

1998-99
Annual Report
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Institute of Social Studies Trust



ISST is a non-profit non-government organisation with its head office in New Delhi and a branch office in Bangalore. Set up in 1964 as a society, it was registered as a Trust in 1980.

Since its inception, ISST has advocated a development process that is participatory and egalitarian. Addressing the issue of social inequalities, especially gender-based inequalities, has been a major concern of the organisation. Apart from field-based research on a wide range of areas, ISST has been involved in training and gender sensitisation of elected members of Panchayats. ISST also runs a Family Counselling Centre which has been operational for a decade and a half.

ISST enjoys Special NGO Consultative Status II with the United Nations.



From the Director's Desk...

The current year at ISST has seen the launching of the Gender Planning Network (GPN) in South and South East Asia. ISST is the nodal institution in charge of designing the regional research agenda under the GPN, and of co-ordinating the activities of collaborating organizations in several countries of the region, over and above carrying out the Indian component of the project. We hope that in due course, the Network will chalk out a new agenda for gender research. In June this year we have also completed the second phase of the UMA project which has been operational at the Bangalore unit of ISST for the last six years. The UMA Resource Centre continues to cater to the requirements of a large and growing body of NGO's and researchers working on women in local governance.

With our accumulated experience of past several years in reproductive health issues behind us, in April this year ISST has ventured into the new and challenging area of researching the social and gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. Another small but interesting project we undertook this year is on herbal medicinal plants in Himachal, which sought to explore, among other things, the nature of vulnerabilities that collector households are subjected to in the context of changing demand conditions.

Ours is a society which, despite constitutional guarantees to the contrary, continues to be fraught with social and economic inequalities that are pre-determined by the accident of birth—be it of gender, caste or class. Fifty years of independence has done little to ensure basic human dignity to large sections of our people. A massive public awakening is needed to alter the national priorities to one that ensures a more humane, egalitarian and dignified existence for all—irrespective of caste, creed and gender. Through our research and action programmes that have always been geared to the poor and the socially vulnerable, we hope to be a part of the initiative ushering in that process of awakening, which has to come—sooner than later—if this country has to survive and prosper in the new millennium.

Swapna Mukhopadhyay

Director

August, 1999



Project Details in the Delhi & Bangalore Offices of ISST*

Project Title	Sponsoring Agency	Date of Commencement	Duration	Status
Delhi Designing a Reproductive Health Strategy Using Local Structures of Governance in India	MacArthur Foundation	April 1996	Three years	Completed
Herbal Medicinal Plants : An Analysis	Ford Foundation/ NCAER	August 1997	One year and six months	Completed
Strengthening the Research and Dissemination Activities of ISST	Reserve Bank of India	January 1997	Five years	On-going
Family Counselling Centre	Central Social Welfare Board, Government of India		Annual	On-going
A Regional Gender Planning Network in South & South East Asia: With Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms (Phase I)	International Development Research Centre, Canada	October 1998	Two years	On-going
Bangalore UMA Project : Phase II	Ford Foundation	October 1995	Three years and nine months	On-going

*As of 31 March, 1999.

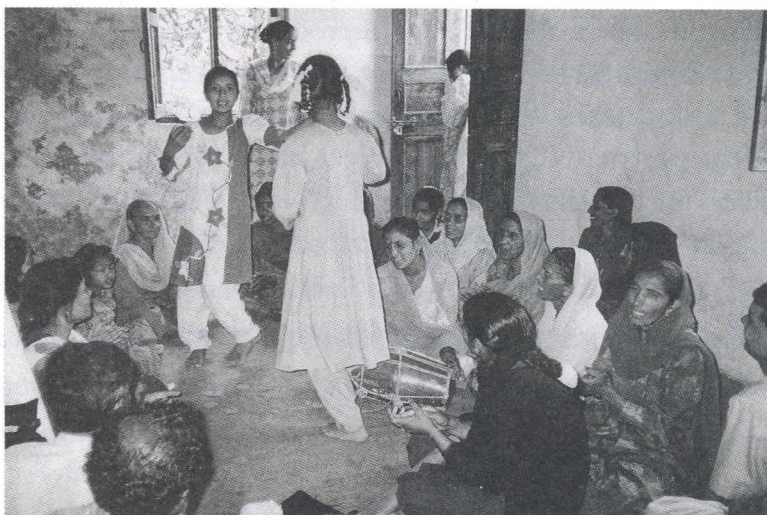
Completed Projects

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH THROUGH THE PANCHAYATS

The three year project on reproductive health has been completed this year. The major thrust of the project has been to address the issue of reproductive health of women through the involvement of the Panchayati Raj institutions and local level NGOs. The project tried to activate local structures of governance for improving the delivery of health services in general, and of reproductive health services to women in particular. It was carried out in three states of India in collaboration with three local NGO's. These are, Leading Organisation for Rural Development (LORDS) in Bellary district of Karnataka, Social Uplift Through Rural Action (SUTRA) in Solan district of Himachal Pradesh, and Child in Need Institute (CINI) in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. An essential component of the project was to form linkages between the community, the elected panchayat structure, line ministry officials and the bureaucracy at various levels in order to ensure that health care services become more responsive to the needs of the community.

In the first couple of years of the project, community workers and local level health personnel were trained and a number of meetings and workshops were held for networking and advocacy. During this period, the study had also collected valuable data on the basic health status of the communities in the project sites using community resources and a variety of survey and participatory techniques. In all, 4 Panchayats in West Bengal, 4 in Himachal Pradesh and 2 in Karnataka were surveyed.

In the last year, the study was involved in strengthening the linkages of the community with the elected PR institutions and with the health system in all the three locations. Several follow-up meetings were held in which various



*First steps in people's participation:
a mahila mandal meeting in Himachal Pradesh in progress*

persons from the different structures participated. Also, village level information obtained from the HSM survey data was fed back to villages for starting off the process of community awareness generation and as a first step for ensuring accountability from relevant agencies. As part of ISST's co-ordination activities, the fourth interactive workshop on



*Mastering the techniques of participatory research:
an exercise in participatory learning by partner agencies*

the project was held between 16 - 19 November, 1998 at Bellary, Karnataka. The main objectives of the workshop were, (a) to discuss the activities that have been completed so far; (b) to compile and assess the project in its entirety and (c) to chalk out the future course of action.

The project has succeeded to a considerable extent in getting the panchayats in the study areas to make health an important issue in their agenda and in bringing about greater articulation of women's health needs. The ushering in of the project at a time when the Central Government is revamping its Family Planning Programme into a more comprehensive Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH) is of great significance. The project is well placed in bridging some lacunae that exist in the design of the centrally administered programme. For at least two out of the three of the partner NGOs, the project has played a role in strengthening the strategy of involving Panchayats in reproductive health issues and in establishing link-ups with the on-going official programme on RCH.

The Project was sponsored by MacArthur Foundation

SHARAM KAHE KEE :

breaking the culture of silence

A film on reproductive health and the panchayats

The film provides a glimpse into the working on ground of the Reproductive Health Through Panchayats project in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal from 1996 to 1999. It captures the evolution of the project in the three states and its working under very different social, political and geographical conditions. It demonstrates the catalytic role of the three collaborating NGOs : SUTRA in Himachal Pradesh, LORDS in Karnataka, and CINI in West Bengal, in translating the project strategy into a process of change.

From a Family Planning Programme focussed on controlling human fertility, the Government of India has recently shifted to a more gender-sensitive Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) policy, which seeks to involve people to a greater extent in the proper delivery of health services. Coinciding with this has been the introduction of the 73rd Amendment which has reserved one-third of the seats for women in the elected Panchayat bodies.

The film shows how the project has put forth a blueprint on strategies for effective implementation of the RCH policy and in evolving a system which is responsive to peoples needs. It also demonstrates the beginning of a process of empowerment of the people, especially of women, and a strengthening of the Panchayati Raj structures.

HERBAL MEDICINAL PLANTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: An Analysis of Income and Employment Potential

Herbal Medicinal Plants constitute a small part of 'Non-Timber Forest Products' is an important source of livelihood for forest-based poor people in India. Collection of medicinal plant products constitutes the starting point of a chain of intermediaries who contribute to the value added in this 'sub-sector'.

The present project uses household survey and sub-sector analysis to gauge the nature and extent of household activities related to medicinal plants across the various agro-climatic zones in Himachal Pradesh. It also analyses their potential in generating employment and income for the villagers, the role of women in collection, processing and marketing, peculiarities of the market structure for herbal products and mark-ups at various stages of trading.



Herbal products focussed in Himachal Pradesh

The household survey was conducted in eight village clusters across the state. The field work for this project was done in association with two local level NGOs, i.e., Navrachna and Society for Rural Development and Action (SRDA).

Some of the findings of the study are listed below:

- The activities associated with extraction, processing and trading of HMPs are fraught with various kinds of uncertainties, both of availability, as well as of market demand.
- To the extent collector households depend on HMPs for sustenance, such uncertainties contribute greatly to the vulnerability of these households.
- Although patterns do vary across species and over space, the profit margins in the trade in HMPs are very high, with middlemen usurping much of the difference between the value of the products in the final market and what the collector households get.

- Much of these differences can be explained by absence of access: both physical access to larger markets as well as absence of information and contacts in right places.
- The multiplicity of legal provisions dealing with extraction of and trade in HMPs across



'Charas' planted by villagers in the forest area of Kullu

the districts of Himachal, coupled with the legal loopholes they entail, often go against the interest of collector households and also turn out to be inimical to biodiversity considerations.

The study was part of a set of projects undertaken by Ford Foundation and NCAER to explore the linkages between formal and informal sectors.

New Membership

ISST has become a member of INDEV. INDEV is a network of development Information created by British Council in India for the benefit of development managers, academics, researchers, think-tank and anyone interested in India's development. This network is browseable at

<http://www.indev.nic.in>

or

www.indev.org.

ISST homepage can be browsed at

<http://www.indev.org/isst>.

On-Going Projects

DELHI

A REGIONAL GENDER PLANNING NETWORK IN SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA : With Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms (Phase I)

The main aim of this project is to analyse and contextualise gender issues in a co-ordinated and systematic manner. A Gender Planning Network has been presently formed in South Asia, later to be expanded to include South East Asian countries, to take forward gender research in the region in a co-ordinated fashion and to investigate among other things, the gender impact of macro-economic policy reforms.

The project is currently running in five countries of South Asia, i.e., Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Current Partners in South Asia under the GPN

Bangladesh	:	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
India	:	Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST)
Nepal	:	Agricultural Projects Services Centre (APROSC)
Pakistan	:	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)
Sri Lanka	:	Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)

ISST is co-ordinating and supervising the entire exercise and is in charge of developing a regional agenda for the project.

All the five countries have been involved in detailed mapping of 'conventional' gender indicators using available census and large scale sample survey data from their respective countries, in diverse areas such as education, health, employment, and

income. There will also be an attempt to develop some 'non-conventional' indicators of gender discrimination such as gender-based violence, anxiety and stress. Participating countries will be free to supplement their work with additional inputs in terms of sector specific studies as needed, within the pre-assigned format.

The proposed regional gender network will cover the following research agenda in phase I :

- Mapping and analysis of conventional indicators
- Developing non-conventional indicators
- Micro-studies, sector-specific studies and household surveys to analyse both categories
- Modelling of gender

As noted above, in the first year of the project all five countries have been involved in the collection and analysis of conventional indicators. Development of 'non-conventional' indicators using household survey data will be done in the second year of the first phase. Planning for primary data collection work for sector specific studies and household surveys is currently on in all the countries. As part of the regional component of the Network's activities, a survey of available gender models has already started. Also in the pipeline is a study introducing gender-disaggregated data in standard intersectoral models. A study on the impact of changes in export demand on gendered labour use patterns is also being carried out.

The first international workshop on the project is scheduled to take place in November 1999.

The Project is sponsored by IDRC, Canada.

STRENGTHENING THE RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES OF ISST

This project is aimed at providing critical supplementary inputs to existing research and field activities of ISST. The project has been put into operation from January 1997 and is currently being used for in-depth analysis of data from various field-based and other research activities in Delhi and Bangalore offices of ISST.

The project is sponsored by the Reserve Bank of India and is to continue for a period of five years.

Family Counselling Centre

ISST's Family Counselling Centre has been handling issues pertaining to marital maladjustment, desertion, interpersonal relationships, personality differences, legal custody of children, etc. During the year, the centre has handled 58 new cases and followed up 25 old cases.

The counsellors seek guidance from a panel of experts, comprising of psychologists, psychiatrists, NGO activists and senior members of society. Two sub-committee meetings with the experts were held during the year in which the need for strengthening the process of counselling was strongly expressed. The

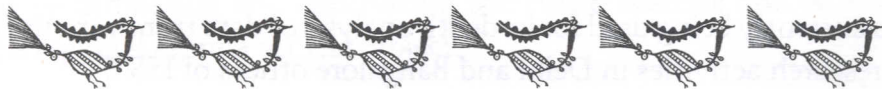


Creating legal awareness: legal experts addressing to the rural women at Lado Sarai

Family Counselling Centre also organised a legal awareness camp at Lado Sarai village with the support of a local voluntary organisation.

During the year, the Family Counselling Centre has taken part in several seminars and workshops and raised the issues relating to legal rights of women, domestic violence against women, and the need for better networking among the counsellors in the city.

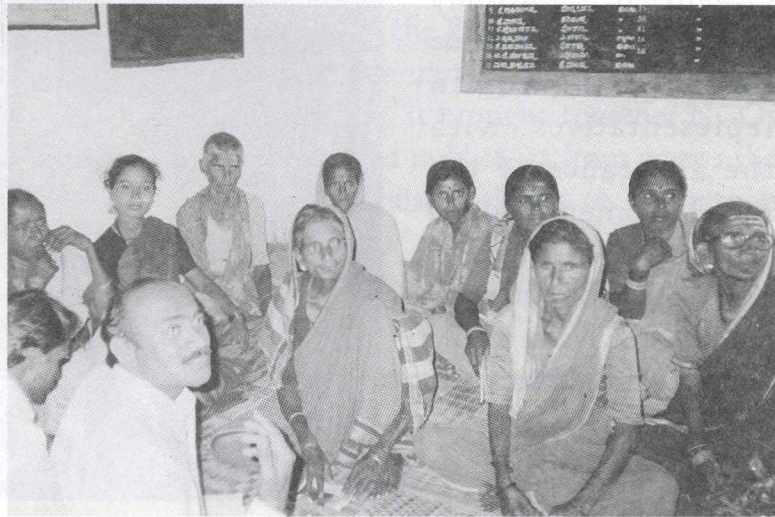
While the Central Social Welfare Board provides an annual grant, nearly half of the expenses for running the FCC is met from ISST's own resources.



BANGALORE

STRENGTHENING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE : UMA Project, Phase II

Utsahi Mahila Abhyudaya, better known by its acronym UMA, is involved in the issue of women in local governance. Among other things, it runs a national level resource centre set up in 1993 with the assistance of the Ford Foundation to cater to the needs of elected women representatives (EWRs) in Panchayati Raj. During the last year, the UMA project concentrated on two major objectives:



Strengthening women's role in Panchayats: a meeting held in Bellary district in Karnataka

- Consolidating the UMA National Resource Centre for Women in Panchayat Raj.
- Undertaking field based activities for continuous interaction with elected women and men representatives of Gram Panchayats in order to ensure proper assessment of training needs and priorities.

UMA aspires to strengthen the solidarity and enhance the capabilities of women in politics by fulfilling the need for information exchange and networking among individuals and organisations in Panchayati Raj.

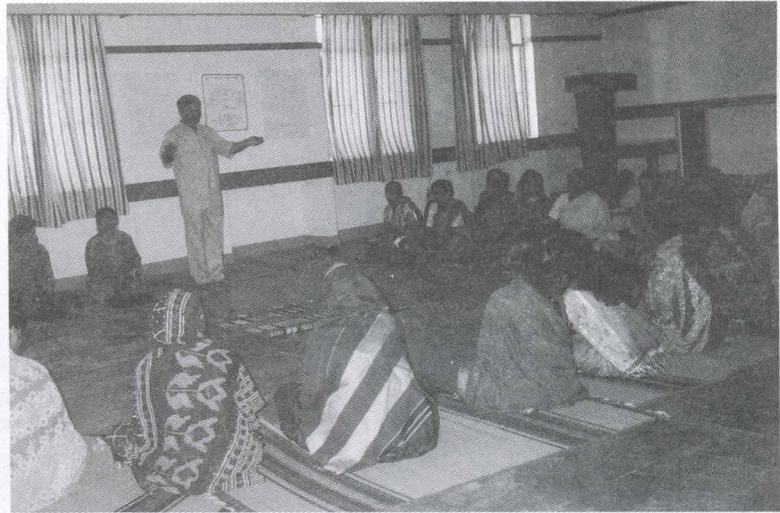
UMA Prachar, a newsletter on the subject of women's involvement in local governance, is being published regularly in three languages, i.e., English, Kannada, and Hindi, to reach the clientele in the South as well as in the North of the country.

The project has been sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

Workshops/Seminars organised by ISST

Enhancing Women's Political Participation and its Impact

Organised a two-day Orientation Programme for elected women representatives with the assistance of the Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC) of Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu on the 20th and 21st of May 1998.



Reproductive Health through Panchayats

ISST organised a four day interactive work-shop from 16 November to 19 November 1998 at Bellary, Karnataka to bring together partnering organizations to interact with one another and with local change agents.

Training Methodology and Material

ISST organised a workshop on "Training Methodology and Material", as a follow up of the first workshop organised in October, 1997. This was held in Bangalore between December 2 and 4, 1998. The main purpose of the workshop was to demonstrate

different types of techniques that are effective for strengthening women and to have a feed back on the different methodologies and materials discussed in the previous workshop.

Second National Conference of UMA

UMA held its second national conference on "Assessing the Participation of Women in Local Governance: Exploring new Frontiers" from February 3 to February 5, 1999 to assess the participation of women in Panchayati Raj. It brought together NGOs and government officials, policy makers, researchers and publishers from across the country to exchange and explore new ideas and establish linkages to strengthen women's participation in local governance.

Networking and Advocacy

Our networking grew this year to include institutions and individuals from other countries too. We have had visitors from Institute of Development Studies (Sussex) and New Economic Foundation, London; Ph.D scholars from Development Planning Unit, University College, London; University of Connecticut, USA and Bangladesh visited the National Resource Centre, Bangalore for reference work along with several other individuals and members of various organisations.

Field Visits

- Several field visits were made by the research team under the Health Through Panchayats project to study locations in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal. These visits served the purpose of promoting interaction with project population, facilitate process documentation and achieving the objectives set by the project. This constant interaction has enabled people to prioritise health issues as an essential developmental issue that needs to be addressed by the Panchayats.
- ISST research team made several visits to Himachal Pradesh also on account of the Herbal Medicinal Plants Project. The team interviewed forest officials, village people in different agro-climatic zone spreading over several districts of the state. Group discussions were held in many places with both women and men, including those who collect medicinal plants from alpine pastures and high hills.
- Field based activities of the UMA team in Bangalore ISST continued through the year. These visits are designed to ensure continuous interactions with Gram Panchayats in various districts in Karnataka for proper assessment of training needs and priorities at the grassroots level. In order to keep in tune with ground conditions, the UMA team visited select districts of Karnataka from time to time. The team had interactions with both women and men members.

Living with HIV/AIDS...

How do individuals—women, men and children—cope with terminal illness, and death, in the family? What if it is also untimely, unexpected and smeared with social stigma and shame? How does the deep-seated gender bias in Indian society manifest itself at such times of personal tragedy?

ISST's research team is exploring some of these difficult questions in a pilot project on social and gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in various locations in Delhi. The study is being sponsored by UNIFEM.

A sample of ISST Participation in: Training Programmes, Workshops, Seminars, Discussions, Meetings etc.

During the year, ISST participated in a number of workshops and seminars. Some of these are :

- “Women’s Empowerment Day” celebration on April 23 and 24, 1998, conducted by ISS, Bangalore. The theme of the celebration was “Women, Panchayats and Poverty Eradication”.
- The First Review Meeting of The NCAER-SEWA Informal Sector Project, organised by NCAER-SEWA at NCAER, New Delhi on May 4-5, 1998.
- VIII National Conference of Women’s Studies” from 30 May to 2 June, 1998 at SNDT Women’s University, Pune.
- Annual Meeting: Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies, November 2-6, 1998 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- State-level open discussion and evaluation on training given to EWRs organised by Department of women and Child Development, Bangalore from November 6-7, 1998.
- “Women on the Move” - A March as part of the Global Campaign on Elimination of Gender-based Violence in the South Asia Region on 10 December 1998, organised by UNIFEM in Delhi.
- Seminar on “Towards Violence-free Society” at Baha’is of Delhi at Baha’i House on 12 December, 1998.
- “National Conference on the 73rd/74th Amendment to the Constitution” held on 4-5 January 1999 organised by ISS, New Delhi in Bangalore.
- “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” organised by National Alliance for Women (NAWO) and Initiatives: Women in Development (IWID) in Chennai on January 19, 1999.
- Stock taking of Beijing Conference and to formulate the Agenda for New Millennium in the context of Women Empowerment on 5th March 1999 at Parliament House, organised by Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha.
- Training Programme for the Counsellors of family counselling service, organised by The Department of Social Work, New Delhi on March 8-18, 1999.
- UNDP workshop for Finalisation of the proposed Agenda for new Millennium in the context of women empowerment on 14 April, 1999.

List of Publications 1998-99

Research Papers/Articles

- **"Women in local governance: Macro myths, micro realities"** Mukta Banarjee in *Social Change*, Volume 28, No. 1, March 1998.
- **"Locating Women within Informal Sector Hierarchies"** Swapna Mukhopadhyay in *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Volume 43, No. 3, Jan-Mar 1998.
- **"Forging New Partnerships: Towards Empowerment"** Swapna Mukhopadhyay and Jyotsna Sivaramayya in Saroj Pachauri edited *Implementing A Reproductive Health Agenda in India: The Beginning*, Population Council, New Delhi 1999.

Reports

- **Reproductive Health Through Panchayat**
- **Herbal Medicinal Plants in Himachal Pradesh: An Analysis of Income and Employment Potential**

Newspaper Clippings

- *A selection of News Clippings on Women and Health 1995-98*
- *A Selection of News Clippings on Family Planning and Contraception 1995-98*
- *A Selection of News Clippings on Local Governance and Women's Empowerment 1996-98*

Newsletters

- **Uma Prachar** : Quarterly (English and Kannada). Published from Bangalore
- **Uma Prachar** : Quarterly (Hindi). Published from New Delhi
- **Samachar Patrika** : Quarterly (Hindi). Published from New Delhi

New UMA Resource Material

- Report of the Workshop on "Training Methodology and Materials"
- Report of the National Seminar on "Assessing the Participation of Women in Local Governance: Exploring New Frontiers"
- Newspapers Clippings on Panchayati Raj - 1998
- A Case Study, "Mydolalu: An All Women Gram Panchayat in Karnataka"
- "UMA at a Glance" An Album about UMA activities

UMA Training Material in Process

- Training Manual for Women in Local Governance "**As We Did It**", is being published in collaboration with "Books for Change", a non-profit publishing and distribution house set-up by Action Aid.
- A Resource book on Training Techniques "**What Works**" is under production.

Documentary Video Film

1. *Sharam Kahe Kee ?* (In English) A Film on Reproductive Health Through Panchayats

ISST Working Papers 1998-99

Sl. No.	Title	Author
6/98	Measuring Intra - Household Resource Allocations: Some Methodological Issues	D.V. Rukmini and Rina Bhattacharya
7/98	Groups in Theory and Practice	Pallavi Ghosh



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