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The impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability of social entrepreneurship

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness and impact of e-commerce practices on the sustainability of social entrepreneurship in Hyderabad. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from 160 social entrepreneurs. E-commerce practices were treated as independent variables, and sustainability in social entrepreneurship was the dependent variable. Neural Networking and Regression Analysis were used to assess relationships and identify significant predictors. The findings reveal that customer feedback, digital monitoring, online sales, and visibility play crucial roles in enhancing financial stability, operational efficiency, and social impact. All predictors showed positive influence, affirming the role of digital tools in supporting entrepreneurial growth. The study concludes that e-commerce adoption enables social entrepreneurs to expand their reach, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and scale their mission effectively. Overall, e-commerce serves as a key enabler of sustainable and impactful social entrepreneurship in a digitally evolving ecosystem. Therefore, Accepting the Alternative Hypothesis i.e., There is a Significant impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Sustainability social entrepreneurship, e-commerce practices, e-commerce adoption, mission effectively

Introduction

In recent years, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful mechanism for driving inclusive and sustainable development. Unlike traditional business models that primarily pursue profit, social entrepreneurship integrates social, environmental, and economic goals into its core operations. Social entrepreneurs address pressing issues such as poverty, inequality, gender disparity, and environmental degradation by creating mission-driven enterprises that blend innovation with social impact. In the Indian context, social entrepreneurs have increasingly leveraged digital platforms to extend their reach, promote local products, empower marginalized communities, and create livelihood opportunities in both rural and urban settings. Their commitment to ethical practices and sustainability has positioned them as key players in reshaping commerce with a human-centric approach.

Parallely the rise of e-commerce has transformed the global economic landscape, revolutionizing the way businesses connect with customers. E-commerce enables small and medium enterprises including social ventures to overcome traditional market barriers and access wider, more diverse consumer bases. Key e-commerce practices such as streamlined checkout processes, real-time customer support, digital marketing, product personalization, and multi-channel integration have enhanced customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. For social enterprises, these practices offer scalable solutions to promote handcrafted, eco-friendly, and ethically sourced products, thereby extending their social mission into the digital marketplace.

However, as e-commerce continues to expand, so do concerns about its environmental and social implications. The rapid pace of consumption, packaging waste, energy use in logistics, and exclusion of underserved populations raise questions about the sustainability of digital commerce. In response, sustainable e-commerce practices have gained traction, emphasizing eco-friendly packaging, ethical sourcing, reduced carbon footprints, circular economy models, and inclusive digital access. Social entrepreneurs, by virtue of their values and community-centric missions, are uniquely positioned to adopt and promote these sustainable practices.

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Their integration of digital tools with ethical strategies can serve as a model for balancing growth, efficiency, and responsibility in the online economy.

Review of literature

Vijayakumar, (2016) ^[1], investigates sustainable supply chain entrepreneurship management practices among leading global corporations, focusing on the role of information technology in optimizing logistics and e-commerce operations. The study adopts a conceptual analysis approach to examine how tools like ERP, CRM, SRM, and RFID enhance supply chain performance. Findings reveal that real-time electronic payment systems are critical to the growth of e-commerce and essential for completing online transactions. The research highlights the bottleneck caused by inadequate digital payment infrastructure in India. It concludes that integrating advanced technologies is vital for improving supply chain efficiency and supporting sustainable entrepreneurship in the digital commerce era.

Goyal, Agrawal, and Sergi, (2021) ^[6], examine how social enterprises address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and institutional voids in peri-urban areas of India lacking basic amenities. The study employs a multiple case study methodology to explore scalable strategies used by social entrepreneurs. Findings highlight three key strategies: leveraging digital technologies, fostering extensive partnerships, and designing accessible, affordable, and user-friendly innovations. The study confirms that institutional voids present entrepreneurial opportunities for impactful social innovation. It concludes that social enterprises can effectively address BoP challenges and contribute meaningfully to SDG implementation and the scaling of social enterprise models.

Mishra and Tapasvi, (2021) ^[7], aim to explore how the social entrepreneurship paradigm can enhance the effectiveness of Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) under India's Common Service Centre (CSC) scheme for inclusive public service delivery. Using a holistic single case study approach, the study evaluates the CSC model against established social entrepreneurship frameworks. Findings indicate that while CSCs provide essential e-services, they fall short in transforming VLEs into empowered social entrepreneurs. The study recommends a policy shift to give VLEs a more central and flexible role in public scheme implementation. It concludes that enabling infrastructure, motivation, and space for innovation are critical for scaling and sustaining social entrepreneurship through CSCs.

Nag, (2021) ^[2], explores the transformative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on socio-economic systems, emphasizing the rising significance of data intelligence, artificial intelligence, and Big Data in driving Industry 4.0 and social innovation. The study adopts a conceptual and analytical approach, integrating insights from prior research such as Ashraf *et al.* (2019) and Bell (2003) to examine the underutilization of social business models and the emerging role of technology in sustainable development. Findings highlight the exponential growth in data availability and the potential of Big Data analytics to solve complex social issues post-COVID, including health, welfare, and governance. The paper concludes that leveraging digitization and data-driven tools can foster inclusive, ethical, and impactful social entrepreneurship. Overall, the review underscores the necessity of embedding equity,

ethics, and innovation in Big Data usage for sustainable societal transformation.

Kumari and Eguruze, (2022) ^[9], explore the role of social entrepreneurs in advancing women's empowerment and rural community development in India. Using a qualitative cross-case study method, the research analyzes two handicraft-based social ventures through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations. The study identifies five key self-efficacy roles of social entrepreneurs that contribute to sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic transformation, with each role being both interlinked and independently impactful. Findings emphasize that social entrepreneurship techniques are critical in addressing rural challenges and fostering upward social mobility. The study concludes that social entrepreneurs act as vital change agents and their work offers valuable insights for policy-making and rural development planning.

Verma, (2023) ^[5], investigates the role of fashion social commerce in India and its correlation with sustainable development, focusing on youth entrepreneurship, women empowerment, and environmentally conscious practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study conducted surveys with 38 social media-based entrepreneurs and in-depth interviews with 17 businesses. The findings reveal a significant rise in young and female entrepreneurs utilizing social media to build sustainable, micro-scale fashion ventures, particularly in rural areas. These businesses adopt eco-friendly practices like make-to-order production and waste reduction, contrasting fast fashion models. The study concludes that fashion social commerce fosters inclusive, value-driven entrepreneurship while contributing to environmental sustainability and socio-economic development.

Waliczko, (2023) ^[4], explores the role of Sustainable E-commerce Entrepreneurship (SEE) in advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comparing perspectives from Indian and German entrepreneurs. Using semi-structured interviews analyzed with ATLAS.ti, the study gathered insights from ten Indian and nine German SEE participants across New Delhi and Berlin-Brandenburg regions. Findings reveal that German SEEs prioritize biosphere-related SDGs, while Indian SEEs focus more on social and economic goals due to prevailing socio-economic challenges. The study highlights divergent national priorities shaping SEE strategies and SDG focus areas. It concludes that SEE implementation should balance global SDG frameworks with localized socio-economic contexts for greater effectiveness.

Purohit and Gupta, (2023) ^[10], present a case study on Gramshree, a hybrid social venture focused on empowering women artisans and promoting sustainable economic development. The study uses a descriptive case method to explore the dilemma faced by the organization's trustees in selecting effective marketing channels to sustain the business amidst rising competition. Findings reveal that generating market demand and maintaining steady income for artisans are central challenges in hybrid social models. The case highlights the importance of strategic marketing and value creation for the viability of social enterprises. It concludes that resolving these challenges is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability and impact of such ventures.

Subrahmanyam, (2025) ^[3], investigates the future trajectory of rural social entrepreneurship, aiming to anticipate emerging trends and prepare for sector-specific challenges. The chapter uses thematic analysis and case study methodology to explore forecasting tools, technological advancements, sustainability practices, and adaptive strategies in rural contexts. Findings highlight the significance of innovation, resilience, and collaborative approaches in overcoming challenges in rural manufacturing and enterprise development. Case studies demonstrate successful models and offer policy recommendations and growth pathways. The chapter concludes that proactive forecasting and strategic adaptation are essential for shaping a resilient and sustainable future for rural social entrepreneurship.

Parvez and Khan, (2025) ^[8], aim to understand the factors influencing e-commerce adoption in rural India by extending the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the variables of government support and information quality. The study employed a quantitative survey method, collecting 978 valid responses from rural populations across four regions of Uttar Pradesh using a 5-point Likert scale. Findings indicate that perceived usefulness, government support, and information quality significantly influence rural e-commerce adoption, with noticeable disparities based on age, gender, education, and occupation. The study reveals that rural users remain infrequent e-commerce adopters despite growing digital access. It concludes by highlighting the importance of context-specific strategies to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive e-commerce in rural India.

Research Gap

Existing literature extensively discusses the role of social entrepreneurship in rural development, women empowerment, and digital inclusion, as well as the adoption of e-commerce in various socio-economic contexts. While studies highlight the use of digital tools and online platforms by social enterprises, there is limited focus on how specific e-commerce practices contribute to the long-term sustainability of these ventures. The current body of research does not adequately examine the effectiveness of e-commerce strategies such as digital marketing, customer engagement, and online payment systems in strengthening the social, economic, and environmental pillars of social entrepreneurship. Moreover, the integration of e-commerce with sustainable operational models in social ventures remains underexplored. This reveals a critical gap in understanding the impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability of social entrepreneurship.

Objective of the study

- To examine the effectiveness of role of e-commerce Practice in social entrepreneurship.
- To identify the impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis of the study

H₀: There is no significant impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study is examining various e-commerce practices influence the sustainability of social entrepreneurship within the city of Hyderabad. It focuses on understanding how digital tools such as online platforms, customer feedback systems, and supply chain technologies support financial, operational, and social outcomes for social enterprises. The study explores the effectiveness of these practices in expanding market reach, enhancing visibility, and scaling impact. By analyzing specific e-commerce applications, the research aims to provide region-specific insights that can guide digital adoption strategies among social entrepreneurs in Hyderabad.

Research Methodology

The research adopted a quantitative design to examine the impact of e-commerce practices on the sustainability of social entrepreneurship in Hyderabad. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from a sample of 160 social entrepreneurs operating in the region. The study considered E-commerce practices were treated as the independent variable, while sustainability in social entrepreneurship was the dependent variable. To analyse the data and assess the strength and significance of relationships, Neural Networking and Regression Analysis were employed as key statistical tools.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Case processing summary of e-commerce practice

		N	Percent
Sample	Training	109	68.1%
	Testing	51	31.9%
Valid		160	100.0%
Excluded		0	
Total		160	

Source: Primary Data

The Case Processing Summary shows that out of a total of 160 valid responses, 68.1% (109 cases) were used for training and 31.9% (51 cases) for testing. This indicates a well-balanced data split, ensuring the model is trained with sufficient data while retaining a fair portion for validation. No data was excluded, reflecting the completeness and reliability of the dataset for analysing the effectiveness of e-commerce practices in social entrepreneurship.

The figure presents the neural network architecture for analyzing e-commerce practices in social entrepreneurship. It includes input variables (VAR00001 to VAR00010), a hidden layer with 4 neurons using the hyperbolic tangent function, and one output node with an identity function. This model helps identify complex patterns and predict the effectiveness of e-commerce practices on social entrepreneurship.

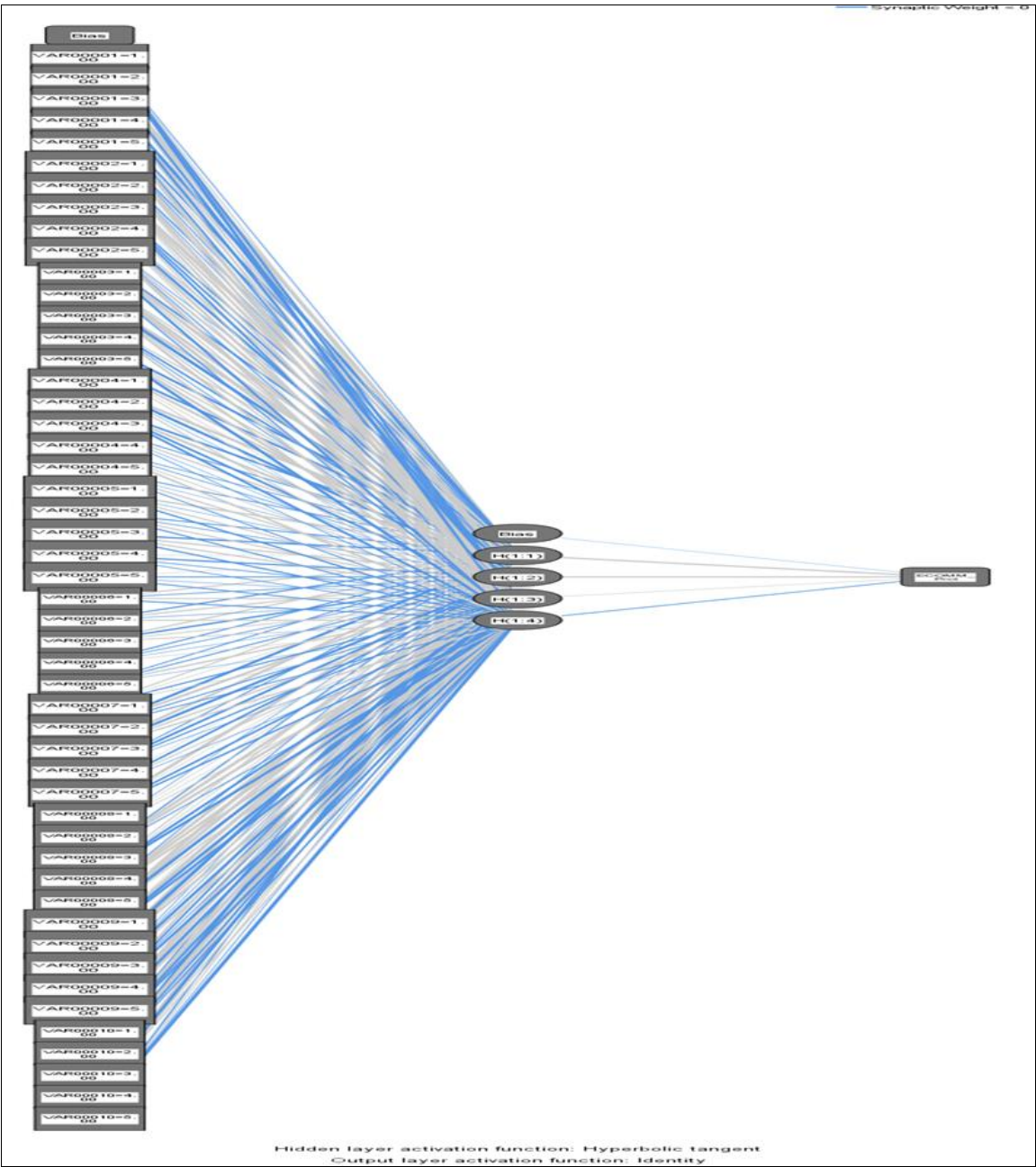


Fig 1: Neural networking of e-commerce practice

Table 2: Independent variable importance of e-commerce practice

	Importance	Normalized Importance
E-commerce platforms help my social enterprise reach a broader customer base than traditional methods.	.098	82.8%
Selling products/services online has significantly improved the financial sustainability of my social enterprise.	.115	96.3%
E-commerce has reduced operational and marketing costs for my organization.	.080	67.1%
Online tools help us effectively communicate our social mission to potential customers.	.106	89.0%
Customer feedback received through online platforms has helped us improve our offerings.	.119	100.0%
E-commerce enables more efficient inventory and supply chain management for our social business.	.079	66.7%
Digital visibility has increased support from stakeholders, investors, or donors.	.106	88.8%
Using e-commerce channels has helped us build stronger relationships with socially conscious consumers.	.092	77.3%
E-commerce facilitates better monitoring and evaluation of sales and impact performance.	.117	98.0%
Adopting e-commerce practices has enhanced our ability to scale up our social impact.	.089	75.0%

Source: Primary Data

The table presents the Independent Variable Importance of various e-commerce practices in evaluating their role in the sustainability of social entrepreneurship. The results show that customer feedback through online platforms holds the

highest normalized importance (100.0%), indicating it plays a critical role in improving offerings and ensuring long-term engagement. Other significant contributors include monitoring and evaluation of performance (98.0%),

financial sustainability through online sales (96.3%), and effective communication of social missions (89.0%), all of which directly support organizational stability and growth. Additionally, digital visibility (88.8%) and broader market reach (82.8%) also exhibit high relevance in enhancing brand value and outreach. While cost reduction and supply chain efficiency show relatively lower normalized importance (around 67%), they still contribute positively to operational aspects. The findings suggest that a multi-faceted e-commerce strategy not only enhances visibility and financial performance but also strengthens mission

delivery and stakeholder relationships. Thus, the analysis confirms that e-commerce practices play an effective and enabling role in supporting the sustainable development of social entrepreneurship. Therefore, Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis i.e., There is a Significant effectiveness of Role of E-Commerce Practice in social entrepreneurship.

To identify the impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship

Table 3: ANOVA of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship

	Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	68.321	10	6.832	5.341	.002 ^b
	Residual	190.779	149	1.280		
	Total	209.100	159			

Source: Primary Data

The table presents the ANOVA results assessing the impact of e-commerce practices on the sustainability of social entrepreneurship. The model shows a statistically significant result with $F=5.341$ and $p\text{-value}=0.002$, which is less than

the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that the set of e-commerce practices collectively has a significant effect on enhancing social entrepreneurship outcomes.

Table 4: Coefficients of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coeff.	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.125	.535		5.844	.000
E-commerce platforms help my social enterprise reach a broader customer base than traditional methods.	4.321	0.382	2.025	11.312	0.004
Selling products/services online has significantly improved the financial sustainability of my social enterprise.	4.271	0.284	2.001	15.039	0.022
E-commerce has reduced operational and marketing costs for my organization.	5.034	0.375	3.041	13.424	0.048
Online tools help us effectively communicate our social mission to potential customers.	3.362	0.174	3.071	19.322	0.038
Customer feedback received through online platforms has helped us improve our offerings.	5.044	0.224	1.051	22.518	0.048
E-commerce enables more efficient inventory and supply chain management for our social business.	1.346	0.172	0.984	7.826	0.031
Digital visibility has increased support from stakeholders, investors, or donors.	6.088	0.175	1.101	34.789	0.026
Using e-commerce channels has helped us build stronger relationships with socially conscious consumers.	6.061	0.379	0.965	15.992	0.043
E-commerce facilitates better monitoring and evaluation of sales and impact performance.	5.081	0.374	0.991	13.586	0.026
Adopting e-commerce practices has enhanced our ability to scale up our social impact.	7.126	0.172	2.153	41.430	0.033

Source: Primary Data

The table presents the coefficients of various e-commerce practices in predicting their impact on the sustainability of social entrepreneurship. The results reveal that all predictors have positive unstandardized coefficients, indicating a direct and favourable influence on social entrepreneurship. Key practices such as adopting e-commerce to scale impact ($B=7.126$, $P=0.033$), digital visibility ($B=6.088$, $P=0.026$), and relationship building with conscious consumers ($B=6.061$, $P=0.043$) show strong and statistically significant effects. Additionally, customer feedback ($B=5.044$, $P=0.048$) and monitoring performance ($B=5.081$, $P=0.026$) also contribute meaningfully to sustainability outcomes. The low p-values (all < 0.05) across variables confirm their significance in shaping positive results. These findings suggest that effective application of digital tools and practices enhances visibility, feedback integration, scalability, and stakeholder trust. Overall, e-commerce practices significantly benefit social entrepreneurs by improving operational performance and expanding their impact potential. The study highlights the strategic value of digital adoption for sustainable and scalable social enterprise models. Therefore, Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis i.e., There is a Significant impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship.

Findings of the study

- The highest normalized importance was recorded for customer feedback mechanisms (100.0%), indicating their crucial role in improving offerings and sustaining long-term engagement.
- E-commerce-enabled monitoring ranked second in importance (98.0%), emphasizing its contribution to tracking impact and supporting data-driven decisions in social enterprises.
- The practice of selling products/services online achieved a high normalized importance of 96.3%, confirming its effectiveness in ensuring economic stability for social entrepreneurs.
- Online tools used for social mission communication were highly influential (89.0%), highlighting the importance of narrative clarity in stakeholder engagement and visibility.
- Although ranked lower, reducing operational costs (67.1%) and improving supply chain management (66.7%) still contribute meaningfully to backend sustainability and efficiency.
- Adopting e-commerce practices to scale up social impact showed the highest effect ($B=7.126$, $P=0.033$), indicating its pivotal role in expanding the reach and

mission of social enterprises.

- The variable related to increased visibility through online platforms exhibited a strong influence ($B=6.088$, $P=0.026$), supporting the importance of digital presence in attracting support and investment.
- Feedback collected via e-commerce channels significantly impacted social entrepreneurship outcomes ($B=5.044$, $P=0.048$), emphasizing its value in continuous service refinement.
- Selling products/services online positively influenced financial sustainability ($B=4.271$, $P=0.022$), affirming that e-commerce contributes to long-term economic viability.
- Performance tracking through e-commerce platforms showed a notable effect ($B=5.081$, $P=0.026$), highlighting the effectiveness of data-driven decisions in achieving impact goals.

Conclusion of the study

The study concludes that e-commerce practices play a transformative role in enhancing the sustainability of social entrepreneurship in Hyderabad. Social entrepreneurs are significantly benefiting from the use of digital platforms, as these practices facilitate broader customer reach, improved financial stability, and enhanced operational efficiency. E-commerce enables them to communicate their social mission more effectively, build trust, and adapt quickly through continuous customer feedback. The Practices also support data-driven decision-making and performance monitoring, which are vital for long-term growth. Moreover, e-commerce enhances visibility and investor engagement, allowing social entrepreneurs to scale their initiatives with greater ease. As a result, digital adoption is not just a business enabler but a catalyst for impact-driven growth. Overall, e-commerce practices empower social enterprises to expand their reach, strengthen their mission, and operate sustainably in a competitive and connected environment. Therefore, there is a significant impact of e-commerce practices on sustainability social entrepreneurship.

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