

Decentralized Planning and its Implementation in Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The concern of decentralized planning in India has emerged from the fact that the growth models based on top down approach has failed to raise people above the poverty line. In light of this, constitution of India was amended through 73rd and 74th amendment which paved the way for the decentralized planning in India. There are two states in the country namely the Kerala and Andhra Pradesh that started decentralized planning since 1996-97 as model of decentralized planning. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, functional and financial decentralization was adopted but the District Planning Committees (DPCs) could not be constituted despite legal provision for their formation existed. Therefore, the planning process which was to emerge from the village level could not happen. The function of village and middle tier panchayat levels remained confined to implementation of certain of government programmes rather than making plans for their respective panchayats. The need is that the District Planning Committees should be constituted which should call for village and block panchayats to submit their plans for incorporation in the district plan.

Introduction

The planning process was initiated in the county with an objective of achieving development with social justice which could pave the way for establishing the socialistic pattern of society. However, the 'top-down' approach adopted through the growth models could neither solve the unemployment problem not could raise the people above poverty line. Without a deliberate policy to insure an equal distribution of gains of development, the process of development benefit the upper middle class and the richer section of the society much more than they do to the lower middle class and poorer sections. Although the effort to outline the decentralized planning of development were made since the inception of first five year plan, yet nothing concrete could emerge in this direction till early eighties. It was during the year 1984 that while reviewing the studies connected with the planning commission's report on District planning, the working Group of District Planning, headed

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by C. H. Hanumanta Rao brought out the fact that 'planning from below' was undetermined by different streams of funding the district plan. This Working Group recommended the following steps to achieve the objective of meaningful district planning:

- For good district planning, function, powers and finances need to be decentralized. States should outline the sharing of function with districts;
- Each district plan must reflect the basic objectives of the national plan and divisible plan outlay ought to be distributed to the district on the basis of population, area and level of development;
- District Planning Bodies consisting of a Chairman, member-Secretary and about fifty members, in which Collector is the chief coordinator, should be set up and district Planning body should be assisted by block level planning officers and technical experts from various disciplines.

In the year 1985 the G.V.K. Rao committee, constituted to review the administrative arrangements for rural development recommended that the district panchayat should be the principal agency to manage all development programs. At the district level. The Sarkaria Commission on center state relation highlighted the need for participation of people's representatives in the planning and administrative machinery at the district level.

The involvement of PRIS in rural development was enhanced during the sixth and seventh plan period. The involvement of PRIS was geared up with the launching of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (1989-90). Thus over a period of four decades since the beginning of planned development there were several suggestion and attempts of decentralized planning and the conditions required were also outlined and repeated. However, the vertical planed preparation of programs and methods of funding stood in the way of decentralized planning becoming a reality.

Factors for Impediments

Despite repeated recommendations of various committees decentralized planning could not be formalized till the commitments of 73rd and 74th amendment of Indian constitution. Such a state of affairs prevailed because of certain misconception about decentralized planning and lurking doubts in the in mind of the policy makers and bureaucrats.

1. There is a misunderstanding of the concept and it's practice even of the highest level of government. For instance, the then prime Minister of the country, while speaking on the debate on the six five year plan proposal in the Lok Sabha on 9th may. 1978, said:

“Is it possible to frame the plan from the village onwards? I would like to see the genius who will show me the way to do it in a given time. I Would like to know it and whether it can be practicable because in every district or every village we will want to have its full planning and full development irrespective of resources. They were not to be bothered at all. This will be only spending...But the plan has got to be made with the states. And this is what is being made?”

2. There is a strong feeling in several that community action as a myth in a heterogeneous society where mutually competing interests exist besides vested interests and social groups which co exist apparently in harmony but with mutual distrust and even hostility. The Dantawala group was specific in its approach when it say's. If we plan for the weak, the plan may have to be imposed from above and cannot be a product from below in which below is dominated by the rich and the strong.
3. The economists view planning as a technical and scientific process for expert knowledge. In the words of a leading economist. “ A district planner must identify his district resources, extent of their utilization the nature and extent of the infrastructure needed for optimum utilization. It is true that theoretically speaking, district planning means all the above and many more things. But it all such variables were to be taken into consideration for the formulation of local plans, it is almost impossible to formulate any district plan. Hence, in the context of micro-plans simple models have to be developed.
4. As a part of our legacy of pre-independence administrative system, there is a lurking suspicion that in the absence of control, large sums of money meant for rural development are likely to be wasted besides the lack of faith in local people's capacity in meeting the challenges of development administration.

Constitutional Amendments

The 73rd and 74th amendments of the constitution gave constitutional status to local self governments and provided a new more politically underpinned, universalized platform for decentralized planning from below. It is imperative to adjudge whether the constitutional amendments contain enough to reverse the trends in local planning, that were set in over a period of time. The constitutional amendments no doubt laid the foundation for decentralized planning, provided the state government prefer to take advantage of it, but at the same time several of the loose ends in the system remained united.

- Local self governing institutions are entrusted with the task of preparing plans for economic development and social justice by the constitution of the land;
- Richer and advanced sections of the community can longer prevent the weaker section from reaping the benefits of programmes of economic and social justice, as they are provided with due representation on local bodies through reservation;
- Local bodies are insulated from the vagaries of local politics by the provision that they would not remain superseded for more than six months. On account of such stability of the structure. It is possible for the local bodies to pay undivided attention to the function of planning and development;
- Finance which is said to be a crucial factor in decentralized planning, is taken care of by the appointment of the state finance commissions;
- Constitutional status is provided to the district as well as the metropolitan planning committees, which is denied even to the national planning commission and the state planning boards. Further, the planning committees largely consist of the representatives of the local bodies. At the same time, provision is made for expert guidance to the committees, which are required to consult such organization, and the government may specify institutions as may be the government;
- The amendments for the first time provided for comprehensive area plans involving both rural and urban areas in the district as well as metropolitan areas;
- While the metropolitan planning committees in the preparation of their plans have to keep in mind the "overall objectives and priorities set by the government of india and the government of the state". No such condition is stipulated for the district planning committee there by giving them the freedom to prepare genuine micro-level plans. Also the district committees unlike their metropolitan counterparts need not consist of the representatives of the government of india or the state government. Further, they need not take into consideration the investment made in their area by the government of india or the state government etc. These variations, of course, testify to the nature of planning in rural and urban areas;
- In place of the highly centralized planning process under which plans are prepared, programmes designed, and targets fixed at the central and state levels and instructions issued to the local bodies for

implementation, a decentralized arrangement for the preparation of plans by the local bodies is provided for.

It is now nearly 14 year since the 73rd and 74th amendments were made and there had been a progress in implementing some of the mandated provisions, such as regularization of elections. However, the concept of development planning from below has still not taken root even in the few states in which there in relatively larger devolution of power and provision of untied funds to local governments⁴.

It is amply clear by now that the state government have hardly shown respect to the spirit of the constitutional amendments with regard to decentralized planning. The foremost condition for decentralized planning was to set up district planning committees in all the states in accordance with article-243 ZD of the constitution. In spite of the resolutions of the second round table conference of state ministers for panchayati Raj (28-29 August, 2004) to set up DPCs. And effort made by the ministry of panchayati Raj to persuade all states, most of the states are still lagging behind in this regard.

Pioneering States

Only two states, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh had started the exercise of decentralized planning since the year 1996 and 1997 respectively. The states of Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh closely watched the experiments made by these states. The methodologies and models adopted by these two states are described in subsequent paragraphs.

The Kerala Model

To begin with, gram sabhas met to identify their problems and voice their aspirations. For the purpose of collection of data on local resources, local demands, problems. Project to be implemented and mobilization of resources by the gram Panchayats development seminars were held in all the panchayats in November, 1996. Consequently, 1.5 lakh projects were finalized by PRIs. And municipalities in the states. The government of kerala sel up voluntary technical corps (VTC) consisting of 10000 experts drawn from the ranks of retired officials with experience in varied fields, besides college teachers. Pradhans Should rise above their parochial dealings and not to cater to the needs of his resource group only.

Capacity Building of PRIs and their Representatives

For an innovative programme/activity we always talk of capacity bulding the capacity is the ability of individuals, institution and societies to perform function, solve problem and achieve objective in a sustainable manner. For

capacity building training programme is taken up . Training is a process of bridging the gap which one has what is required for the performance of a certain job. How ironical it is that people in general and PRIs representatives of most of states in particular, are devoid of education. Hence ,effort should be made to enhance the education status of people so that they could be made perfectly aware about the need and resources in their areas. Such an enlightened electorate would preferably elect the right type of persons on the public bodies and help formulate the micro-plan for the villages.

Perception about Decentralized Planning

The concept of decentralized planning should be properly understood. It should not be taken as a substitute for national and state level planning but a supplement. In other words, the macro and micro plans should be treated as mutually complementary, areas being clearly demarcated, so as to promote the wider goals of growth, employment, effective utilization of energies of the people and of local resources and to attain distributive justice. Thus a mutually complementary role played by the marco and micro plan agencies will create conditions for meeting the 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' linkage requirement.

Mobilization of PRIs Funds

There is a difference between precept and practice when providing untied funds. It has been long accepted that for formulating a meaningful and integrated development plan, based on local resources, PRIs should have the freedom to determine and plan for their priorities through the use of untied funds provided to them. It must also be emphasized that PRIs. Should mobilize their own financial resources.

Methodology for Decentralized Planning

Four – pronged Methodology for Planning and implementation of the decentralized Planning will have to be adopted:

- Pre-Planning Phase;
- Planning-Phase
- Implementation Phase;
- Monitoring& Evaluation Phase.

For the Pre-Planning Phase there are following requisites:

- Defining the scope and contents of district plan;
- Desegregation of plan funds from the state to the district, kshetra and gram panchayat level on appropriate criteria;

- Establishing a suitable organizational framework for decentralized planning;
- Effecting certain administrative decentralization measures
- Establishing a proper decentralized planning machinery
- Making arrangements for the training of personnel.

For Planning Phase:

- Formulation of the major objectives of the decentralized plan .
- Collection & compilation of data for decentralized planning.
- Bringing out the profile the district in relation to the basic objectives.
- Formulating the main strategy and thrust of decentralized planning
- Analysis of the on-going programmes and projects with reference to the strategy out-lined above and proposals regarding.
- modification/ phasing out of the on-going programmes & projects.
- proposals for removing inter-block disparities.
- Assessment of employment / under-employment and proposals for manpower planning & budgeting.
- Inclusion of new projects and plans.
- Inter linkages between various project & plans.
- assessment of resources for allocation to various programmes and projects
- A statement of physical and Financial components of decentralized plan.
- Statement of spatial dimension of the decentralized plan.
- Relationship and links between the district and regional and state development plans.

Implementation Phase

For the implementation of the micro-plan the members of a committee of Gram Panchayats should be specially trained through fresh, as well as orientation courses to get the village development plan executed.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The work of monitoring and evaluation should be left with the gram sabha. The gram sabha members if made fully aware about the execution of the plans/programme they can ably control and point out the faults. Thus gram sabha will be performing a watch-dog function.

Essential Steps of Micro-planning

For a perfect village development plan minute details and calculations will have to be worked out. Prior to formulation of village development plan we will have to do:

- Collection of detailed information about the village.
- Identification of main requirements of the village.
- Identification of development works.
- Alternatives to be considered.
- Identification of best alternatives.
- Identification of natural, human and financial resources.
- Calculation of the additional resources.
- Mobilization of additional resources.
- Identification of identical schemes/programmes in the area.
- Identification of implementation, and monitoring agencies.
- Rapid Rural Appraisal.
- Preliminary inferences drawn.
- Environment building.
- Participatory Rural Appraisal.
- Analysis and search for Alternatives.
- Formulation of Action Plan.

Functional Decentralization of Village Panchayats in U.P.

Under the process decentralized planning the state has assigned the planning and management of following function:

- Rural Water Supply Scheme.
- Poverty Alleviation/Employment
- Mid Day Meal.
- Management of Rural Hat Painth.
- Rural Sanitation Programme.
- Animal Husbandry.
- Youths Welfare Programme.
- Distribution of Scholarships.
- Public Distribution Scheme.

- Maintenances of Assets.
- Rural Library.
- Rural Housing – Beneficiaries Selection.
- Implementation of Scheme of Bhoomi Sudhar.
- Minor Irrigation – Beneficiaries Selection.
- Verification of Works of Primary Health Centre.
- Upkeep of Seed Stores.

But in the reality, the village panchayats in the state are not performing all the above functions. The programmes of Mid day Meal, PDS and beneficiaries identification for Indira Awas Yojana are the major programmers being looked after by the village panchayats in U.P.

Devolution of Functionaries and Finances

The state government has deputed Village Panchayat Officer of the Department of Panchayati Raj and Village Development Officer from the Department of Rural Development at the village panchayat level for assistance of village panchayats in performing the assigned responsibilities. The State Finance Commission from I to III (2006-07 to 2009-10) has recommended the devolution of finances. It ranged from 4 per cent by I FC to 6 per cent by III FC. But the proportion of devolution recommended by these Finance Commissions are quite inadequate in view of financial devolutions recommended in other states.

District Planning Committee

DPCs is the committee created as per article 243ZD of the Constitution of India at the district level for planning at the district and below. The Committee in each district should consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district and prepare a draft development plan for the district.

Functions of DPC

The Constitution of India provides the DPCs two specific responsibilities. In preparing the draft development plan, the DPC shall have regard to matters of common interest between the Panchayats and the Municipalities including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources, the integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation and the extent and type of available resources, both financial or otherwise. The DPC in this endeavor, is also mandated to consult such institutions and

organizations as may be specified. In order that the plans at different levels are prepared as envisaged in the previous chapter, there is need to strengthen the system comprising the machinery of planning and the process of consolidation of plans at the district level.

There is confusion in states as to whether the DPC is to be established as a separate and permanent office or whether it denotes only a meeting that is periodically called and which can be serviced by a part-time secretariat. There is a feeling that the DPC ought not to emerge as yet another layer of bureaucracy to vet people's plans. At the same time, the fact that the DPC is held intermittently and without permanent support undermines its effectiveness as a constitutional institution and a coordinating mentor. On balance, the DPC merits the status of a permanent institution, with adequate Secretariat to service it at the District level. It could also be provided the means of drawing experts to assist it whenever required.

Status of DPCs in the States

All States and Union Territories except Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, J&K and NCT of Delhi are required to set up District Planning Committees in accordance with Article 243ZD of the Constitution of India. But the status is as follows:-

Status of District Planning Committees in the States		
Sl No	States/Union Territories	Status of constitution of DPCs
1	Andra Pradesh	Not yet constituted.
2	Arunachal Pradesh	Not yet constituted.
3	Assam	Not yet constituted.
4	Bihar	Constituted in all 38 districts. Chairman ZP is the Chairman of DPCs.
5	Chattisgarh	Constituted. Minister is Chairpersons of DPC
6	Goa	Constituted. President of ZP is the Chairperson of DPC
7	Gujarat	Not yet constituted.
8	Haryana	Constituted in all 19 Districts.
9	Himachal Pradesh	Constituted in 12 districts. Minister is Chairperson of DPC.
10	Karnataka	Yes. In all Districts. President, ZP is Chairman of DPC.
11	Jharkhand	Panchayat Elections yet to be held.
12	Kerala	Yes, Chairman of District Panchayat (DP) is Chairman of DPC.
13	Madhya Pradesh	Yes. District in-charge Ministers are Chairpersons.
14	Maharashtra	Guardian Minister for the District (Ex-Officio Chairperson)
15	Manipur	Yes in 4 districts. Adhyaksha, DP is Chairperson
16	Orissa	26 Districts. Minister is Chairperson of DPC.
17	Punjab	Not yet constituted.
18	Rajasthan	Yes. Chairman of DP is Chairman of DPC

19	Sikkim	Yes.
20	Tamil Nadu	Yes. Chairperson, DP is Chairperson
21	Tripura	Not yet constituted.
22	Uttar Pradesh	DPCs are not notified or constituted, even though legal provision exists.
23	Uttaranchal	DPCs are not notified or constituted, even though legal provision exists.
24	West Bengal	Yes. Chairperson, DP is Chairperson of DPC.
25	Andaman Nicobar	Yes. Chairperson of DP is Chairman of DPC
26	Chandigarh	Not yet constituted.
27	D & N Haveli	Yes. Chairman, DP is Chairman of DPC
28	Daman Diu	Yes. Chairman, DP is Chairman of DPC
29	Lakshadweep	Yes. Collector cum Dev. Commissioner is Chairperson.
30	Pondicherry	Panchayat Elections yet to be held.

It is clear that the steps taken to operationalize the provisions of Article 243 ZD of the Constitution of India by the States have been far from satisfactory. Despite shortcomings, DPC should become the fulcrum of the planning effort in the district, and should have the capacity to undertake the tasks expected of it.

Functioning of DPCS

An analysis of the functioning of DPCs and the formulation and implementation of 'district plans' in 14 States reveals the following:-

- In most States DPCs are yet to function as envisaged in the Constitution. They neither consolidate nor prepare draft district developmental plans.
- Very few States are preparing district plans even though some of them allocate funds to the district sector
- In several States, where there is no separation of the budget into District and State sectors, allocation of funds to Panchayats does not match the legislative devolution of functions to them.
- Funds given to Panchayats are tied down to schemes, thus limiting the scope for determining and addressing local priorities through a planning exercise. In this regard, CSSs pertaining to functions devolved to Panchayats now constitute the largest element of such tied funds.
- Actual provision in State budgets also differs from the gross outlays communicated. Some States do not provide matching funds to Centrally Sponsored Schemes, reducing the actual flow of funds for such Schemes to local governments.

- Planning is of poor quality and is generally a mere collection of schemes and works, many of the works suggested by elected panchayat members themselves is an ad-hoc manner. Integration of Gram and Taluk Panchayat plans into the District plan, even when done, also tends to be mere summation and not a synergistic integration. This is further distorted by placing funds with MPs and MLAs, whose utilization falls outside the pale of any planning.
- Since the so-called planning exercise follows certain chain of events at the State level as regards finalisation of budgets and plans, its quality suffers seriously for lack of sufficient time. Thus detailed guidelines regarding consultation, consideration and decision making at different levels remain largely on paper and the planning process does not stir meaningful debate in Panchayats.

In the absence of a well functioning District Planning machinery, taking decisions on the priorities of a district is often left to officials, guided by district development committees, which consist largely of elected representatives of legislatures and Members of Parliament and some nominated members, sometimes including elected representatives of Panchayats.

The above table stands corrected and the DPC in Arunachal Pradesh have been constituted with the Zilla Parishad Chairpersons as its head.

Establishment of DPCs

The first step is to ensure that DPCs are set up in all States in accordance with Article 243 ZD of the Constitution. In spite of the resolutions of the Second Round Table to set up DPCs as mandated by the Constitution and efforts by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to persuade all States, some States are still dragging their feet in this regard. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj addressed all Secretaries of Panchayati Raj in States on 30th May, 2005 requesting them to constitute DPCs in their respective States if the same had not been constituted. Their attention was also drawn to the meeting of the Committee of Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of Panchayati Raj in the States/Union Territories held on 11th April, 2005 wherein the Ministry of Panchayati Raj had communicated that the States that had not constituted DPCs in accordance with Article 243ZD of the Constitution should do so before 31st October, 2005. However, this was not achieved. The steps taken by this Expert Group and the circular issued by the Planning Commission to all States regarding formulation of the Annual plans of States has already been referred to in Chapter 2. While the circular marked an important step forward and would give an impetus to the endeavor to establish and strengthen District Planning Committees, detailed instructions were issued

to all States and Central Ministries prior to Eleventh plan discussions on the following points:

- CSS guidelines that entrust the task of district level planning and implementation to parallel bodies, such as DRDAs and District Health Societies, need to be modified to incorporate the District Planning Committee in the process of District level planning.
- The Planning Commission could inform States that the DPC would be the sole body that is entrusted with the task of consolidating plans at the district level.
- The Planning Commission could specify a time frame within which States will need to issue detailed instructions covering the manner in which the DPC would perform its functions.

Support to DPCs

The need to provide professional support to the DPC cannot be overstated. Though several States have provided staff from the State level on deputation to District Panchayats for the purpose of undertaking planning, such Staff are overburdened and ill equipped. There is a need to create, preferably within the District Panchayat, a separate cell to service the District Planning Committee. The Cell could have five separate and distinct sections, namely, dealing with Municipal Plans, District Panchayat Plans, Intermediate Panchayat Plans, Village Panchayat Plans and one for maintenance of data and undertake research, with the necessary support in terms of IT and qualified research assistants.

- There must be a full time professionally qualified District Planning Officer to head the District Planning Unit. If such persons are unavailable in the government, appointments of professionals on contract or outsourcing are options to be considered and acted upon.
- Institutional support through universities and research institutions, both at the District and State level, could be identified for assisting the DPC in planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- The Planning Commission should continue to provide the required support for district planning as was done earlier, except that this would now be provided to the DPC.

Enabling DPCs

The aim of drawing experts is to assist the local governments concerned (Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies) in both forming a vision and designing

strategies to attain that vision. Advice of the experts would be based on experience, expertise and the field position, as revealed from ground data. Special efforts ought to be made by States to ensure that the best talent and the most motivated are invited to participate as experts. The following points are recommended by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, to guide the drawing of experts to support the DPC:

- Experts could be assigned to work either individually or in teams. They could be taken on a part time basis, an assignment basis or full time, if the need arises.
- It is for the State to determine the number of experts that can be drawn to assist the DPC. This could depend upon the extent of devolution in each State.
- Though ideally they are best drawn locally, experts can be drawn even from outside the jurisdiction of the district, if required. Care must be taken to ensure that participation is voluntary, above partisan politics and able to respect different points of view.
- With growing urbanization of smaller and intermediate sized towns, there is need to especially draw in experts on municipal matters and the urban rural interphase to assist the DPC in planning for local resource sharing, area planning, solid waste and sewage disposal and other such matters which call for close coordination between Panchayats and Municipalities.

The DPC could also constitute a few sectoral sub-committees for both the envisioning and the consolidation processes. The task of sectoral Sub Committees is to go into the details of each development sector assigned, such as proper quantification and description of service available in the sector, whether these meet the norms prescribed, the gaps that need to be filled and track data availability, in consultation with local Bodies, public and private organizations before finalizing the vision of that Sector. Once the Sectoral Vision document is prepared, it shall be submitted to the DPC. Sectoral sub-committees could also give suggestions for innovative plans and integrated projects, which local governments may accept if they so desire.

One of the primary tasks of the DPC would be to build capacity for decentralized planning in the district. A major impediment to proper planning is the lack of personnel providing planning support and availability of good and comprehensible information at the Intermediate and Gram Panchayat levels. Provision of support for planning at the Intermediate Panchayat level: Each Intermediate Panchayat should be provided a planning and data unit, which could also be integrated into the larger concept of having a Resource

Centre at each Intermediate Panchayat level, to provide a basket of pooled services, such as for engineering, agriculture, watershed development, women and child care, public health etc., which Gram Panchayats can draw upon for support in planning and implementation.

The problem in the U.P. state is that the efforts to constitute DPCs have never been done seriously. The result is that the district plans are the summations of needs of each department, assessed on the basis of past targets and achievements and not on the basis of incorporation of plans obtained from block and village levels. The result is that the neither the middle level of PRIs nor the bottom level of gram Panchayats are asked to prepare their plans for upwards submission. Therefore, village panchayats have become an agency to implement some of the programmes of the government. The village panchayat hardly make any plan of their own for the development of their areas. The other reason is that the village panchayats in Uttar Pradesh are also financially crippled. The funding from the state is generally tide while their own resources are very meager. The efforts to generate own resources are next to nothing. In these circumstances, village panchayats cannot plan at their own level unless their financial position is improved. The state apathy to devolution of more funds to PRIs is also evident from the fact that latest State Finance commission which covered the period of 2006-07 to 2010-11 has recommend the transfer of only 6 per cent of net tax proceeds to PRIs in the state while this proportion is much higher in other states. Therefore, the need is to change the attitude of the state in favor of realistic decentralized planning in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

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