Challenges in Home Making Faced By Women Professionals Working in The Information Technology Industry

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Abstract:

Working women play a vital role in the progress of mankind and occupies a significant place in our society. However, the responsibility of home making regardless of her professional profile rests with the women as is expected by the Indian family and society. The present study was aimed at understanding the challenges faced in home making by the women working in the sector of Information Technology. The study was conducted in the Ernakulam district of Kerala among one hundred women professionals from the Information Technology industry selected as samples through Purposive sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed that 89 per cent of them had nuclear families comprising of 1- 4 family members and 71 per cent were educated at the undergraduate level. A significant 58 percent of them spent 3- 4 hours on home making daily. A huge majority of 89 percent of them had employed a domestic maid to help them with the home making activities. Varied measures were taken by the women professionals to do the home making tasks including finishing duties on priority basis (71 per cent) and the use of online services (62 per cent). A notable 52 percent of them reported that the time for home making was adequate only some times. The major challenge reported in home making was to rush through the household chores (80 per cent). The negotiation done for performing home making duties were devoting less time for personal care as reported by a majority of 80 percent of them.

Keywords: Women professionals, Information Technology, Work-life balance, Home making, Gender roles.

Introduction

The Information Technology sector is the largest employer of the country's white collar work force and is a highly competitive, dynamic and technical industry. This sector is an important driver of employment in India as also a major contributor to the nation's GDP (Manoharan et al, 2023). The rapid growth of the industry along with the lucrative job opportunities offered, has elevated it to the status of a premium career option among the younger generation.

Information Technology being a rapidly growing and a highly competitive industry has a considerable female workforce (Patel et al, 2024). India has marked a rapid increase in the number of women employed in the IT industry in the last decade. Presently, more than 20 lakh women are working in this sector making up 36 % of the overall   work force (Economic Times, 2023). Technology, though a male dominated profession (Maji and Dixit, 2020) finds huge number of women entering the workforce, not only because of the lucrative and stable prospects offered by this industry, but also it   being considered safe for female employees as these are white collar jobs where workers engage with the elite and well-educated members of society (Thakkar et al, 2018).

However, today's fast evolving technological landscape has resulted in increased demands at the IT workplace accompanied by changing work roles and evolving work schedules (Thilagavathy and Geetha, 2020). The work demands in this sector are often rigorous especially in roles involving client interactions across different time zones (Raj, 2025). The work load in the IT sector is always high with every project or document submission having to be met within a deadline (Balamurugan and Sreekala, 2020). Consequently, the work environment often involves extended work time necessitating the employees to work for long hours during day and night in order to meet the targets given to them (Umamaheswari and Geetha, 2021). These

additional working hours were often gained at the expense of their time to be spent at home with their families.

The job profile of women professional working in the IT industry is no exception to this. In addition to performing the duties at the workplace diligently, they get back to their   homes after work to take care of the family and fulfil the home making responsibilities awaiting in the home front. These women are needed to cope with varied problems and perform multiple roles in both their personal and professional lives (Ajayan, 2021). Work and family being two central domains of a person's life, it is necessary to balance and integrate the roles and responsibilities both at home and work (Handelzalts et al, 2024).

India is a changing society where women's traditional roles as caregivers and homemakers are still very much in place. The employment of women outside their homes though accepted, the change in life pattern that should essentially follow is not yet largely accepted. This calls for the career women to discharge the dual responsibilities of a professional at the work place and home maker in the household with equal weightage. Thakkar et al (2018) opines that the responsibility of household tasks in India's patriarchal society falls unequally on women. Even while being gainfully employed, bringing in economic inputs into the family, they are expected to cook food, raise the children, take care of the elderly and perform all other household duties. The societal expectations on women regarding their familial duties remain high ever so, irrespective of the job profile they hold. Thus, working women have to put in tremendous hard work to balance their personal and professional duties in order to carry forth life smoothly. Powell et al (2019) has opined that most individuals face challenges in managing their work and personal lives effectively. Its only when the energy and efforts of an individual are efficiently allotted to various areas based on priority and sensitivity, that they gain satisfaction and achievement resulting in a balanced life (Francis et al, 2023).

Gender-based societal and familial duties are part of the intricate social fabric of Indian society (Kurup and Raj, 2022 a). Working women face more problems than their male counterparts both at work and at home by virtue of their gender. Working in the Information

Technology industry inevitably puts a larger pressure on women as the IT sector has a different culture and time line of work.

Women working in this profession often face the burden of aligning their home duties with official responsibilities. It was worth drawing attention to the challenges faced by these women in discharging their duties at the home front. Hence, the present study was designed with the following objectives.

1. To recognise the measures employed by the women working in the Information Technology industry to perform home making duties.
2. To understand the challenges faced in home making by the women working in the sector of Information Technology.

Research Gap

Reviewing the existing literature revealed that though extensive research has been conducted on various aspects of employees working in the Information Technology sector, not much studies have been done on the home making role of the women professionals. Studies on the challenges faced in home making by these women workforce were not noticed. This was identified as a research gap and the present study was done as an attempt to understand the challenges in home making faced by the women working in this sector who are a valuable segment of human capital of the organisation.

Literature Review

Chauhan et al (2022) in their study on women in the Indian Information Technology sector found that family responsibilities, perceived and organizational support (POS) and lack of mentoring significantly impacted the perceived career success of women. . It was also observed that despite increased female empowerment and engagement alongside diminished gender discrimination, women are under-represented at top-level positions in India. This is in view of

women having to overcome several barriers to advance to senior or top-level positions in their careers.

Thakkar et al (2018) observes that women working in the Indian IT industry encounter disproportionate problems both structurally and culturally. The emphasis on late-night shifts pose difficulties for women with families and physical safety concerns can be problematic posing difficulty in mobility and social acceptance. Marital and family responsibilities interfere with their career progress. Women having to spent more hours at work every week when compared to most countries presents a scenario where conflicting childcare and family responsibilities are not positively translated.

Triana and Suratman (2022) in their study on the Industrial Park employees in Indonesia found that there is a significant and positive relationship between work life balance, employee performance and job satisfaction. The study also implies that work- life balance could be improved by focusing on job satisfaction.

Raj (2025) in his study among Indian IT employees found that work-life balance and emotional intelligence are positively correlated, suggesting that employees who possess more emotional intelligence and emotional regulation skills are able to balance their personal and professional responsibilities better. It was also found that there was no discernible difference in the emotional intelligence of males and females. However, there was a gender difference in work-life balance, with men reporting more balance than women.

Jackson and Fransman (2018) in their study conducted among women employed in a higher learning institution found that work-life balance would benefit employees in many ways including enhanced productivity and well-being. Employees with healthy work-life balance experienced satisfaction with their jobs. In addition, a positive correlation between job satisfaction and work-life balance was also noted.

Sumanarathna and Samarakoon (2019) in their study done at Sri Lanka on women executives in the IT sector found that the employees' intentions to remain in the profession are influenced by

the work-life balance policies of IT companies. It was also found that the two components of work-life balance - workload management and opportunities for training and career development - exerted a major influence on the retention intentions of IT industry employees, but the other components, like flexible work schedules, company leave policies, and a compressed workweek, had no significant effect.

Wakdikar et al (2024) in their study on the hurdles and challenges perceived by women scientists in India found that school timings of children did not match with the office timings making the work life of a woman difficult without time flexibility. Managing both personal and professional life by balancing work and life was also reported as a huge task especially during child-bearing and child-rearing age, all the more so with the family's high expectation from the women in performing their role as a wife/mother/daughter-in-law.

Ballakrishnen et al (2019) has observed that women professionals who face systemic barriers including disproportionate household duties and gender-biased workplace regulations resort to intentional invisibility as a low-risk conflict avoidance tactic by staying in the background in an effort to avoid criticism and maintain the status quo in their careers.

Patel et al (2024) in their study conducted on the women in the Information Technology sector of India found that a major issue faced by them was work-life balance as they confront many demands and challenges while trying to combine their personal and professional lives. It was also reported that increased stress levels, burnout and work -family conflict were commonly noted in them and these aspects adversely affected their health happiness and productivity.

 Maji and Dixit (2020) in their study on female engineers in the Indian IT sector found that gendered division of labour inside the family, gender based stereotypes and discrimination within the organisations acts as barriers preventing women's professional advancement.

Gayathri and Anand (2020) in their study conducted in Chennai found that the main challenges faced by the employees of the Information Technology companies were travel time from home to workplace, extended working hours and engaging in additional work assignments.

The stress faced in their personal life included feeling guilty of being unable to do self - care and get approval of elders.

Van der Lippe and Lippenyi (2020) in their study in European workplaces remarks that women spend more time on domestic work. Women were often more responsible for housework and childcare and spent more time on these chores. Women were also noted to experience higher amount of work - family conflict when compared to men.

Significance of Study

In addition to their traditional role as homemakers, women these days take on the role of working professionals too. This puts them under a lot of strain to manage their personal and professional lives. The Indian Information Technology sector presents a unique set of challenges related to maintaining work -life balance. Long working hours has been identified as one of the primary challenges of individuals employed in this industry. They are often required to work well beyond the standard eight-hour workday. Besides, the duration of working time in IT companies varies considerably depending on the projects assigned to them, posing challenges while interfacing their professional and personal duties. Moreover, the   high   expectations placed on IT employees in terms of performance and productivity add an additional layer of pressure.

The findings from the present study brings to light the challenges faced by women employees in the home front that could serve as an impetus for IT organisations to empathetically offer family friendly policies that allows career women to perform their duties both inside and outside their homes in a commendable manner. Gender sensitive workplace policies including flexible work arrangements and leave for care of sick children etc. may help the women employees to perform both work and family roles effectively and satisfactorily. Organisations need to recognise strategies to assist women employees in effectively juggling work and family roles and may implement family supportive policies.

Methodology

The sample size for the study was determined as 100 allowing a 10% margin of error. A total number of 100 women professionals working in the Information Technology sector in the Ernakulam district of Kerala were selected as the samples employing the Purposive sampling method. The conditions employed for purposive sampling were that the samples should have had a minimum of one year of work experience in the industry and also that their spouses were engaged in full time occupations outside their homes.

The ethical considerations for the conduct of study were ensured. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested and assured. The consent for the study from the samples were got and confidentiality and anonymity of the samples were assured. The freedom to withdraw their participation from the study at any point of time also guaranteed to the samples.

The primary data were collected through a well-devised self - report questionnaires. The secondary data collection was sourced from online sources and digital depositories. The collected data was analyzed appropriately using Simple percentage analysis and Chi square analysis. Statistical significance was verified at the level of $p \leq 0.05$.

Inclusion criteria

Women who were engaged actively in home making on daily basis were included in the study. Thus women who belonged to the age group of 25 - 40 years of age (married and with children) and was staying in households along with their families were included as samples of the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Women who weren't engaged actively in home making on daily basis were excluded from the study. Thus those women who were not married and those married without children or residing away from their homes in hostels or other boarding facilities were excluded from the study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done on ten women working in the Information Technology industry who wouldn't form part of the samples of study. Necessary modifications were made by adding, deleting and also rephrasing the questions, thus finalizing the questionnaire to be employed for the study.

Theoretical Framework

The anchor for the present study is the work-family conflict that originated from the Role theory (Merton, 1957). Work-family conflict is defined as a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

The goal of work - life balance is to attain parity among work and home duties. Work -life involves occupation and vocation while home- life includes family, companions and self (Singh et al, 2022). Joseph and Sebastian (2019) looks at work-life balance as the degree of balance amongst work and non -work spheres comprising of personal life, self -care, family, friends and society.

Though conflicts between work and non-work roles are inevitable for most working people, women particularly find their efforts to lead balanced lives being obstructed by deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that exist in many countries (Mushfiqur et al, 2018) and therefore face more challenges while fulfilling their professional and family responsibilities.

Results and Discussion

The data gathered from the women professionals working in the IT industry were analysed and the results of the study is given under,

1. **Demographic profile**

Demographics are specific information regarding the characteristics of the given population.

Table 1

Demographic profile

Demographic profile	Percentage of respondents (N=100)
Type of family	
Nuclear	89
Extended	11
Size of family	
Small (1- 4 members)	89
Medium (5- 8 members)	11
Educational status	
Under graduate	71
Post graduate	29

The demographic profile of women as noticed from Table 1 revealed that a majority of 89 percent of them had nuclear families with small family size having 4 or less family members. This family type has less built-in support system and necessitates that the women or her spouse bear the primary responsibilities of child care and household management. The remaining 11 percent of them had extended families with either parents or parents- in law living along and had medium size families with 5-8 family members. More than one quarter of them were educated at Post graduate level (29 per cent) and 71 per cent of them were undergraduates.

2. **Time spent on home making duties daily**

Home making refers to the tasks related to management of homes and deals with the day-to day operations of the home regarding domestic concerns. The time for homemaking refers to any time dedicated to managing the home.
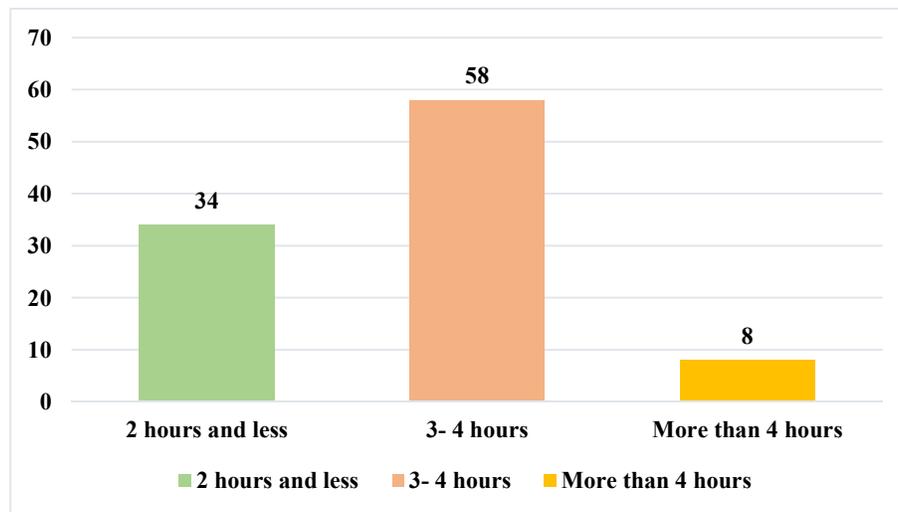

Figure 1

Time spent on home making duties daily

The amount of time needed for home making tasks vary significantly by households. Regarding the time spent on home making duties daily, it was noticed from Figure 1 that a majority of 58 percent of the women spent 3-4 hours and 34 percent of them spent 2 hours or less. However, a significant 8 percent of them reported to spent more than 4 hours on home making duties. These extended hours of work carrying out the home making duties in spite of the women being engaged in a full time demanding career outside the home is daunting and cause imbalance in their work-life balance. Chi square test was employed to find the association between the time spent on home making duties and the type of family and it was found that there is no statistically significant association between these two variables ($\chi2 = 8.1732$, p = 0.016, df = 2). This result is a telling reflection of women spending considerable amount of time in home making irrespective of them belonging to either nuclear or joint type of family. In this regard, Mechlenborg and Gram-Hanssen (2020) has pointed out that home making is dominantly and

historically inscribed as feminine and hence women encounter more work - family conflict than men.

3. Help received in performing home making duties

Home making is a collective responsibility and the burden of home making is lightened by sharing of work by individuals either within or outside the family.

Table 2

Help received in performing home making duties

Sl. No	Person from whom help is received*	Percentage of respondents
1.	Domestic maid	89
2.	Family members	11
3.	Spouse	7

*Multiple responses

Having someone share home making duties relieves the workload of the working women tremendously. It was noticed from the Table 2 that a majority of 89 percent received help from domestic maids. Srinivasan and Nachimuthu (2021) in their study has similarly observed that maintaining balance without domestic help is a struggle for nuclear families with both the couple working. A notable 11 percent received help from family members and 7 percent of them received help from their spouses. This result is similar to the findings of Kurup and Raj (2022b) that professional women always had a support system which was either the family, domestic help or the husband. The sharing of home making duties among members of the family fosters a co-operative and supportive home environment. Moreover, support from family members, particularly spouses, significantly assists individuals to retain a good work-life balance (Dumas and Perry-Smith, 2018).

4. Measures employed to perform home making duties

Varied techniques could be applied to accomplish home making responsibilities effectively.
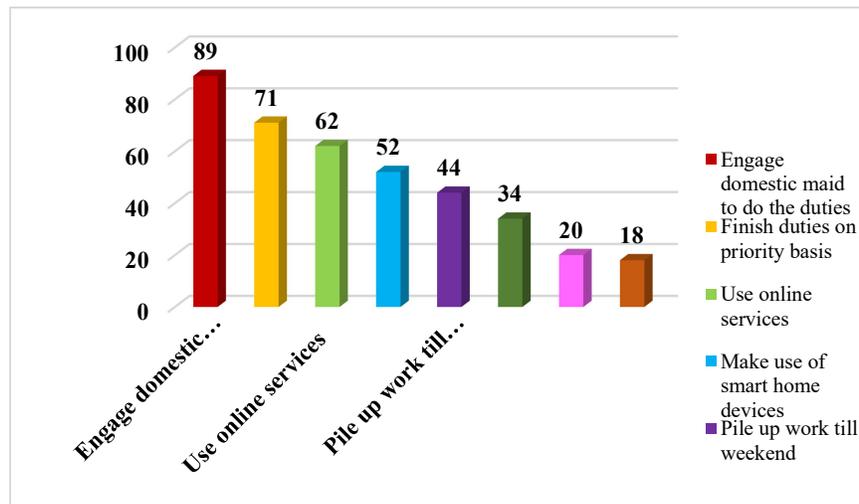

Figure 2

Measures employed to perform homemaking duties

The measures employed by home makers to do the home making duties were noticed from Figure 2 and it was revealed that a majority of 89 percent of them engaged domestic maids to do the duties and 71 percent of them finished the duties on priority basis. A huge 62 percent of them used online services for shopping of clothes, delivery of grocery, pick and drop of laundry and payment of bills. More than one half of them leveraged technology by making use of smart home devices like electric roti maker, induction cookers, air fryers and robotic room cleaners replacing the tedious traditional methods of doing work (52 percent). A significant 44 percent of them piled up the work till weekend. Nearly one third of them utilised remote work options like work -from- home opportunities (34 percent). However, this facility could be availed only by those working in data entry sector and by call centre agents. Pareek (2024) has observed utilising remote work options help women balance their personal and professional responsibilities. A significant 20 percent of them working with IT companies that permitted flexible work arrangements used it to benefit. Kotwal (2019) has opined that flexible working arrangements like variable hours of working suits an employee's needs and help them complete work related to home including care of children. In the same vein, Mishra et al (2022) has observed that women

professionals wish flexible working hours for achieving better work-home balance and these flexible work systems empower them to meaningfully contribute to both their personal and professional lives (Singh et al, 2022). Chung & Lippe (2020) observes that flexible working offers the worker control over when and where to work while Gayathri and Anand (2020) points out that work from home arrangement offers benefits to both the organizations and their employees.

5. **Adequacy of time for home making**

Home making is vital for maintaining the daily functioning of the home as also the well-being of the family and time needs to be divided between the various home making tasks to get them completed effectively.

Table 3

Adequacy of time for home making

Sl. No.	Adequacy of time	Percentage of respondents
1.	Sometimes adequate	52
2.	Rarely adequate	47
3.	Never adequate	4
	Total	**100**

The time for home making refers to the time dedicated in dealing with the daily operations necessary to manage the home. With regard to the adequacy of time received for home making duties, it was noticed from Table 3 that, more than half of them sometimes got adequate time (52 percent) whereas a significant 47 percent of them rarely got adequate time. However, 4 percent of them never got adequate time for home making duties. The work pressure at the office puts a demand on the time of the women professionals making it difficult for them

to stretch it to meet the home making responsibilities. However, planning and prioritising the home making tasks could be employed as an effective means of managing the time ensuring that all responsibilities are completed within the stipulated time frame.

6. Challenges faced in home making

Home making involves varied tasks in managing the home and comprises of diverse tasks like cooking, cleaning, child care, and much more, getting these domestic tasks done regularly often pose challenges to the home maker.

Table 4

Challenges faced in home making

Sl. No	Challenges faced in home making*	Percentage of respondents
1.	Have to rush through household chores	80
2.	Lacks time to perform duties with contentment	71
3.	Unable to regularly assist children with studies and home work	52
4.	Experience heavy road traffic consuming much time	40
5.	Have less time to meet the needs of small children	34
6.	Has larger home space to be maintained	22
7.	Trouble in availing leave when children are ill	20
8.	Struggle with mismatching of timings between work and home duties	11

9.	Difficulty in managing home alone as the spouse is working out of town	10

*Multiple responses

It was noted from Table 4 that a majority of 80 percent of women had to rush through the household chores and 71 percent of them lacked the time to perform the duties with contentment. More than half of them were unable to regularly assist their children with studies and home work (52 percent). A significant 40 percent of them experienced heavy traffic consuming much time and 34 percent of them had less time to meet the needs of their small children. In this regard, Vasumathi (2018) has observed that working mothers with small children do a formidable task while doing justice to their job without neglecting their children. While 22 percent of them had larger home spaces to be maintained, 20 percent had trouble in availing leave when children fell ill and 11 percent struggled with mismatching of timings between work and home duties. A notable 10 percent had difficulty in managing their homes alone with their spouses working out of town. This result aligns with the findings of Kurup and Raj (2022a) that married women find it easier to balance their personal and professional lives and manage them effectively when their husbands offer their support. The multiple challenges faced by women in home making could be addressed effectively by differentiating between home domain and workplace borders, though some aspects are not easy to change (Singh et al, 2023).

7. Negotiations done

Negotiations are necessary ever so often to get the home making tasks done on time as also to maintain harmony in the home. Negotiations in this context refers to the adjustments done by the women in their personal needs and desires with the view of prioritising home making responsibilities.
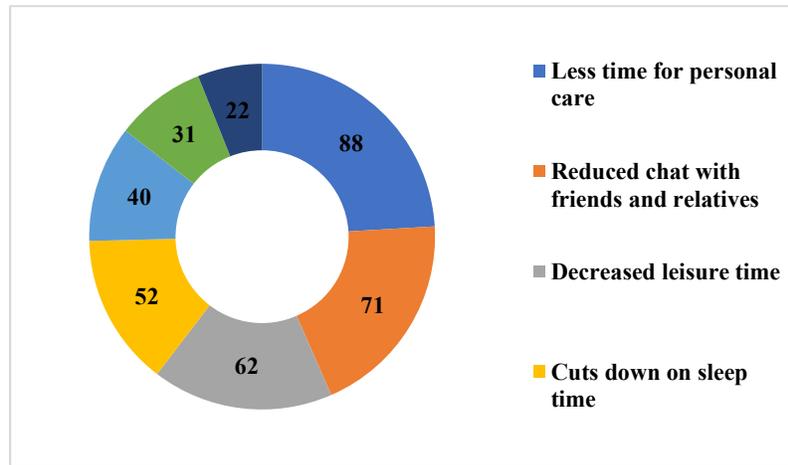
Figure 3

Negotiations done to perform home making duties

Negotiations were done by the women at the personal front by showing willingness to refrain from activities they enjoyed doing. It was noticed from Figure 3 that a majority of 88 percent of the women had less time for personal care and 71 percent of them had reduced chat with friends and relatives. Decreased leisure time and cutting down on sleep time were reported by 62 percent and 52 percent of them respectively.

A significant 40 percent of them reported to forgo their rest time to engage with children as they were small and demanded mothers spending time with them. In this regard, Tamang (2020) has observed that females have been traditionally expected to do the role of caregiver and their work is clustered around caring for family members and nurturing relationships. A little less than one third of the women reported declined socialising (31 percent) and a significant 22 percent of them refrained from attending family functions as they were staying far away from their home towns. These negotiations were done to strike a balance between their professional and personal duties. Though often not done joyfully, the women were making negotiations for the sake of maintaining good work- life balance. This result supports the findings of Wakdikar et al (2024) that women negotiate in the domains of marriage, relationship, family and career.

Conclusion

During these modern times, even while the women are productively engaged outside their homes providing financial support to the family, their responsibility as a homemaker has not changed much. The women professionals faced considerable challenges in home making as they discharged the dual responsibilities both at the workplace and home front. They employed varied methods for practicing effective home making to fulfil the socially normative roles prescribed for women. However, negotiations were also done to ensure a good work-life balance that would ensure a harmony between their professional and personal responsibilities.

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