIV/AIDS, It is very important aspect regarding health. An only 8.26 percent person doesn't have knowledge about HIV/AIDS. They may be having the knowledge but don't want to give the answer due to stigma attached to the HIV/AIDS.

Figure No. 9

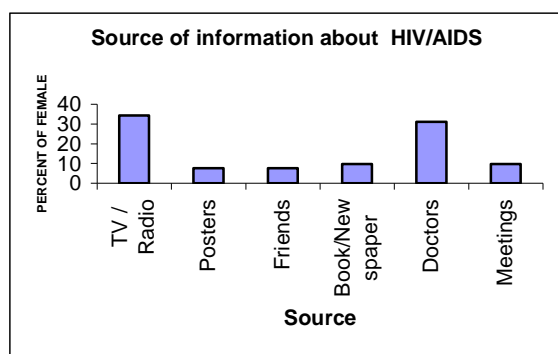
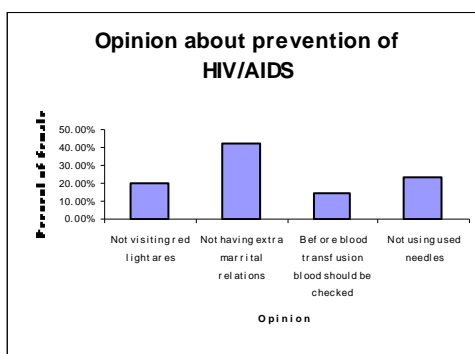


Figure No. 10



Source of information about HIV/AIDS

In the village of Taradgoan as many as 34.30 percent female heard about HIV/AIDS from TV and Radio. 31.05 percent female get information from doctors because they visit hospital for health problems. 9.75 percent female read books and newspaper and got knowledge about HIV/AIDS. For 9.75 percent female the source of information about disease were mainly meetings of different institutions, posters and friends.

Table No. 9: Reasons for transmission of HIV/AIDS

Modes of Transmission	No of Population	Percent of Population
Sexual Relationship	110	65.87
Blood Transfusion	57	34.13
Total	167	100

In this village we observed that all 121 female respondents are aware about HIV/AIDS. About 65.87 percent female accepted that the disease transmitted due to sexual relationship. According to 34.13 percent of female it transmitted due to blood transfusion and there is no any other way to transmission of HIV/AIDS. This means that as a result of above sources, female even in rural areas don't have misconception about spread of the disease.

Opinion about prevention of HIV/AIDS

In this village most of the female had knowledge about HIV/AIDS, as far as prevention of HIV/AIDS is concern about 34.13 percent of female accepted that HIV/AIDS can be prevented through awareness about blood transfusion. As per 41.77 percent female avoiding extra marital relation is the better mode of prevention. According to 22.89 percent female, used needle should be avoided. Though their educational level is less but they are properly aware about this epidemic.

Table No. 10 Is AIDS curable?

Is AIDS curable?	No of female	Percent of female
Yes	102	90.27
No	11	9.73
Total	113	100

In this village out of total 121 respondents household 90.27 percent female think that HIV/AIDS is curable. This shows their educational unawareness because they don't read the newspaper or they have ideas about the life after HIV/AIDS. This shows that female is aware about the disease but not completely. It needs more attention in these regards through NGOs, Government and mass media.

Discussion

The prosperity and growth of the country depends on the status and empowerment of its women. Women play a vital role in the family as a mother, sister, wife, who educates, loves, cares, feeds and support each and every person of the family.

Sharma's (1999) reported that would be mothers -in- law wish their daughter- in law to be employed. Whereas in present study it has been observed that the attitude of female towards education and job have not change in case of daughter- in- laws. Their attitude towards

daughter- in- laws education is traditional. The female of traditional orthodox background have not changed in their attitude and preference. But literacy situation among female in India is poor. The overall scenario of female education in India is discouraging. Female literacy in rural areas needs special attention.

Need for Accelerated Literacy Effect In Rural Areas

Literacy situation of the rural areas is very serious. Literacy level is low of people characterized by extreme poverty and illiteracy. Most literacy initiates in the past were forced on urban areas. It is now being realized that the growing problem of illiteracy and poverty and negative attitude in rural areas also need more attention. The situation of illiterates in rural areas is extremely impoverished, both maturely and in terms of quality of life. The problem of rural illiteracy and poverty in rural areas is being made more complete by continuous migration of poor illiterate, semi literate, unskilled and semi skilled unemployed deserted, separated and widow women neighboring urban areas in search of employment. The level of skill required to get the job in urban areas is different. Literacy is an essential tool for them to upgrade their skills to handle different types of jobs required to earn their livelihood. The inability to read and write is a big disadvantage to the rural poor migrant. Globalization is also affecting the chances of employment and earning their livelihood in the organized and unorganized sector. The problem of these rural poor illiterates needs to be talked through special inter reforms like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan introduction of soft skills, counseling, rewards campaign in earn village.

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