Greater Bengaluru : Leveraging the power of emerging Green Banyan Giants for Tourism and Boosting of Green Economy

1Suresh Kumar Gigoo, 2Beena Gigoo 1Director(Operations and Strategy), 2Senior Researcher and Partner 1Gigoo Omni Quality Enterprises

Abstract - This paper will attempt to uncover the beautiful Banyan Green Heritage of Greater Bengaluru. In the Himalayas, though Mt Everest peak steals the thunder but other peaks are more formidable or even more appealing than this well known apex. Similarly in Bengaluru most of the people are only familiar with Dodda Alada Mara, the huge giant located at Ramohalli area. But as this paper highlights below, there are beautiful green giants located all across the megacity but sadly unnoticed and undervalued. Our team has successfully unravelled many giants of superb beauty and heritage potential. Some important ones are discussed in subsequent paragraphs. Our work can accelerate the structured protection paradigm on the lines of ancient/medieval man made monuments lying all across India to our green Banyan giants. But lot of hurdles will require to be crossed and lot many new Environment Best Practices kick-started.

keywords - Banyan trees,Greater Bengaluru,Save the Banyan Trees,Tourism,Emerging Banyan giants,UNESCO,GI Tag

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present traditional way, the heroes of our Economy are all Environment guzzlers and Environment depleters. In the name of economic growth, our cities are becoming the havens for automobiles, bulldozers, digging machines, concrete mixers and concrete and concrete spewing and proliferating ecosystem. Increasingly, our life sustaining friends of millennia, the trees, are now being treated with irritation, disdain and uselessness and "precious real estate liabilities". Real Estate agencies loath them in case they are "in their land".

But the thinking may change with better marketing of the green heritage. Imagine showing a Picasso painting to a slum poor. He/She may not appreciate it but for a connoisseur it may be more precious than gold or a diamond. Similarly, if we create a good buzz about the huge green dividend and aesthetic enhancing potential of Banyan trees, the positive reboot for Environment will easily get accelerated.

The extensive roadshows and campaigns to save the Banyan Trees have previously been reported for Greater Bengaluru¹ region.

Our team has been so overwhelmed with the green giants that we feel Bengaluru must get the status of BANYAN CITY .By getting the tag, million opportunities to salvage and protect our environment will get unleashed. Aesthetic, Clean and Green Economy will emerge and will be the trailblazer and role model for the world.

Green Economy may have been overshadowed by big players and sectors of other parts of Economy.But gradually people are understanding that Environment must be a big inclusive factor in their lives with plethora of ills generated by various players.Some catalysts for revival of Green Trees Economy are factors include aspects of pollution,growing discussions on arresting Climate Change,great work done in Africa where an 8000 km green wonder wall/corridor² is emerging from Atlantic coast to Red Sea. India will also have to be more inclusive in Environment matters.A graphic below illustrates this :-



Fig. 1. Emerging Green Economy is a fact with various factors playing role

Bengaluru's green Banyan tree heritage could be like the Pyramids of Egypt. They could draw millions of tourists for delighting in Nature's wonders. By doing so, a message will go across the world that tourism is not only about manmade structures alone. Nature's wonders can help kick in the Green Economy and enhance the dwindling green cover. It has been described that Banyan trees play vital role in improving air quality in urban areas³.

It may sound like a bad news for construction behemoths but it can reboot/re-green our environment in more ways than ever imagined. But it will require change in thinking at various organisations including UNESCO.

Preamble to unravelling Emerging Banyan Giants: Dodda Alada Mara

Though Dodda Alada Mara, almost 600 years old, is the most famous and well known Banyan tree in Bengaluru, but some of the iconic heritage and precious pride of IT City is spread all over the megacity. The sheer number and spread of these giants, beautifully unravelled by hard working efforts of team from GIGOO OMNI QUALITY ENTERPRISES points to the fact that Bengaluru must have been the haven of Banyan trees in previous centuries. The enabling factors of soil conditions, copious and bountiful rains must have been enabling factors.

Before we delight with the fresh discoveries/unravelling/bring to light/report on the beautiful and majestic Banyan trees all across the city, we call them as Emerging Banyan Giants, we will first discuss about the Titan in Banyan World in Bengaluru. Dodda Alada Mara(Big Banyan Tree).

Dodda Alada Mara

Dodda Alada Mara is located in Ramohalli village of Kumbalgodu Area in Southwestern Bengaluru. The first sight of the tree as we approach it from Bengaluru is truly a mesmerising and unforgettable sight. But once we enter into its giant canopy the Nature's drama is evident in full splendour. The sheer area, number of aerial roots, the symphony of bird chirping, the calmness and tranquillity ,the accommodation to hundreds of species itself gives a strong hint and imperative necessity to protect Nature's best Environmental gift to India.

The Emerging Banyan Giants of Bengaluru Region

Bengaluru is the megacity in India possibly gifted and endowed with large number of Banyan trees. While for a city of population almost 12 million, it should be a thumb rule to have at least 1 Banyan for 100 people, it may seem a tall order today. But with our work in popularising, and later monetising Banyan heritage there may be a new hope to our best Environment assets. Infographic below illustrates



Fig. 2. Emerging Banyan Giants of Greater Bengaluru can revive/boost Green Economy

But Team GIGOO OMNI QUALITY ENTERPRISES have discovered and unveiled more than 75 Banyan trees in Bengaluru and its environs with many of them located in Southwestern suburbs of the bustling metropolis.

Some of these are mentioned below, with selective discussion, on some of them. More details will be revealed in a future paper and book very shortly(The bold text below represents the very huge Banyan giants which can be identified/located from medium distances).

II. BENGALURU:SOUTH WEST

1. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Sir M. Visvesarya Layout, Ullal

Dodda Alada Mara may be the Mt Everest of Banyan trees in every way, but equally great emerging Banyan giant in Bengaluru is this great tree complex in Ullal. It is near 3rd Block close to junction at M V Enterprises paint showroom.PIN Code-560056.

It is like K2 in Bengaluru Banyan world. From the distance itself it looks like a great Green Majesty lording over the road junctions in all directions. The authorities have done well to fence it in all directions. But, slowly and surely, a nominal ticketing entry must be started to enable the giant to live for next 500 years.

But the bane of Bengaluru, the cranes and concrete mixers, are now threatening this giant as hardly a distance away a giant construction project is underway/coming up. Further, in the city where people are too much obsessed to make things concretised and build up, the vulnerability below the tree is already evident. Concrete and paved pathways have already come up. There is a possibility that in future metal swings for children may also come up as is happening in some parks across Bengaluru. The same must be resisted otherwise Banyan tree life expectancy and longevity will get severely threatened and that is a bad news for the Environment. It must with immediate effect become a ticketed entry "green monument" on the lines of monuments of Archaeological Survey of India.Some images of the Giant from various positions are shown below:-





Fig. 3. Great Emerging Giant at Ullal area in South Western Bengaluru is like God's own green sculpture on ground

The Green giants of India must be buffered to ensure their life expectancy is not curtailed/cut/compromised. The Delight and Vulnerability Matrix of this beautiful heritage of India can be represented in the matrix form below:-

Serial No.	Parameter	Assessment
1.	Domination Footprint	Very High
2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	High
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Low
8.	Spread Complexity	Very High
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Medium
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Very High

Fig.4. Assessment Matrix for Sir M V Layout Great Banyan Tree at Ullal in Bengaluru

2. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Karubele, Kengeri Area

Close on the heels of Sir M.Visvesaraya Layout Banyan giant as mentioned above, comes a relatively not much known giant at Karubele in SW Benagaluru's Kengeri suburb off Mysuru Road,PIN Code -560060,Nearest Landmark Our Lady of Lourdes Church.But this is possibly the best in its great spread and with numeour aerial roots has tremendous potential to grow.Alas,the area underneath is being used by fast motorcycles and 4 wheelers.The same may impact its life for the worse.This Banyan giant clearly requires statutory protection and ticketed entry.This emerging giant needs urgent saving as it is almost Number 3 Banyan we surveyed in Bengaluru and its environs so far.





Fig. 5. Great Emerging Giant at Karubele area in Kengeri suburb is Nature's superb gift to Bengaluru and India with its mighty aerial roots in all its directions but it needs statutory fencing and protection to become a future Dodda Alada Mara and vehicular movement under its spread needs to be curbed

The Delight and Vulnerability Matrix of this beautiful heritage of India can be represented in the matrix form below:-

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2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	High
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Medium
8.	Spread Complexity	Very High
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Low
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Very High

Fig. 6. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Karubele, Kengeri Hobli in Bengaluru

3. Super Giant Twin Banyan Trees at Assam Bhawan

On Big Banyan Road coming from the Mysuru Road side when we are prepared to view the sight of Bengaluru's "Green Taj Mahal" (Nature's wonder Dodda Alada Mara) we are rewarded with a beautiful sight of 2 massive Banyan trees in a compound where Assam Bhawan building is under construction. This area is Kumbalgodu.PIN Code: 5600



Fig. 7. Great Emerging Giant at under construction Assam Bhawan on Big Banyan tree in Kumbalagodu area in South Western Bengaluru is indeed a visual splendour like a Raja Ravi Verma painting on ground.But it must be mitigated and protected from Construction chaos

The Delight and Vulnerability Matrix of this beautiful heritage of India can be represented in the matrix form below:-

Serial No.	Parameter	Assessment
1.	Domination Footprint	Very High
2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High

4.	Aerial Root Props	High
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Medium
8.	Spread Complexity	Very High
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Low
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Very High

Fig. 8. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Assam Bhawan, Kumbhalgodu

- 4. Super Giant Banyan Tree-1 at Gerupalya
- 5. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Gerupalya
- 6. Super Giant Banyan Tree-1 at Kolur
- 7. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Kolur
- 8. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Dodderi and nearby Banyan grove



Fig. 9. Great Emerging Giant at Dodderi alongwith Banyan group of trees nearby constitute a great hub of Green Heritage.But protection is imperative.The Tree is a potential future Dodda Alada mara

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2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	Very High
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Low
8.	Spread Complexity	Very High
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Low
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Low

Fig.10. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Dodderi in South western outskirts of Bengaluru

Super Giant Banyan Tree at Dodderi-Banikuppe junction
Super Twin Giant Banyan Tree at Lakshmipura

- 11. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Hejjala
- 12. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Shyanmangala,Bidadi
- 13. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Talaguppe,Bidadi
- 14. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Nelligude,Bidadi
- 15. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Nityanand Ashram(under survey/clearance)
- 16. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Chikkelaru Ramapura

17. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Uttarahalli-Kengeri Road turn

- 18. Super Giant Banyan Tree-1 at Kengeri Near SBI
- 19. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at KHB Colony, Shirke Layout, Kengeri
- 20. Super Giant Banyan Tree-3 at Kengeri Open Ground
- 21.Super Giant Banyan Tree at BGS Hospital
- 22.Super Giant Banyan Tree at Pattangere
- 23. Super Giant Banyan Tree behind Global Academy, Rajarajeshwari Nagar
- 24. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Nagegowdanapalya, Banashankari 6th Stage
- 25. Super Giant Quad of Banyan Trees at Ganakal
- 26. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Ganakal
- 27. Super Giant Banyan Tree at JSS Gate
- 28. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Pattangere-BEML 5TH Stage Junction near Lalith International School
- 29. Super Giant Banyan Tree near Chikkenahalli on Byalalu to Machinabele Dam Road
- 30. Super Giant Banyan Group of Trees near Byalalu Market Junction

III. BENGALURU:WEST

- 31. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Bengaluru University Law College
- 32. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Nagarbhavi Outer Ring Road

This giant can not be missed by any eyes as it is holding its fort at busy Outer Ring Road connecting Bengaluru university with western busy artery Magadi Road.PIN Code :560072.But even its great stature is no guarantee of its continuance of survival as underneath the tree lot of construction work is constantly happening.It needs the statutory protection at the earliest before it dies.



Fig. 11. Great Emerging Giant at Nagarbhavi on West Bengaluru's Ring Road coonecting famous Magadi Road to Bengaluru University area is a visual feast to the eyes and green grandeur.But the construction resources including a bus shelter under the green giant are having a telling effect on the growth of the tree.It needs urgent protection

The Delight and Vulnerability Matrix of this beautiful heritage of India can be represented in the matrix form below:-

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2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High

4.	Aerial Root Props	High
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Medium
8.	Spread Complexity	High
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Low/nil
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Very High

Fig. 12. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Nagarbhavi in Western Bengaluru

33. Super Giant Banyan Group of 2 Trees and 1 Tree at Forest complex Magadi Road

- 34. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Janaseva PU College Channenahalli
- 35. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Laggare/Papparadalya Outer Ring Road
- 36. Super Giant Quad Banyan Tree behind Bengaluru University Library
- 37. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Main road temple Bengaluru University
- 38. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Dubashipalya
- 39. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Dakshinamuthy Temple, Jalahalli
- 40. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Muslim Masjid/Burial Ground at Doddabettahalli, Vidyanarayapura, Yelahanka New Town Area
- 41. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Rajaji Nagar Opp Sidwin Hospital
- 42. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Rajaji Industrial Town
- 43. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Ram Mandira Road, Kaveripura
- 44. Super Trio Giant Banyan Trees at Rajaji Nagar BESCOM Opp ESIC
- 45. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Sandal Soap Factory Opp Yeshwantpur (under survey)
- 47. Super Twin Giant Banyan Tree Raj Kumar Road, Opposite Orion Mall
- 48. Super Twin Giant Banyan Tree at Yeshwantpur Fire Station

49. Super Giant Banyan Tree beside Railway line of Yeshwantpur Bye Pass Cabin below Flyover near Sharadamba Nagar Jalahalli Industrial Estate

- 50. Super Twin Giant Banyan Tree at Basaweshawra Layout
- 51. Super Giant Banyan Tree at BHEL Mysuru Road Gate area
- 52. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Deepanjali Nagar Post Office

IV. BENGALURU:SOUTH

53. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Jayanagar 3rd Block

54. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Jayanagar 40th Cross, Kanakpura Road near Banashankari TTMC

In this case study, we reveal a new threat to India's National treasures. The busy and crowded inner core of Indian cities have space for plush luxurious malls and houses but not the toilets. Here we observe the threat to an emerging giant with toilet construction invading the trunk of the helpless giant. This certainly poses a question.

Can Trees survive in tomorrow's cities where unending work related metros/airports/roads/buildings keeps sucking up our land and now even sacred trees? We may have an answer.Make our trees valued with according them Taj Mahal type World heritage status.We will discuss more on this subsequently.





Fig. 13. Great Emerging Giant at Jaya Nagar 40th Cross at Kanakapura Road Junction near Banashankari TTMC is a dominant Banyan giant in this neighbourhood but its underneath has faced the construction overdose in Bengaluru.A Toliet has been constructed beneath this sacrosanct tree.

The Delight and Vulnerability Matrix of this beautiful heritage of India can be represented in the matrix form below:-

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1.	Domination Footprint	Very High
2.	Aesthetic Appeal	Very High
3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	Low
5.	Canopy Coverage	High
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Low
8.	Spread Complexity	Medium
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Low/nil
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Very High

Fig. 14. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Jaya Nagar in South Bengaluru

- 55. Super Giant Banyan Tree at JP Nagar Royal County Layout
- 56. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Devarachikkanahalli,BTM Layout
- 57. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Ayurveda Research Institute,Kanakapura Road
- 58. Super Giant Banyan Tree behind Brigade Meadows Colony near Load Controls Junction
- 59. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Art of Living Ashrama(under check)
- 60. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Thimmegowdanapalya
- 61. Super Giant Banyan Group of Trees at Uthari EKA Living Layout
- 62. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Banjarapalya
- 63. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Karenhalli Lake Junction
- 64. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Kagallipura Kanakpura Road
- 65. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Pyramid Valley

66. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Maralebekuppe on Kanakpura –Mikedatu road

V. BENGALURU: CENTRAL

- 67. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Lal Bagh, Shanthinagara
- 68. Super Giant Banyan Tree-1 at Central College and University
- 69. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Central College and University
- 70. Super Giant Banyan Tree at V H D Central Institute of Home Science



Fig. 15. This Great Banyan Tree located in Central Bengaluru is a case study of leveraging our college campuses across the city and pan India to give refuge to our Heritage and in turn the Environment

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3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	Low
5.	Canopy Coverage	Medium
6.	Healthy Leafing	High
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Low
8.	Spread Complexity	Medium
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Medium
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Medium

Fig. 16. Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Home Science Institute in Central Bengaluru

- 71. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Freedom Park(under check)
- 72. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Reserve Bank of India Gate
- 73. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Junction of roads at Nrupthanga Road
- 74. Super Giant Trio Banyan Tree Opposite GPO Bengaluru
- 75. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Vidhan Soudha Junction
- 76. Super Giant Banyan Tree at City Court Area
- 77. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Cubbon Road
- 78. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Link Road Infantry/Cubbon Road
- 79. Super Giant Banyan Tree opposite Museum
- 80. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Cubbon Road Police Station

VI. BENGALURU:EAST

81. Super Giant Banyan Tree at Whitefield

VII. BENGALURU:NORTH

- 82. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at CRPF Complex, Hessarghata road
- 83. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Suredhanapura
- 84. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at Nallur Temple

Located in Northern outskirts of Bengaluru almost 12 km from busy international airport of the city is located a wonderful Banyan tree with famous Nallur Temple and Nallur Tamarind Grove nearby. The tree is a green tour de force but is relatively uncared and unprotected. It needs to be owned and protected by statutory authorities.Certain recent treatments done in Telengana⁴ may help revitalize this giant and prolong its life even further.



Fig 17. Huge Banyan wonder in Nallur is so powerful in its draw that even nearby India's first Biodiversity Nallur Tamarind Grove gets only second attention

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3.	Environmental Usefulness	Very High
4.	Aerial Root Props	High
5.	Canopy Coverage	Medium
6.	Healthy Leafing	Medium
7.	Hollowing out Factor	Very High
8.	Spread Complexity	Medium
9.	Fire Protection	Low
10.	Storm Protection	Low
11.	Fencing and Security	Medium
12.	Future Built up Threat below canopy	Medium

Fig 18.Assessment Matrix for Great Banyan Tree at Nallur in Northern outskirts of Bengaluru

85. Super Giant Banyan Tree-2 at KIADB Aerospace Complex

- 86. Super Giant Quad Banyan Tree at Grove in Mylanahalli
- 87. Super Giant Twin Banyan Tree at Yelahanka (under check)
- 88. Super Giant Twin Banyan Tree at Yelahanka (under check)
- 89. Super Giant Twin Banyan Tree at Hebbal Muslim Burial Ground

Leveraging UNESCO Tag for green Assets

World level organisation UNESCO among other roles is mandated⁴ to "mobilising science knowledge and policy for sustainable development" and "fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and culture of peace".

UNESCO Heritage status is a coveted aspiration for many heritage sites across the world. The UNESCO status goes a long way to give structured protection, security and tourist visibility to many monuments across the world. Though they have covered many monuments but many still deserve. Power of UNESCO Tag is highlighted through graphic below.



Fig 19. Graphic highlights the power of a UNESCO tag for Heritage Asset

Time has come for UNESCO to be bold and green minded for our environment. UNESCO must mull and formulate the mechanism to accord UNESCO Heritage to Banyan Trees of India as a pilot project. Later this template can be replicated for full spectrum of trees around the globe. This will be in furtherance of the goal to improve Environment Sustainability. Further UNESCO Heritage status must be more democratised and expanded. Target should be to have 1 million entities. For a world with population of 20 billion (yes world must include in population 8 billion humans and other flora and fauna ,possibly other population entities like cars, aeroplanes etc. as their contribution to footprint in greenhouse gases is increasing exponentially).

Future Work

In this series, we shall continue to unravel more and more Banyan Heritage wonders pan Karnataka and pan India with our body of knowledge and experience from our campaigns across greater Bengaluru region. We are poised to be Great Nation India's Banyanpaedia.

Summary and Conclusion

In the Post Covid-19 world, there is a regular debate and discussion to save the deterioration in Environment and reversing the Climate Change. With President Joe Biden taking over as President of the United States of America, the Climate and Environment topics will again be on everybody's radar. Banyan Trees are symbolic Environment assets of India. In case we are successful(we have to be) to save our dwindling Green National assets as Banyan trees, we can further extend the template of success to other vulnerable green assets. But tremendous change management, co-operation, transformation in lifestyles and attitudes will be the vital factors of success.

Acknowledgement

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