International Journal of Applied Home Science
Volume 5 (4), April (2018) : 837-845
Received : 27.02.2018; Revised : 07.03.2018; Accepted : 18.03.2018

RESEARCH PAPER
ISSN : 2394-1413 (Print)

Progress of school education in Uttarakhand: Quest for quality

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ABSTRACT

In a region or state like Uttarakhand, where large number of people leaves their home and earth for earning livelihood, education – is determining factor of the jobs and level of income of migrants. The elementary education of migrant's children is looked after by their mothers, who are already burdened with the enormous responsibilities of managing the family – right from ensuring food security to looking after the elderly. Therefore, it is an imperative for policy makers to look the issue of elementary education in the wider social and economic context and underline the fact that it is the quality of elementary education on which the entire edifice of capability creation rests.

Key Words : Elementary education, Universalization, Access, Enrollment, Retention

INTRODUCTION

For long education has been identified with progress and prosperity of a society. In fact, the spread of education is treated as an effective solution to the problems of economic decline, hunger, human poverty and elimination of unfreedom. In fact education helps in five distinct ways to help to broaden the sphere of human choices. First education has intrinsic value *i.e.* being educated is important in itself, second education has instrumental personal value *i.e.* education is important for getting a job and more generally for making use of economic opportunities. The resulting increase in incomes and economic means, in turn adds to the personal freedom to achieve functioning that he or she values. Third instrumental social value, where by education facilitates public discussion of social needs and encourage informed collective demands fourth instrumental process role *i.e.* the benefit , besides the explicitly educational functions. For example the incidence of child labour is intimately connected with non schooling of children, and the expansion of schooling can reduce the distressing phenomena of child labour. Schooling also brings young people in touch with one another thereby broaden their horizon. Fifth role that education plays is of empowerment and distributive justice. Greater literacy and educational achievements of disadvantage groups can increase their ability to resists oppression to organize politically and to get a fear deal. The redistributive effects can be important not only between different social groups or households, but also within the family since there is evidence that better education (particularly female education) contribute to reduction of gender based inequalities (Drez and Sen, 1995). The overall conclusion so drawn could be that

Cite this Article: Sati, Anita (2018). Progress of school education in Uttarakhand: Quest for quality. *Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci.,* **5** (4) : 837-845.

education is an instrument of promoting equity as well as efficiency. Education appears as a core area of concern in public policies in national as well as international circles. Governments in different countries are pursuing the goal and widening the spread of education at one level and international agencies such as the United Nations pursuing the target of universalizing Elementary Education (UEE) as an important part of human development at other. As regards to scenario of elementary education in India is concern, the story of India's educational achievements is one of mixed success. On the one hand, India has 22 per cent of the world's population, on the other 46 per cent of the world's illiterates, resides in India and it is home to a high proportion of the world's out-of-school children and youth (Kingdom, 2007*)*. Mainstreaming the out of school children in 2009, Parliament passed the historic Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act. It provides a justifiable legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years to an education of reasonable quality, based on principles of equity and non-discrimination. It provides for children's right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. As a result of RTE India has made encouraging progress in raising school participation and quality in the recent years.

METHODOLOGY

This paper *deals* with the overall educational scenario of Uttarakhand state. An attempt has been made to analyze the present status of access, enrollment, retention and learning outcome of the students studying elementary level of schooling. Secondary data of all thirteen districts of Uttarakhand state has been collected from government and non –government sources. Other literature and relevant data was also collected from the field study carried out in the district Bageshwar, Champavat, Haridwar, Rudraprayag, Tehri –Garhwal and Us Nagar districts. The paper lead to conclude that despite massive investment in education – the quality of education in the government schools is far from satisfactory as consequence; large private schools are making inroads wherever lucrative market exists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Uttarakhand state has made tremendous progress in literacy and education. Eight districts of the state has literacy rate more than eighty per cent. Except in Haridwar and US Nagar, male literacy is either very close to ninety per cent or more than ninety per cent. This is largely because the state has taken big stride in universalization of elementary education. There are 15642 primary 4285 upper primary schools in the states. Around 97.34 per cent habitations had primary school or Education Guarantee Schools either in the habitation or within less than half kilometer. Similarly about 98.2 per cent habitations of the state had upper primary schools within less than three kilometers. This expansion of schooling facility has facilitated enrollment to the extent that the state is at the threshold of achieving Universal Elementary Education (UEE) as far as access and enrolment is concerned, as about 99.57 per cent children in the age group of 6-11 year and 99.47 per cent in the 11-14 years are enrolled in schools, with very little difference across district and gender. There have been tremendous improvements in enrolment of children in SC, OBC and ST communities.

Enrolment :

The data reveals that the gradual progress of enrolment of children of 6-14 years and the data

of Gross Enrolment and Net Enrolment ratio, across districts and castes for primary and upper primary are given in following tables. A perusal of Table 1 and Table 2 reveals GER at both level Primary and upper primary is more than hundred and NER is still less than hundred. Although there is not much difference in the GER and NER across districts but social equity in enrollment is still an issue. For example at Primary level, other backward class and Minorities have the lowest GER. At Upper Primary level, the lowest GER is of scheduled caste community. However, the lowest NER both at primary and upper primary level is in the scheduled tribe community**.** Here, it is to mention

Table 1 : Districtwise enrolment ratio at primary level in Uttarakhand

District	Gross Enrollment					Net Enrollment Ratio				
	Over all	SC	ST	OBC	Muslims	Over all	SC	ST	OBC	Muslims
Almora	101.85	104.42	102.00	106.05	100.10	94.40	81.63	95.00	81.81	89.00
Bageshwar	101.50	101.00	100.50	101.00	101.50	99.50	99.30	99.90	99.00	99.80
Champavat	100.66	105.44	111.64	100.00	102.05	99.68	99.79	96.25	99.97	99.75
Nanital	102.31	99.55	100.00	100.31	101.21	99.16	99.41	99.71	99.92	99.48
Pithoragarh	100.56	100.66	100.79	100.86	114.57	99.97	99.92	100.00	100.00	100.00
US Nagar	102.59	103.52	102.91	102.73	104.62	98.78	98.07	97.99	98.76	97.09
Chamoli	102.84	101.20	94.80	99.07	71.43	99.62	90.04	94.10	88.40	85.29
Dehra Dun	99.35	98.99	99.94	NA	99.89	94.90	88.64	95.36	NA	95.03
Haridwar	99.51	99.59	91.53	97.13	99.49	98.27	97.62	NA	96.10	97.53
Pauri Garhwal	100.90	100.90	100.00	100.21	100.78	98.74	99.95	99.76	100.00	99.91
Ruder Prayag	101.24	100.32	100.00	97.60	97.02	99.97	97.99	96.89	97.18	98.20
Tehri- Garhwal	100.59	110.27	118.18	93.80	93.72	99.95	99.96	100.00	99.90	99.36
Uttarkashi	100.55	100.48	100.97	100.23	101.55	99.68	99.71	99.72	99.94	99.71
Uttarakhand	101.11	102.03	101.79	99.92	99.07	98.7	96.31	92.68	96.75	96.93

Source: SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget SSA and NPEGEL 2014-15

Table 2 : Districtwise enrolment ratio at upper primary level in Uttarakhand

District	Gross Enrollment					Net Enrollment Ratio				
	Over all	SC	ST	OBC	Muslims	Over all	SC	ST	OBC	Muslims
Almora	105.57	107.35	103.00	99.89	102.00	99.50	71.82	99.90	85.59	98.8
Bageshwar	101.50	100.50	100.50	101.00	100.70	99.54	99.40	99.80	99.50	99.0
Champavat	101.96	108.83	113.52	105.10	106.00	99.35	94.61	78.82	100.00	77.8
Nanital	100.28	99.30	100.43	100.74	99.82	99.97	99.29	99.34	99.32	99.1
Pithoragarh	100.39	101.95	104.73	108.45	100.70	98.46	99.98	100.00	100.00	100.
US Nagar	102.27	104.35	102.47	104.62	97.88	99.42	97.91	98.13	97.62	84.6
Chamoli	105.32	10.40	94.8	99.07	71.43	93.39	90.04	94.1	88.4	85.2
Dehra Dun	99.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	98.10	93.39	93.39	0.00	93.4
Haridwar	99.36	99.52	100.00	99.51	99.15	99.05	98.20	16.47	98.18	90.2
Pauri	100.72	100.72	100.33	100.25	100.21	98.32	99.87	99.43	100.00	98.8
Rud. Prayag	100.10	102.37	100.00	98.20	98.04	99.78	95.67	96.25	92.38	94.4
Tehri	100.10	102.20	45.00	104.54	129.74	99.79	99.67	100.00	99.37	97.7
Uttarkashi	100.88	100.87	99.86	100.42	101.06	98.82	99.61	99.82	99.71	99.7
Uttarakhand	101.38	94.86	97.42	101.85	102.16	98.82	95.42	89.90	96.53	93.7

Source: SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget SSA and NPEGEL 2014-15

that Other Backward caste and Muslims have sizeable presence in Haridwar, US Nagar and Dehra Dun districts therefore, GER and NER in these districts speak better about these communities. The data indicate that among Muslims in US Nagar the GER at primary level is higher than the district average but at Upper primary level both GER and NER are lowest, has not touched even 90 per cent. In Haridwar district also, in Muslims, GER at primary and upper primacy level are close to hundred per cent but NER at Upper primary level is only little more than 90 per cent.

Despite these there have been tremendous improvements in enrolment of children in SC, OBC and ST communities in these districts. For instance district Haridwar is among the star performer in improving literacy - specially female literacy between two census counts 2001 and 2011. Looking at the figure of enrolment of district Haridwar in 2002, the improvement in communities appears quite impressive, e.g. in 2002 about 7 per cent children both in rural and urban areas in the age group of 6-11 years were out of school, and social disparity in enrolment was to the extent that about 14 per cent and 17 per cent girls of minority community (Muslim) in the age group of 6-11 years, in Khan Pur and Bhagwan Pur block were out of school. Similarly in US Nagar District, in 2002, about 25 per cent girls of other backward class, in 11-14 years were out of school. In the contingent of out of school girls in OBC, Muslim girls formed the largest chunk. In District Dehra Dun also about 25 girls and 19 per cent boys of 11-14 years of Minority community (Muslim) are out of school (NIAR 2003 and 2004) .However despite this commendable progress in enrolment the issue of social, gender and spatial equality even at the level of entrance in school, as we see in the subsequent section is still matter of concern.

As per the data available of primary and upper primary schools reveals that Upper Primary Schools are found better as compared to primary schools. This is because, as mentioned earlier villages in the mountains are scattered, as about 50 per cent villages as per census of 2001 have population of less than 200 person, with the receding population growth rate, owing to reduction in birth rate and also because of migration of people from mountains, the proportion of villages with small population threshold may have gone up further. As per the State SSA mission 694 habitations are without primary schools but only 07 habitations are eligible for primary school as per state norms. In case of upper primary schools too very few only 15 habitations out of the total 569 habitations without Upper Primary Schools as eligible for it. In this situation to provide primary school to every habitation, irrespective of resources constraints is an intricate task, requiring meticulous planning, provision of large number of teachers and above all sufficient number of students to utilize educational facilities' optimally.

Infrastructure :

The state has a modest school infrastructure in place and only around 8 per cent schools have to accommodate more than 40 students in a class rooms. This situation has to improve further as the preparatory period of Right to Education will be over in 2013. Moreover, the census 2011 indicate that the child population in most of the district is on decline which softens the severity of the inadequacy of infrastructure. However the children enrolled in unrecognized private school (which may not get recognition because of the norms of RTE about space, teachers etc.) are to be enrolled in government schools. The deficiency in basic infrastructural facilities, like drinking water, common toilet has been bridged considerably. As in the year 2014-15 only around 10 per cent primary and upper primary school, was to be covered by drinking water facilities and 10 per cent primary and 14 upper primary schools were lacking common toilet facilities. However, provision of girls toilet, (not available in 22 % primary and upper primary school), boundary wall (not available

in 17 % primary and 19 % upper primary schools) and play ground (not in available in 48 % primary and 31 % primary schools) requires more attention. The official data of progress of the status of these facilities are yet to be available, but as the finding of sample survey carried out in six districts of the state, reveal that much the gaps in deficiency of infrastructure including the provision of teaching learning material and teaching learning equipment has been bridged substantially but school with small enrollment are more deprived *vis-à-vis* large school (Juyal *et al.,* 2013).

Table 3 : Deficiency of basic infrastructure facilities in Government and Government aided primary schools

District	No of schools	Percentage of Schools without				
		Drinking water	Common toilet	Girls' toilet	Boundary wall	Play ground
Almora	1431	13.41	0	14.35	5.92	46.19
Bageshwar	603	12.43	0	0.00	15.20	56.05
Champavat	1006	4.17	2.58	15.16	0.00	99.20
Nainital	516	29.65	0	31.61	19.17	28.88
Pithoragarh	963	3.21	7.06	43.52	23.58	19.63
US Nagar	698	1.43	11.31	13.16	20.61	24.21
Chamoli	951	12.40	56.25	25.00	22.12	91.48
Dehra Dun	1698	15.90	7.12	18.29	2.05	66.67
Hardwar	1190	13.27	24.11	3.60	12.81	44.29
Pauri Garhwal	571	3.50	5.60	18.67	0.00	72.68
Ruder Prayag	1472	20.04	12.36	50.27	62.70	39.88
Tehri Garhwal	784	0	0	0.00	6.85	0.00
Uttarkashi	770	0	0	32.83	12.05	0.00
Uttarakhand	12653	10.78	10.51	21.97	16.95	47.70

Source : State Project Directorate SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget 2014-15

Table 4 : Deficiency of basic facilities in Government and Government aided upper primary schools

District	No. of schools	Percentage of Schools without				
		Drinking water	Common toilet	Girls' Toilet	Boundary Wall	Play Ground
Almora	439	9.56	0.00	14.35	9.57	28.70
Bageshwar	204	15.19	0.00	0.00	27.86	56.86
Champavat	409	3.178	2.44	15.16	20.87	51.83
Nainital	193	34.19	0.00	31.61	15.31	23.31
Pithoragarh	386	6.99	8.29	43.52	26.48	10.62
US Nagar	228	2.63	15.79	13.16	13.75	21.92
Chamoli	416	15.86	64.90	25.00	20.82	31.49
Dehra Dun	585	13.33	4.62	18.29	5.12	28.20
Hardwar	445	10.78	36.63	3.60	20.59	34.83
Pauri Garhwal	225	9.33	11.56	18.67	40.46	68.00
Ruder Prayag	555	23.42	15.14	50.27	33.70	48.10
Tehri Garhwal	321	0	0.00	0.00	7.78	0
Uttarkashi	332	0	0.00	32.83	9.35	0
Uttarakhand	4738	11.14	13.68	21.97	18.45	30.83

Source: State Project Directorate SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget 2014-15

Remoteness and inadequacy of teacher :

Because of extensive coverage, declining child population, enrollment in government schools especially in mountains is low consequently pupil teacher ratio is much below 40 and most of the primary schools in the state as per the RTE norms will require two teachers. However, large number of teachers' posts, about 10 per cent in primary and about 12 per cent in upper primary, were vacant. Consequently, many schools at primary (13 %) as well as upper primary (2.4 %) level are single teacher schools. Table 5 and 6 indicate that more post of teachers are vacant in districts which are remote – for example in Bageshwar and Chamoli more post of primary school teachers are vacant and have more single teacher school compared to other districts. In these schools, if the teacher proceeds on leave or goes out for training and any other official job the school is closed. Moreover, the problem of teachers absenteeism in the state, according to world bank study , is quite serious as one third teachers are often absent from school and the state has worst record in this regard compared to many other states and UTs (World Bank, 2006). Moreover, in the remote districts the percentage of female teachers-specially at upper primary level is much less, for example in Uttarkashi, Bageshwar and Chamoli and Ruder Prayag which have some more areas compared to other districts – the percentage of female teachers at upper primary level ranges between 15 to 20 per cent. At upper primary level the issue is more complex as RTE insists on posting subject specific teachers and non-availability of subject specific teachers is equally acute everywhere but in remote areas it is severe. For instance, in Mori Block (District Uttarkashi), relatively remote areas about 56 per cent upper primary schools are without head master and 50 per cent schools were functioning without Science and Mathematics teachers. In this block 27 teachers in primary schools and 2 per cent in Upper Primary are female teachers. Compared to it Bhatwari Block of the same district, which is well connected with national highway No 108 leading to Gangorti adjacent to District Head Quarters Uttarkashi, 83 per cent teachers in Primary schools are female and in Upper Primary Schools this percentage is about 22 per cent. This story is same everywhere as

Table 5 : Teachers in place and vacant position of teachers at primary level

District	Sanctioned post of teachers	Teachers in place	Vacant post of teacher's (in %)	PTR with teacher in place	PTR with sanction post	% of female teachers	% of single teacher school
Almora	2955	2547	13.8		17.41	45.00	22.9
Bageshwar	1223	952	22.2	22.23	22.23	39.19	32.0
Champavat	1084	924	14.8	24.52	24.52	35.75	9.4
Nainital	2271	2236	1.5	21.82	21.48	68.60	11.6
Pithoragarh	2401	2143	10.7	15.68	13.99	59.00	26.8
US Nagar	2941	2541	13.6	41.10	35.41	40.00	1.9
Chamoli	2062	1774	22.6	18.35	15.79	56.65	24.3
Dehra Dun	2290	2080	9.2	18.69	15.83	75.67	14.2
Hardwar	2714	2501	7.8	39.41	36.32	42.32	3.5
Pauri Garhwal	3444	3200	7.1	15.21	15.16	55.13	0.0
Ruder Prayag	1153	974	15.5	20.15	19.28	50.31	11.4
Tehri Garhwal	3031	2899	4.4	20.15	19.28	52.09	0.0
Uttarkashi	1637	1408	14.0	20.26	17.43	55.00	1.7
Uttarakhand	29206	26434	9.5	24.05	21.77	51.92	13.0

Source: State Project Directorate SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget 2014-15

Table 6 : Teachers in place and vacant position of teachers upper primary

District	Sanctioned post of teachers	Teachers in place	Vacant post of teacher (in %)	PTR with teacher in place	PTR with sanction post	% of female teachers	% of single teacher school
Almora	1909	1618	15.2	19.17	16.45	46.00	3.2
Bageshwar	817	732	10.4	20.00	28.00	18.87	0.0
Champavat	834	729	12.6	17.75	15.22	29.50	4.7
Nainital	2118	1750	17.4	14.82	13.83	31.3	1.4
Pithoragarh	1789	1589	11.2	15.53	13.8	44.00	1.1
US Nagar	1573	1467	6.7	31.10	29	32	4.4
Chamoli	1596	1324	17.0	15.72	13.04	15.99	0.5
Dehra Dun	1784	1511	15.3	29.58	26.87	36.72	4.1
Hardwar	921	755	18.0	32.88	26.96	30.25	6.6
Pauri Garhwal	2550	2550	0.0	11.91	11.91	25.08	1.0
Ruder Prayag	1152	833	27.7	14.99	10.84	18.46	0.0
Tehri Garhwal	2311	2168	6.2	15.16	14.22	32.00	1.6
Uttarkashi	1573	1467	6.7	15.07	12.21	15	4.2
Uttarakhand	20723	18135	12.5	17.55	15.36	28.41	2.4

Source: State Project Directorate SSA, Uttarakhand Annual Work Plan and Budget 2014-15

Deval Block of District Chamoli, only 32 per cent teachers in primary are female but at upper primary level this percentage drops to 11 per cent. Compared to it the Dasoli block, well connected with National High way 58 leading to world renowned shrine Badrinath and adjacent to District Head quarters the percentage of female teachers in primary schools is more than 80 per cent. In some district for example Nanital, Ruder Prayag and Haridwar about fifty per cent, forty seven and thirty per cent schools, respectively are functioning without Science and Mathematics teachers. The data as given in appendix 3.19 that in all about 20 per cent schools in the state are functioning without science and mathematics teacher. About 2.60 and 12.30 per cent schools do not have language teacher and social science teachers, respectively. This has serious implication to quality of education. The schools with low enrollment are generally in remote areas and are single teacher school. In these school teacher is left with no alternative but to huddle children in a room. This practice is euphemistically called as multi-grade teaching contrary to it in schools with larger enrollment have better provision of facilities and more teachers, consequently the learning level is suppose to be better. In the regression analysis discussed in chapter 5, the enrollment of students has appeared an important determinant of learning achievement (Juyal *et al.,* 2012). These empirically facts indicates towards the implication in the implementation of RTE. and above these facts indicate that in delivery of quality education size of school matters.

Learning achievement :

These lacunas of educational governance have a very high toll on quality- measured in terms learning achievement of students. The various achievement surveys commissioned by the state show that achievement level of students completed penultimate primary standard in mathematics could not reach even to 50 per cent and in language it is around sixty per cent. The other studies of quality of learning narrates almost similar situation. The Annual Status of Education Reports (Rural) of last five years indicate that in rural schools of the state, only 58 per cent students of class V

could read the class II level text of story this percentage of students with this reading ability increases to about 88 per cent, in class VIII. As far as abilities in arithmetic are concerned only about 34 per cent students have the ability to do simple division *i.e.* can divide three digits by one digit. What is more distressing that the learning level over the period of time as given in the Table 7, instead of improving is sliding down?

In Uttarakhand DPEP was operative in the Six Districts–Bageshwar, Champavat, Pithoragarh Haridwar, Tehri and Uttarkashi 2004-05. SSA was initially launched in seven districts- Almora, Chamoli, Dehra Dun, Nainital, Pauri Garhwal, Ruder Prayag and US Nagar. The DPEP was over in 2004-05 and SSA became operative in all the 13 districts of the state. Base line Assessment Study of learning achievement in DPEP revealed that the average achievement level of students of completed class I (studying class II) in language and Mathematics was 66 per cent and 64.39 per cent, respectively which on the completion of DPEP was 77 per cent and about 76 per cent, respectively. The achievement level in mathematics of students completed class IV (studying in class V) in the base line survey in mathematics and language was 31.55 per cent and in language was about 46.13 per cent .On completion of DPEP these improved to about 46 and 55 per cent, respectively. In non-DPEP, or the initial SSA districts the condition was not much better in the Base line study carried out in 2002, it was found that the achievement level of average class I completed student in mathematics and language was about 66 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively which as per the mid term assessment survey of SSA in 2005, increased to about 79 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively an improvement of about 12 percentage points in mathematics and 16 percentage point in language. The achievement level of class IV completed students in Mathematics in above mentioned period increased from 31 per cent to 43 per cent an approximate increase of 12 percentage point. In language the score of students improved from 45 to 58 per cent an improvement of 13 percentage points. These findings indicate that in 2005 the students of DPEP and Non DPEP districts were almost on equal footing (GOU, 2010).

Table 7 : Level of learning of children students of class V and VIII (Rural areas)

Year	Reading ability (Able to read class II level text of story)		Mathematical ability (Able to divide a three digit number by single digit)	
	Class VIII	Class V	Class VIII	Class V
2010	92.06	70.52		
2011	91.95	70.38	80.58	53.36
2012	93.29	67.59	76.65	42.72
2013	91.04	68.08	76.8	45.68
2014	90.53	65.76	84.32	51.48
2015	87.92	57.99	65.68	33.87

Source : ASER (2015)

It has been found that pace of learning in Uttarakhand, is quite low. The results of ASER study (ASER, 2015) show that in year instructions, out of ten, seven children in language and eight in arithmetic do not acquire mastery, And the mastery level defined is not very high, but ability to read standard two level story text and division of three digit number by single digit, for students enrolled in class III and above in elementary level. This finding does not speak well about the massive investment being incurred on elementary education, and as well to the objective of Universalization of Elementary Education, which lays the foundation of the process of capability creation, as it has been established empirically as discussed above, it is the quality of education, which motivates

parents to invest on education or bear the cost of education. The issue of quality of education of elementary education is equally important to all, but it assumes overwhelming importance in the society- where large numbers of young people have to migrate leaving their home and hearth in search of employment. Their earning and working condition out of their home to large extent will be determined by the skill, knowledge and attitude they possess. And it is a fact that the process of acquiring these attribute starts early in life – *i.e.* during the years of elementary school.

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