

GIG Economy: Emerging Trends and Challenges After Globalisation

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ABSTRACT

Economic globalization, has significantly changed the patterns of employment in the 21st century. Due to technological progress and globalisation, the workforce is radically changing. A new set of expectations and attitudes about work are being brought about by the growth of the gig economy. One of the main reasons the gig economy is becoming more and more popular is the development of digital talent platforms that connect employers and employees. Workers in the gig economy face job insecurity, irregular income, and lack of benefits such as health insurance and pensions. The importance of gig economy is largely acknowledged in industrialized countries and it is also becoming popular in emerging economies. During COVID-19, gig helped many people by providing employment and a source of income. The expanding Gig economy benefits both the employers and workers in terms of low-cost labour, a more agile and adaptable workforce and freedom to choose projects, increased flexibility, autonomy, and diverse income streams respectively but the issues like Labour exploitation, Job security, Issues with payment, Regulatory framework and Lack of organizational support will pose challenges and questions the sustainability of Gig Economy. By building a strong professional development, and effective workforce management, gig workers and businesses can maximize the benefits of gig economy. Governments should come forward with strong legislations and frameworks to make the gig economy more viable. The gig economy must become more structured in order to become sustainable and integrated into a country's economy.

Keywords: Globalization, Digital labour platforms, Gig Economy, NITI Aayog, Job insecurity and Exploitation

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic globalization, has significantly changed the patterns of employment in the 21st century. The shape of the workforce is changing dramatically with the globalisation and technology innovation. Organisations have to respond the rapidly shifting consumer preferences and the changing business environment. The rise of the “gig economy” is helping organizations address these needs. The term Gig was first used in 1915 by Jazz performers to Describe the live music events and their contract work. Gig businesses, which provide corporations with temporary labourers, first appeared in the 1940s as a response to the workforce shortage brought on by World War II. A "gig" is a chore, alternative labour, or temporary employment contract. Earning money outside of the traditional employer-employee relationship is what gig workers do. Other terms used to refer to the gig economy include platform economy, open-talent economy, sharing economy, and collaborative economy. The term "gig economy" describes labour markets where independent contractors work through digital channels and on digital platforms. The gig economy offers short-term job opportunities. Gig Workers work erratic hours and have limited job security the chances of career development are very low as their wages are determined on the basis of their amount of work they perform. Technology provides the organisations many flexible ways to meet the demand.

Gig economy transforms the work and creates new expectations and attitudes to work for the workers. Organisations need highly skilled workers for short term projects .workers expect greater flexibility in their work. The needs of the businesses and workers are met with the help of technology. Gig economy is clearly to stay because of huge macro-economic forces. Globalisation of work and trade, outsourcing and technology shifts the shape and nature of employment dramatically. This transition created a new era in which the employers can get their workers who are available in large numbers with their

innovation and creativity. Similarly the workers can decide where to work, when to work and how much time to work and how much to earn. Thus they become the masters of their career. The globalization and digitalization reshaped the working world and brought in a new economic paradigm which impacted much the global employment. Working from anywhere and work flexibility are the two main factors behind the Gig economy. The short time task agreement, focused task assignment and flexible negotiable wage rates are the common features of Gig Economy.

Tech-enabled platforms connect the consumer with a service provider to perform a specific task on a short term basis. The service providers, known as Part-timers, freelancers, and independent contractors are examples of gig workers. Rather than receiving a set income, they used to receive paid after completing a specified duty. Thus Gig economy can be viewed as a shift from regular full time job to demand based –task based work. Digital platforms create employment in the absence of middlemen.

The rapid developments in technology resulted in outsourcing of business activities. Increasing start-ups utilise the service providers on a contractual basis. Digitalization and smartphones help the gig workers to choose the tasks in which they own more skill through tech-based platforms. Gig workers enjoy the freedom of maintaining work-life balance. The timing of work, the nature of work, how much to earn, when to take rest, flexibility in work, convenience are decided by the workers. Increasing unemployment problem among the urban youths and rise in tech literacy level opens sources of earning and empowers the gig economy to flourish in future.

Due to the fact that freelancers do not incur the customary administrative and regulatory costs associated with normal workers, corporations find it more cost-effective to hire them for specific projects. Hiring individuals with the necessary skills is increasingly flexible and economical due to the rise in on-demand services for particular jobs tailored to corporate requirements. For instance, rather than employing a regular PR staff, a business can hire a freelance branding consultant to rename the company as a one-time project. Companies can find workers to employ at an affordable cost which is comparatively high in the traditional employment. Instead of having a permanent team for a specific task the company can hire a freelancer to do that work as one time activity.

Flexibility and freedom attract the workforce to choose the Gig work in the place of full time work under one employer. They enjoy autonomy over their career chances. Both gig workers and employers receive benefits in terms of a flexible work schedule with less entrance barriers and considerably lower training expenses respectively. Short term assignments, no need to work for a full day and free to work from wherever they live the gig works become more dynamic and productive.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Mirjana Radović-Marković et al.(2021) conducted an analysis of work in the gig economy and entrepreneurship during the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the importance of adaptability and financial resilience for businesses. The gig economy offers workers flexibility, extra money, independence, and other opportunities, which require entrepreneurial digital skills to boost competitiveness and contribute to the economy. Encouraging digital entrepreneurial abilities through various educational modalities is crucial. This book examines the value of industry and virtual universities working together, examining the evolution of entrepreneurship and the impact of digitalization on job creation. It also explores the impact of digitalisation on the labor market's job prospects. The COVID-19 pandemic destroyed \$3 billion worth of value from international stock markets and endangered millions of small enterprises globally. Some analysts believe that globalisation is becoming less significant due to the crisis, but it can still be beneficial and even a source of global economic stability. Multinational corporations have a "connective tissue" that connects national economies, making it difficult to stop long-standing international processes. Digital globalisation will take precedence, as it is immune to pandemics and will greatly facilitate teleworking. It will persist to some degree even after the crisis has passed. As the world community rebalances priorities of national and international development, globalisation will take on new forms, and it is reasonable to expect a decrease and moderating of rhetoric against globalisation. Ultimately, while there is a global crisis at the moment, there has never been a globalisation crisis (Armstrong, 2020).

Elena Okunkova et al. (2023) The article's goals are to outline the risks that the gig economy's explosive growth based on flexible work arrangements poses to developing nations and to suggest ways that state policy may be put into place to help them catch up. According to the article, industrialised nations have the highest percentage of workers who work as freelancers. When it comes to the total number of freelancers, developing nations lead. It demonstrated that there is a strong inverse relationship between the percentage of self-employment and the education index, with the latter being linked to issues in economic development and a low degree of labour relations development. It is discovered that the population's relatively high level of education combined with a low degree of labour relations development adds to the rise in the number of independent contractors.

Dimitar Nikoloski et al.'s 2023 study on the gig economy highlights the global changes resulting from factors like globalisation, digitization, and technological advancement. The rise of smartphones, computers, and the internet has transformed the world into a global village, allowing for more free and accessible communication. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the emergence of remote work opportunities, forcing employment markets to adapt quickly. The gig

economy, which refers to non-standard forms of employment, has seen the proliferation of novel traits that were once considered marginal. This highlights the importance of adapting to these trends and ensuring the continued growth of the gig economy.

The study "Digital labour and development: impacts of global digital labour platforms and the gig economy on worker livelihoods" by **Mark Graham et al. (2017)** highlighted the potential effects of the gig economy and digital employment on workers' livelihoods as more policymakers, governments, and organizations use them as economic development tools to deliver jobs to underserved areas. The article explores four major issues faced by workers in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-east Asia: bargaining power, economic inclusion, intermediated value chains, and upgrading. Despite the significant advantages for a variety of workers, there are several hazards and expenses that unnecessarily impact the standard of living for digital workers. Four major approaches are proposed: regulatory approaches, digital worker organization, certification programs, and democratic management of online labor marketplaces. Digital work is distinguished by specific geographic locations, with some employees flourishing on platforms that incentivize entrepreneurial behavior by enhancing their ranking scores, matching their online persona to customer demands, and re-contracting work for even lesser pay. Proponents and proponents of digital employment, who have their roots in individualisation discourses, frequently draw attention to the benefits that digital workers experience in their life. To make sure that digital employment does not best serve the goals of economic development, systemic difficulties must also be addressed. In a globalised yet unequal economy, there are four main obstacles facing digital labourers: inadequate information, alienation, prejudice, and the risk of being foreign-born. The global labour market's scale and scope reduce workers' bargaining strength, and the anonymity offered by digital media can enable employers to discriminate arbitrarily while promoting certain types of economic inclusion. Future studies will focus on how frequently these problems arise and how they affect different people in different regions of the world.

A 2022 study by Jeeva Balakrishnan et al. explored the future of work in the gig economy. Businesses are scaling up operations to achieve exponential growth and are investing in human capital. The workforce is expected to lose jobs due to automation and the COVID-19 pandemic, with the World Economic Forum estimating that the shift between humans, machines, and algorithms could result in the displacement of 85 million jobs globally in the next five years. The gig economy is growing, with gig workers being preferred over permanent employees and skills and competencies being prioritized over formal qualifications. The gig economy is location-independent, and talent is becoming transferable across all domains. Companies must prepare their current staff for the future, as fierce competition in the job market is expected. Acquiring new competencies is crucial for upskilling employees.

The globalisation phenomenon of the sharing economy was examined by **Ronaldo C. Parente et al. (2018)**. Businesses in the sharing economy have experienced exceptional success on a global scale very quickly. In this research, we particularly concentrate on web-based businesses that permit the temporary use of underutilised assets for rent appropriation. We create a framework to direct future study by examining the key traits of these companies and the dynamics that currently surround their internationalisation process from the standpoint of business ecosystems. Because of its more comprehensive understanding of multifaceted network effects and the involvement of several stakeholders, which can differ between countries, the business ecosystem approach offers a useful theoretical lens through which to evaluate this phenomenon. According to the study's conclusion, there is a lot of room for future research on the internationalisation of sharing economy companies to expand on the uses of the majority of IB theories. This document is simply the beginning of a larger phenomenon, and further theoretical exploration is required to fully understand the consequences of the sharing economy phenomenon for international business. We intend to stimulate future research endeavours into examining and illuminating the fascinating behaviour and repercussion of sharing economy enterprises by bringing attention to the global economic, institutional, and societal impacts of the sharing economy.

Underlying Opportunities and Challenges of Digitalisation in Gig Economy, **Sonia Mukherjee and Reeta Tomar (2024)**. The gig economy, a term used to describe temporary contracts, has experienced significant growth globally. It includes freelancers, part-timers, project-based laborers, independent contractors, and contract workers. In the US, the gig economy has become significant, with around 40% of American workers expected to be employed on an independent contract basis in 2020. The gig economy has gained popularity due to digital platforms, increased digitalisation, and access to advanced technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence. Smartphone adoption has increased, and the digitally literate workforce allows gig workers to provide a wide range of skilled services online. Developed nations like the US have been the primary drivers of the gig economy's growth, leading to companies like Uber, Airbnb, and Upwork. However, developing countries like India are also embracing the gig economy, with an increasing number of outworkers and lower-qualified workers. With increased knowledge dissemination, capital, and human resource upgrading, India is expected to grow at an accelerated rate in the global gig economy. By observing the trends of the US gig economy, India can learn from the US and promote potential gig work opportunities. Examples of businesses operating in the Indian economy include Ola and OYO.

The 2021 study by Moritz Altenried et al. explored the connection between migration and the gig economy, focusing on the departure of food delivery service Deliveroo from Berlin. The study highlights the role of migrant labourers in the functioning of digital platforms like Deliveroo, Helpling, and Uber in cities worldwide. The study uses ethnographic and

qualitative research methods to illustrate how these platforms are hubs for migrant labour, highlighting the inherent erratic nature of this type of employment. The study also examines the factors that make digital platforms welcoming to immigrants and suggests that they are designed to be ideal places for the exploitation of migrant labour due to their algorithmic management and flexible work arrangements. The study also highlights the long history of migratory labor, which is intricately linked to contingent labour. The study also highlights the importance of critical migration studies, which focus on migration regimes and specific migrants or groups, and how these relate to the constitutive relationship between labour markets and labour mobility in capitalism. The study also highlights the role of mobile labour in the gig economy, highlighting its volatility, lack of rights and protections, and erratic labour demand. Digital technology is revolutionizing the organization, management, and control of contingent and mobile employment, redefining the dynamics of migrant labour and labor markets. Digital platforms represent new migratory infrastructures, allowing for the reconfiguration of traditional forms of contingent employment. The gig economy platforms are designed to facilitate the exploitation of migrant labour by combining algorithmic management with flexible forms of employment. This has led to political battles and labour disputes, with the case for reclassifying gig workers as employees being persuasively made. However, standard employment and labour laws are not a safe refuge from precarity, especially for migrant workers. The landscape is changing as platforms use new subcontracting models and other tactics in response to recent rulings and rules pertaining to self-employment. The fight for improved working conditions in the gig economy is complex and multifaceted, involving law, power, and universal rights. Alternatives to platform capitalism's logics, which privatize profits while shifting social and entrepreneurial risk to other actors, are needed to address the complex issues faced by migrant workers in Berlin during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The article "Good Gig, Bad Gig: Autonomy and Algorithmic Control in the Global Gig Economy" by **Alex J. Wood et al. (2018)** examined the quality of work in the gig economy, with a particular emphasis on workers in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The study demonstrates that algorithmic control is essential to the functioning of online labour platforms, even in the face of differences in national contexts and kinds of employment. Workers that make use of algorithmic management strategies frequently enjoy high degrees of independence, diversity, flexibility, and complexity in their work. But these control measures can also lead to low income, social isolation, and erratic, inhospitable hours worked, overworking, exhaustion, and sleep deprivation. The functioning of online employment marketplaces is largely dependent on algorithmic regulation, which differs from Taylorist control, which is often linked to heavy reliance on information management technologies. Platform-based grading and ranking systems enable large degrees of autonomy, task diversity, and complexity, as well as potential temporal and spatial flexibility. Algorithmic control gives remote gig workers nominal control over their work environment, but in practice, they may not have much of an option but to work from home, leading to feelings of social isolation and long, lonely, and unpredictable hours. The autonomy arising from algorithmic control can cause fatigue, sleeplessness, and overwork due to the inadequate structural influence employees have over clients.

3. GLOBAL GIG ECONOMY:

Because developed nations like the United States have higher rates of economic development, digitisation, and disposable income, they are among the first to embrace the gig economy. These same circumstances are also to blame for the founding of successful international businesses like Uber, Airbnb, and Upwork in the United States. As a result, the US is now in the forefront of the gig economy worldwide. Conversely, developing nations like India have a lot of potential to embrace the gig economy because of the growing pool of unskilled workers and freelancers.

Growth of digitalisation, economic development and a higher disposable income, consumption pattern are responsible for the growth of Gig economy in USA. Uber, Airbnb, and Upwork are the leading companies earlier founded in US, the leader in the gig economy. But developing countries like India adopted the Gig work culture due to expanding freelancers and low skilled labour.

Technology and human capital advantages will help India to grow at a faster rate in the global gig economy. The gig tasks provided by Uber and Airbnb in the US, are provided by Ola and OYO in India. The difference is that in US workers need higher work independence. But in India workers are searching to employ their talents. The number of graduates coming out of engineering is continuously increasing, increasing cost of living, changing work mind-sets of women in homemaking caused a rise in the need for additional income resulted in the growth of gig platforms such as Frapp, Internshala and Awign.

It is predicted that the US will have more gig workers than the non-gig workers by 2027. The Mastercard survey reported that the gig workers started working in accounting and finance, legal services, IT, and other professional advice services.

A significant shift has been felt in the nature of work due to the increasing desire for flexible jobs and technological revolution. Hiring of gig workers increases significantly after the Covid pandemic. Forbes found that the number of gig workers increased in the pandemic period by 24% when compared to the pre covid-19 periods. The reason was that many workers had to take care of their parents or children at home. Another reason was the newly created digital platforms that helped the gig workers to work from anywhere globally.

According to a World Bank analysis titled "The Promise and Peril of Online Gig Work," there are between 154 million and 435 million gig economy workers globally, which equates to 4.4% to 12.5% of all jobs worldwide.

The high estimate takes into account gig workers as auxiliary or auxiliary labour. According to World Bank estimates, there are 545 online gig work platforms worldwide, with 186 nations home to platform clients and workers and 63 countries as headquarters.

Drawing from polls carried out in 17 nations, such as Egypt, Argentina, Nigeria, Russia, and China, the World Bank report (2023) examines the current situation of gig workers and underlines the following:

- Up to 435 million gig workers are employed globally, and between 2016 and the first quarter of 2023, demand for gig labour increased by 41%.
- Despite the fast growth of online gig work, employees are not protected under employment laws. The global rate of social insurance coverage among gig workers is low.
- Approximately 50% of gig workers questioned had no retirement plan, and up to 73% of gig workers in Venezuela and 75% of Nigerian freelance workers had no retirement savings.
- There is continuous debate concerning worker rights on these platforms, and gig workers—both online and on-site—represent an increasing share of the labour market in the United States.
- According to the most recent accessible Pew Research research from 2021, 16% of US people and 30% of 18 to 29-year-olds have made money through online gig platforms.

3.1 A. Gig Economy in India:

As per The NITI Aayog the Indian gig economy is experiencing a significant growth, with an estimated 23.5 million workers expected by 2029-2030. This growth is driven by the need for on-demand consumer services and the desire of workers, particularly millennials, to have flexible work schedules. The Boston Consulting Group differentiates between freelancers and permanent employees, based on factors such as demographic profile, work and income patterns, motivational factors, and financial and non-financial benefits. The Indian gig economy is projected to grow at a CAGR of 17% by 2030, with the global gig economy including a significant share of Indian gig workers. By 2029-2030, there will be three times as many gig workers in India as in 2020-21, with India's gig labor expected to increase from 7 million in 2021 to 23.5 million by 2030. India's gig labor is expected to make up 4.1% of India's workforce overall by the 2029-30 fiscal year. There are 15 million gig workers on gig platforms providing professional services, shared services, software, and other related fields in India. The gig economy might support up to 90 million non-farm jobs and add up to 1.25 percent to the GDP of the nation. Despite its small size compared to traditional economies, the gig economy offers a unique way to match customers and sellers of various talents or services. Nearly 70% of Indian corporations have utilized freelancers for at least one project in 2018. To remain relevant in this open work environment, workers must continuously upgrade their knowledge and skill set.

3.2 B. Challenges of Indian Gig Economy:

This low-investment, low-cost labour market attracts many unemployed youths. These systems misclassify gig workers as partners or mini-entrepreneurs in order to evade any accountability or responsibility, and employers are referred to as tech aggregators, mediators, or facilitators. The lack of social security, poor real income, and growing cost of living are forcing young people to work platform jobs in order to make ends meet.

The Social Security Code is the sole document that mentions gig employment. As a result, they are unable to establish unions with official recognition or get a federal minimum wage that is applicable to all jobs. They are still not allowed to use the specific redressal method to file a complaint against their employers. Additionally, they are not included in the group of 'unorganised workers' or 'wage workers and hence they do not have the right to collective bargaining.

Fairwork India has five principles on which platform-based companies are rated: fair pay, fair conditions, fair contracts, fair management, and fair representation. In Fairwork India Ratings 2023, all participant platforms, including Swiggy, Zepto, Zomato, Uber, Ola, Flipkart and Dunzo, scored zero on the 'fair representation' principle--the principle which refers to the formation of unions to amplify the voices of gig workers. Since the gig economy falls outside the scope of traditional, full-time employment, gig workers usually lack basic employment rights such as Minimum wages, Overtime pay, Medical leave etc. App based cab drivers suffer from long working hours and have to work for more than 10 hours per day. App-based delivery persons earn less than Rs 15,000 a month. The income disparities among the delivery persons contribute to existing social inequalities.

Employers exploit the cab drivers by charging higher rate of commission per ride than the officially claimed amount. Drivers are physically exhausted and at increased risk of road traffic accidents especially due to the '10-minute delivery at the doorstep' policy of certain e-commerce platforms. Many drivers and delivery persons struggle to take regular days off, Issues with Platforms. Workers face issues such as ID deactivation and customer misbehaviour, negatively impacting their ability to work effectively. Service workers have to earn and maintain a particular level of rating. If the rating drops below that particular level the workers will be taken off the platform and are reinstated after retraining.

3.3 C. Why the Gig Economy needs attention?

Lack of job security and uncertainty attached to the continuity of income making it even more reasonable to provide social security benefits like unemployment insurance, disability coverage, and retirement savings programs. Job security is

uncertain in Gig Economy. Gig workers do not enjoy the benefits like health insurance, medical insurance, pension and paid leaves as in the case of traditional employment and they cannot face the real life expenditure during the time of retirement, disability, illness, old age etc. retention in gig work is difficult. As digital platforms offer only temporary assignments, the absence of balance between flexibility and security exists in Gig work.

Lack of access to employer-sponsored health insurance and other healthcare benefits leaves gig workers vulnerable to unexpected medical expenses; prioritising their health and well-being will create a healthier and more productive workforce. Exemption from traditional employment protections creates disparities where gig workers face exploitative working conditions and inadequate compensation. Providing social security benefits will level the playing field.

Without employer-sponsored retirement plans, gig workers may struggle to save enough for their future. Enabling gig workers to save for retirement will reduce the risk of future financial hardship and dependence on public assistance programs. The gig economy is characterised by its flexibility, allowing workers to choose when, where, and how much they work. Designing social security benefits that accommodate this flexibility and meet the diverse needs of gig workers is a complex task. In the gig economy, where workers are often self-employed, identifying appropriate funding mechanisms becomes complex. Efficient data sharing and coordination among gig platforms, government agencies, and financial institutions are necessary to accurately assess gig workers' economic status. However, as gig workers often work for multiple platforms or clients, it becomes challenging to coordinate and ensure proper coverage.

The Government of India launched the Code on Social Security, 2020, which advocates providing social security benefits such as accident insurance, maternity benefits, old age protection healthcare and income security etc. to all employees and workers. The Code suggests the digitalization of data on gig workers. The NITI Aayog's report also suggests for training of gig workers and extending social security benefits to them. However, the Code is yet to come into force. Even though the Code on Social Security emphasized data collection, it is unfortunately yet to be operationalized. Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act proposed setting up a welfare fund and providing social security benefits to the gig workers of the state. The Act also sought to register all gig workers across the state and maintain a digital database. However, even as there is a government portal for registration, data on registered gig workers are not available in the public domain. Only Rajasthan and Karnataka governments formulated policies for gig workers, the Code on Social Security is yet to be operationalized across states

Without reliable and specific data, it is a difficult task to evolve suitable policies and programs for specific groups like women, individuals with disabilities. The data of the gig workers released by the companies are always rough estimates. Absence of regulatory laws and rules creates a loophole for companies, and help them to hide the data. Companies refuse to negotiate with unions and they talk to workers individually. They treat the workers as independent partners, contractors. The existence of asymmetries between a worker and a technologically powerful, financially sound company help to play all sort of plays to their advantage. Many gig workers may not fully understand their rights, raising awareness and providing education about the importance of social security, eligibility criteria, and the application process is a challenging task.

3.4 D. What needs to be done?

The UK has instituted a model by categorising gig workers as “workers,” which secures them a minimum wage, paid holidays, retirement benefit plans, and health insurance. Similarly, in Indonesia, they are entitled to accident, health, and death insurance.

Strong support for gig workers should come from the gig companies'. It is necessary to stop categorising gig workers as independent contractors or self-employed. Benefits from companies should be on par with those of normal employees.

Governments, gig platforms, and labour unions should work together to create equitable and open processes for allocating the cost of providing social security benefits. The 2020 Social Security Code ought to be put into effect as soon as possible by the government.

4. CONCLUSION

It is important to acknowledge the role gig workers play in economic growth by enhancing platform workers' living standards, financial stability, and working circumstances and by protecting their rights. By building a strong professional development, and effective workforce management, gig workers and businesses can maximize the benefits of gig economy. Governments should come forward with strong legislations and frameworks to make the gig economy more viable. The gig economy must become more structured in order to become sustainable and integrated into a country's economy. Gig work models will not stop evolving, innovating, and growing beyond digital listing, asset sharing, service sharing, and managed marketplaces as a result of technological advancements and the rise of artificial intelligence in the workplace. These models will play a significant role in the nature of work in the future. However the workers should update their knowledge, and skill to remain in the business. Artificial intelligence will definitely influence the Gig work in future.

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