

## ВИКЛИКИ ПОСТКОЛОНІАЛІЗМУ: ФІЛОСОФІЯ, РЕЛІГІЯ, ОСВІТА

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### IS DECOLONIZATION OR REVITALIZATION OF EDUCATION NECESSARY IN POST-COLONIAL INDIA? A PHILOSOPHICAL INTROSPECTION

*ЧИ НЕОБХІДНІ ДЕКОЛОНІЗАЦІЯ АБО ВІДНОВЛЕННЯ ОСВІТИ  
В ПОСТКОЛОНІАЛЬНІЙ ІНДІЇ? ФІЛОСОФСЬКА ІНТРОСПЕКЦІЯ*

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#### ***Urgency of the research.***

*There is a strong debate going on among the academicians regarding lifting up the veil of Western or Colonial way of looking at every stream of Indian Education; be it arts, science or commerce and also other newly found and ever-growing faculties. Indians have always viewed Indian Education System with the lenses of British glasses and it is the need of the time to view it neutrally as that would suit Indian life style. The metamorphosis is urgently required and that has to come from the academicians. This issue is not just pertaining to India but all former colonies of different countries. Imperialism has left its marks so deep and completely engraved in Indian life-style that every realm of Indian life is first weighed in the weighing scale of Western World. So the urgency of the research is to decolonize or revitalize the education system and view it either with complete neutrality or as it is.*

#### ***Актуальність дослідження.***

*Між науковцями існує гостра суперечка щодо підняття завіси західного або колоніального шляху вивчення кожного напрямку індійської освіти; будь то мистецтво, наука чи торгівля, а також інші нововведені та постійно зростаючі галузі. Індійці завжди розглядали систему індійської освіти через призму британських поглядів, і тому це актуальна потреба, щоб розглянути її нейтрально, саме відповідно до індійського стилю життя. Терміново потрібні метаморфози, і вони мають іти від науковців. Це питання стосується не тільки Індії, але й усіх колишніх колоній різних країн. Імперіалізм залишив свої відбитки настільки глибокими і повністю викарбуваними на індійському стилі життя, що кожна сфера індійського побуту насамперед оцінюється за мірками західного світу. Таким чином, актуальність дослідження полягає в тому, щоб деколонізувати або відновити систему освіти, а також розглядати її цілком неупереджено чи такою, як вона є.*

**Target setting.** *The whole of Indian Education System need to be reconsidered and re-evaluated. India is a land of diversity where different religions, languages, dialects, races and cultures live under one of the largest democracy in the world. The umbrella is vast enough to accommodate the variety and the division of Indian states after independence from British was based on languages. These languages play a pivotal role in Indian life as it demonstrates Indian culture. The topography and the geography is so variegated that it needs a very subtle way of handling this diversity. How is this to be done? So the target setting is to install a new way of looking and analyzing the Indian Education System from its diversified states having different language and culture; and introduce new policies to enrich the education system.*

**Actual scientific researches and issues analysis.** *A thorough analysis of education system in pre-British India, during British Rule and Post-British Rule is a pre-requisite condition for decolonizing Indian Education System. Also to keep in mind that - is decolonizing in this globalized world possible? Somewhere one has to begin and it has to start with academicians and educationists; those who were there and are working at present on the issue.*

**The research objective.** *The research objective is very obvious, to find solution to the above mentioned queries. To view Indian Education System in its entirety as it is and having*

**Постановка проблеми.** *Вся індійська система освіти потребує перегляду та переоцінки. Індія є країною контрастів, де різні релігії, мови, діалекти, раси та культури живуть під однією з найбільших демократій у світі. Парасолька достатньо велика, щоб вмістити це різноманіття, і поділ індійських штатів після отримання незалежності від британців базувався на мовному принципі. Мови відіграють ключову роль у житті Індії, оскільки таким чином проявляється індійська культура. Топографія та географія настільки різноманітні, що потребують дуже точного методу поводження з цим різнобарв'ям. Як це зробити? Отже, цільовим завданням є встановлення нового шляху перегляду та аналізу індійської системи освіти у її диверсифікованих штатах, які мають різну мову та культуру; впровадження нової політики для збагачення системи освіти.*

**Аналіз останніх досліджень і публікацій.** *Ретельний аналіз системи освіти в доанглійській Індії, під час британського панування і постбританської епохи є важливою передумовою для деколонізації індійської системи освіти. Також важливо врахувати, чи можлива взагалі деколонізація в цьому глобалізованому світі? Деся комусь треба починати, та це має починатися з науковців і діячів освіти; тих, хто там був і наразі працюють над цим питанням.*

**Мета дослідження** є напрочуд очевидною, а саме знайти вирішення вищезазначених потреб. Для того, щоб переглянути систему індійської освіти у всій її цілісності, оскільки маються

knowledge of the International Academics that are looking forward to bright future; frame education policies that are fitting to Indian life style with going back to the roots of Indian Education System and see if it fits to the current generation – their necessities, requirements and prosperity; to rejuvenate the Indian Education System in synthesis to International Education System. This will be more apt research objective. Also one has to find out what role does language, in case of India “English” medium, play to enrich or deteriorate the situation.

**The statement of basic materials.** The material is to go back to the work of the master-academics of British Rule and Post British Rule times. Some asked for radical change in the education system, like Rabindranath Tagore; but people like M. K. Gandhi were moderate and thought of self-sufficient education system. Many other academicians till date are figuring out new educational policies either to ‘decolonize’ or ‘revitalize’ Indian Education System; this being the Indian ‘post-modern deconstruction’ of rigid and orthodox being replaced by progressive and invigorating policies; not giving up the old but ‘revitalizing’ the old in new scenario.

**Conclusions.** The study of master academicians’ view from India, during British rule and post-British India; their working on education system of India and trying to find befitting solution to the crisis of Indian Education

обізнані міжнародні науковці, які з нетерпінням чекають світлого майбутнього; сформувати освітню політику, що відповідає індійському стилю життя, повертаючись до коренів індійської системи освіти, і зрозуміти, чи підходить вона нинішньому поколінню – їхнім потребам, вимогам і добробуту; відновити індійську систему освіти у комплексі з міжнародною системою освіти. Це буде більш доречною метою дослідження. Також необхідно з’ясувати, яку роль відіграє мова, у випадку з “англійським” середовищем в Індії, для покращення чи погіршення ситуації.

**Виклад основного матеріалу.** Теза полягає в тому, щоб повернутися до праці вищих діячів науки часів британського панування і постбританської епохи. Хтось, як Рабіндрнат Тагор, бажали радикальних змін в системі освіти; але деякі, подібні до Махатма Ганді, були більш врівноваженими і мріяли про самостійну систему освіти. Багато інших науковців до цих пір опановують нові освітні політики чи то для “деколонізації”, чи для “відновлення” системи освіти в Індії; це індійська “постмодерна деконструкція”, коли жорстка і ортодоксальна політика замінюється прогресивною та більш динамічною; не здаючись на поталу старому, але “відновлюючи” старе за новим сценарієм.

**Висновки.** Вивчення поглядів вищих діячів науки Індії протягом британського панування та в епоху постбританської Індії; їхньої роботи над освітньою системою Індії та спроб знайти належне вирішення кризи індійської системи

*System can give us some framework to do 'what' in present times and in future of India.*

**Keywords:** decolonization, revitalization, colonial rule, colonial education system, indigenous cultures, swaraj (self-rule), nationalism, native language(s).

*освіти може дати нам певну базу, щоб зробити "щось" сьогодні та в майбутньому Індії.*

**Ключові слова:** деколонізація, відновлення, колоніальне панування, колоніальна система освіти, корінні культури, сварадж (самоврядування), націоналізм, рідна/і мова/и.

**Urgency of the research.** “The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, whitewashed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed” Jean-Paul Sartre [1].

The above quote from the great existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) reflects the mood of the present educational system of post-colonial India. Indeed one need to think of decolonizing the educational system otherwise it will jeopardize the purpose of academics in India; where knowledge is possible but wisdom of implementing this knowledge will be in lurch. Why this situation aroused in the first place? As Sartre says it is to produce the “native elite”; and this gives the imperialist countries a tremendous boost of power-consciousness.

On the other hand, to look at Indian culture and civilization, science and philosophy, art and aesthetics, ethics and spirituality, politics, economics and other social sciences from Western perspective has distorted the holistic understanding of Indian civilization. The Indian wisdom has been distorted, termed as worthless and primitive and a paradigm of Western evaluation can do justice to the complete education system is the overall take of not only the imperial countries but their colonies also. The urgency demands to decolonize the Indian minds and restore to its authentic understanding. Viewing everything from Western “categories” has destroyed the youth of India. The glorious culture and civilization seems to be of bygone era that has no relevance in contemporary times is the basic understanding of the modern youth in India. India gained its independence in 1947, till date after almost seventy years Indian minds are still colonized and in true sense self-rule

(*swaraj*) is not achieved. Therefore, there is a need to revitalize Indian Education System and decolonize the Indian minds.

**Target setting.** The need is seriously felt to set the target of setting the authentic set of paradigm to re-evaluate Indian Education System. It is always important to note that the colonial rule of the British left the indented mark on Indian mind where the new rational outlook of the Western civilization indeed provided them with new jobs and sophisticated mannerism of the “white” which was obviously very catchy; at the same time their Indian life-style did not permit them to completely get compromised with the ‘new teachings’. So the indigenous populace was now in dilemma; and this amalgamation brought about complete ambiguity in their minds. From British rule till date unfortunately this dilemma persists and the ambiguity deepens. This creates a peculiar situation for Indians (so also anywhere the colonies were established). Well described in the following quote, “The history of Western civilization articulated in what I have called the “modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric world-system” has privileged the culture, knowledge, and epistemology produced by the West inferiorizing the rest. No culture in the world remained untouched by the European modernity. There is no absolute outside to this system. The monologism and monotopic global design of the West relates to other cultures and peoples from a position of superiority and is deaf toward the cosmologies and epistemologies of the non-Western world” (Grosfoguel 2011, p. 24) [2].

Therefore, to decolonize the Indian minds will help the indigenous cultures to value themselves; here “language” plays a pivotal role. But one thing is to be kept in mind – this is not restricted to the country like India, but is a global phenomenon faced by the countries; those were colonies or still a strong hold of their imperialist counterpart even after their departure. Educational sphere needs it the most as it will pull out the masses from inferiority complex suffered by their ancestors up to their own present times. The feeling of being a ‘loser’ by these natives giving rise to the psychological issues of guilty consciousness, inferiority complex and enslavement is too vast to eradicate. And wanting to remain at the level of ‘enslavement’ will deteriorate human existence. For this, the epistemic upliftment of the minds of Indians and the existential issues of being in the state of ambiguity; which is the ontological issue – has to be erased by revitalizing, restoring and reanalyzing from the grass-root level. The question that follows is – are

we to discard completely the Western structures? First of all it is NOT possible and it also shouldn't be like that. 'Knowledge' is never a waste of time and energy. (The following part of the article will try to prove this.) Human beings move forward and in this globalized world it is therefore very important to know what happened, is happening and future 'happenings' that will bear the positive fruits. It is just to set the goal to have the 'best'. So knowledge of indigenous socio-cultural elements along with later Western impact and moving towards the 'best' has to be the target. One can never ignore the fact that education is always in a state of flux and best should be chosen. Therefore decolonization is very crucial. As Michel DeGraff says, "(In Haiti), like in most nations still struggling against neo-colonial powers from both within and without, social justice and equal opportunity for all will remain figments of our imagination as long as we have not decolonized our research and teaching practices, our views of ourselves and our languages, cultures, etc., and our relationships with foreign powers" [3]. If this is true of Haiti, it is true for all the former colonies, including India. So the whole of Indian Education System need to be reconsidered and re-evaluated. India is a land of diversity where different religions, languages, dialects, races and cultures live under one of the largest democracy in the world. The umbrella is vast enough to accommodate the variety and the division of Indian states after independence from British was based on languages. These languages play a pivotal role in Indian life as it demonstrates Indian culture. The geography is so very variegated that it needs a very subtle way of handling this diversity. So the target setting is to install a new way of looking and analyzing the Indian Education System from its diversified states having different language and culture. And introduce new policies to enrich the education system.

**Actual scientific researches and issues analysis.** As we have seen earlier in this paper - is decolonizing in this globalized world possible? Somewhere one has to begin and it has to start with academicians and educationists; those who were there and are working at present on the issue.

In British Rule, India had a reshuffling of its education system; this was in the late eighteenth century. English education and knowledge of Western science helped produce the requirement of clerks and '*babus*' in the newly developing administrative system. Industrial revolution that affected the Western world percolated its wings in Indian Education System. So the need to create a cluster of 'so-called' modern educated

class was the need of the British Empire to run their newly developed administrative system, their industries and factories – in India and in England and to have third level job seekers demanding less salary but putting in their best to enrich ‘their’ (British) companies. The authentic Indian wisdom had a tremendous set back. The British really did not invest much of its finances to enrich the education system; as their needs were fulfilled with meager expenditure.

Subjects like Philosophy, Literature, History, Sociology and many more especially of Humanities’ discipline have to be protected from colonial kaleidoscope. The imperialist interpreted all major Arts faculty subjects in such a way that let them maintain their dominance on the respective colonies. But according to eminent poet and Professor Dr. Makarand Paranjape (1960) (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) we must stop accusing the West for all that has happened and was made to happen and start researching and working on the line of revitalizing Indian Education System. According to him, the concept of ‘*swaraj*’ (Self-Rule) is more appropriate than the word ‘decolonization’ as it has a negative connotation. He suggests that *swaraj* is associated to the concept of ‘Indian nationalism’ and Indian nationalism is completely differing in its meaning and context than other forms of nationalism. Because for Indian Nationalism , ‘In my *Swaraj* lies your *Swaraj*’. Dr. Paranjape also asks us to take precaution of not ‘misunderstanding’ or ‘misinterpreting’ the concept of ‘decolonization’. What caution? According to him, if Indian interpretation of decolonization turns out to be ‘chauvinistic’, then it is a big set-back to the whole process of improving our education system because Indian Education System is not working in aloofness from other spheres of Indian life or from other parts of the world. It is in connection to other spheres as well; and they too need decolonization. Other important thing that he mentions is India is a land of unity in diversity in relation to its spiritualism and culture, but there have never been political unity in India as other minorities based on caste, religion and races have always been marginalized and have never been incorporated in the main stream Indian life. Therefore, along with Western rationalism in synthesis to Indigenous perspective we need to have research and analysis to revitalize Indian Education System. In his book, Dr. Paranjape writes, “It embarrasses us to say that we have not read Marx, Gramsci, Derrida, Foucault, Levinas....., whereas it is almost a matter of pride to confess that we have not even heard of or read Buddhadev Bose, Shantinath Desai, G. H. Devy, Dharampal.....to

name a few. To admit that we have not read major Euro-American critics is to concede to one's incompetence; to say that we have not read our Indian peers is merely to indicate our low opinion of them. In fact, it is only slightly fashionable to divulge in India that we have not read or are not interested in Rabindranath Tagore, M. K. Gandhi. Sri Aurobindo, B. R. Ambedkar and so on. On the other hand, to declare that one has not read the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Dhammapada or Kabir, Nanak, Tulsi and so on is often considered a positive advantage" [5].

But one thing is clear there needs to decolonize Indian minds and that can take place with revitalizing Indian Education System.

**The research objective.** The research objective remains very clear – that is decolonize the Indian minds. Somewhere it is becoming very difficult task that at this level in contemporary times as English medium education institutes are flourishing day and night. In 1835, Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859), a British historian and politician who impacted Indian education to such an extent that it's echo has retained and deepened to the grass-root of Indian education system. He introduced English medium school with English speaking teachers all over India; wiping out regional languages and popular Hindustani from all schools. Though it meant in a way good as caste system was so very dominating and speaking Sanskrit and Hindustani was only to a privileged community. But Macaulay brought about another divide by creating the 'haves' and 'have-nots'; those who speak English were labeled superior to those who did not. He also thought to influence the world that being "English" is superior to any other community; and this can be done by introducing English in the British colony and erasing the native languages. Even today the disparity continues; those speaking English are considered superior and those who do not are illiterate barbaric. Macaulay noted, "It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England" [7]. This gives us a brief idea as to what he thought of the great Sanskrit language and how petty was Indian education system. This made the whole issue of colonization a sensitive one where the motive was to belittle the importance of the native lands and pose superiority of the imperialist regime. The enslavement is so deep rooted that this pattern of English medium in educational institutions seems to be a magnanimous task to erase. So the same point has to be reiterated that



to establish *swaraj* (Self-Rule) in the true sense of the term (instead of the term 'decolonization') and revitalize Indian Education System.

**The statement of basic materials.** According to Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) English education could not serve the purpose of educating the masses in true sense of the term. Krishna Kumar elaborates the idea of Tagore in his book *Politics of Education in Colonial India*, "English education had denied the Indian child the opportunity to learn through the 'natural' medium of his own mother tongue. Knowledge acquired through a foreign language, Tagore argued, could never become an organic part of the learner's personality. Indian students, he said, 'never see in the right perspective the environment and the process of growth of those thoughts which they are compelled to learn'. (Tagore, 1961a: 2018). This was one of the reasons, Tagore thought, European ideas failed to trigger the spirit of inquiry in the Indian mind" [7]. Therefore, Tagore established Vishva Bharati at Santiniketan in West Bengal, India. This gave the students to learn in Bangla language, the regional language of the Bengalis, which opened up the avenue of creative thought process in every student. It is old style of educating students in natural environment surrounded by nature's elements. This is similar to ancient Vedic education that was imparted by teacher to students under a tree; the language was Sanskrit.

But M. K. Gandhi's (1869-1948) ideas were not so radical. He believed in self-supportive education system. According to him if education remains the realm of the elite class, then it would not serve its purpose. So let the lower caste and lower strata of society get education; and this can happen only when the vocational training is given to students, the handicraft is encouraged and schools remain self-sufficient, not depending on the state (on British government in those days) to sponsor them.

Gandhi insisted that education must be imparted in mother-tongue to the students of that region. He emphasized on character building rather than technical and scientific know-how in education. Gandhi said, "We hold that real education does not consist merely in acquainting oneself with ancient or modern books. It consists in the habits which one knowingly imbibes from the atmosphere, one's surroundings and the company one keeps and above all in work. It is all very well to acquire a stock of knowledge from good books or from other sources. But the more important thing is to learn humanity. The primary function of teachers is, therefore, not to teach the alphabet, but to inculcate humanity" [From

Gujarati] [Indian Opinion. 18-5-1907] [8]. So, Gandhi was quite avert to English medium education.

Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) and his wife Savitribai Phule (1831-1897) were the first Indian couple to open school for girls. They were more into revitalizing Indian Education System. They were social reformers to eradicate caste system and untouchability. So Jyotiba Phule found the *Society for Seekers of Truth (Satyashodhak Samaj)*. According to him, education is must to females and lower caste people. For him, the upper caste *Brahmins* were privileged to have education; the lower castes and the Dalits (called untouchables in former times) were never given the opportunity. No doubt English education brought about the concept of equality but unfortunately it produced other 'English qualified elite group'; which again did not incorporate the lower strata of Indian society. So Phule revitalized Indian education system by pioneering the girls' and all castes school that provided education to all irrespective of religion, caste, race or gender. So also in the writings of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956) one finds the same ideas reflected. 'On 9<sup>th</sup> October 1920 Dr. Ambedkar stated in his Marathi (regional language of Maharashtra, India) Weekly, *Mooknayak (Mute Hero)* as follows: "When the six and a half crores of the Excluded classes society were to fill the knowledge-tank and when the tree of national unity were to grow healthy only then would the Indian nations fate come to rise.....Just as there is the norm treating men with one another in this nature even so is there a need of the education to improve that norm, to grow one's knowledge and to earn one's reputation" [10].

So there were masters who had their individual take on Indian education system. They were either radical with regard to decolonizing Indian education system; or were moderate with regard to the issue. But in both cases revitalization of Indian Education System was their contention. So we need to take the best of the past and should be vibrant enough to accept the best of contemporary times. This being the Indian 'post-modern deconstruction' of rigid and orthodox being replaced by progressive and invigorating policies; not giving up the old but 'revitalizing' the old in new scenario.

**Conclusions.** In conclusion, various academicians worked hard on setting the Indian Education System; though a bit variegated in their opinion; in certain aspects they were all same and that is: we do need to revitalize Indian Education System. Though the Western impact was undeniable; and knowledge seems to have no boundaries, still

decolonizing was a requirement in a different sense. According to Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), the great Indian spiritual Guru, philosopher, poet and nationalist, knowledge has no compartmentalization. One needs to incorporate knowledge of ancient Indian civilization and Indian culture in synthesis to modern epistemology and ontology; knowledge that is contemporary and ever growing; all brought together under the vistas of 'academics'. This will make a complete package, not of the corporate world but of the realm of wisdom. According to Sri Aurobindo, "(Education brings out) to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter his right relations with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member" (Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 17, p. 198) [11].

Coming to Western interpretation of Indian art, religion and philosophy has often too nasty; as already what Macaulay said about Indian education, scripture and Sanskrit language writings. So also one finds in the writing of Hegel's interpretation of Indian aesthetics and philosophy as being too crude, superstitious, unnatural and certain aversion to ancient Indian wisdom. But in the book *Hegel's India*, the authors mention that though Hegel criticizes Indian aesthetics and religious philosophy, he did it with the rationalistic scale of Western epistemology. The quote goes, "With specific reference to Hegel's "rather disrespectful language", Herring's (who criticized Hegel for his disrespectful remarks about Indian philosophy) remarks are quite true. But to suggest, therefore, that his (Hegel's) reflections are "not very enlightening" is a touch hasty. For Hegel's comments on India are extremely enlightening at least in respect to the nature, requirement, and self-understood standing of his own system" [12].

Today, therefore we require reanalyzing and reevaluating the whole of Indian Education System in its entirety; the 'holistic' view. If it is called 'decolonization', *swaraj* (Self Rule), nationalism or revitalizing Indian Education System, one has to take into consideration the ancient i.e. the Vedic era, the great universities at Nalanda and Taxila, the medieval era that saw revolutionary and rebelling movements and pre-British, during British and post-British era till date the master-minds to tried to build a system of education that is best for India. This paper was an attempt to think on the line of 'revitalizing Indian Education System' as India was, is and living in unity in diversity.

India is no doubt producing thousands of graduates every year, the industrial life-style in post-colonial India has imparted certain skilled based graduates; and the impact of colonial education had a lot to do with this. But contemporary educationists doubt – are we imparting ‘education proper’ in the true sense of the term? Value based education has always been given priority in ancient Indian education system, but can we avoid the fast speeding globalized and corporate/industrialized skill based education system? Indeed we have to keep pace with the contemporary world; but we have to revive the old traditional education institutions that imparted knowledge of values, morality and ethical life style which will bring about peace and harmony in the society; where ‘small is beautiful’ can make an individual satisfied with one’s life; and that is the need of the hour. As Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) says, “Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and run riots there, undigested all your life. We must have life building, man making, character making assimilation of ideas” [13].

Dharampal (1922-2006), an Indian thinker, historian and political philosopher, who was highly inspired by M. K. Gandhi; his quote can sum up this paper, “What India had in the sphere of education two centuries ago and the factors which led to its decay and replacement are indeed a part of history. Even if the form could be brought back to life, in the context of today, or of the immediate future, many aspects of it may no longer be apposite. Yet what exists today has little relevance either. An understanding of that which existed and of the process which created the irrelevance India has today, in time, could however help devise what best suits India’s requirements and the ethos of its people” [14].

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