



Paradigm Shift in The Health Reporting After Impact of Covid-19 in India

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Abstract

Health communication involves all effective communications, which can highlight health issues and promote concern related to them. Through Health communication people can make choices about their health. However, it is also seen that many other beats like political, sports, entertainment, crime get much more privileged in media as compared to health beats. But from the last few years, it is noticed that the health beat becoming more prominent likewise other beats. Health issues are always not seen as in the main role in front of us, but only the media is the responsible body that brings it to light. Especially after the worldwide outbreak of covid-19, there has been a significant change in health reporting in the media. Through this research paper, the researcher has presented an analytical study on the subject, using the theory based on media. Researchers try to evaluate the status of health communication in the present scenario and its future consequences. To conduct this study, a systematic literature review methodology had been adopted to analyse the topic's relevancy. With the help of this research paper, the researcher has also highlighted the changes in health reporting due to covid-19 within India. During the study of this topic, the content of various media web portals and online newspapers has been studied during the one year before the pandemic and one year after the covid-19. The objective of this study is to examine the scope of health communication in media after the impact of covid-19 on it. The gist of this research is that the media is like a backbone in the extension of health communication. It is true that priority of health reporting has increased a lot in the last few years, but covid-19 must have a hand in giving it a fast pace.

Keywords- Health Communication, Health Reporting, Covid-19, Pandemic and Health Concern.

Introduction

Media is a mirror of society that shows a clear picture of any event or incident. It reflects the ongoing situation within society. Along with this, it helps to educate people through reporting on different- different beats it may include politics, sports, entertainment, business, education, and health. These all beats are sincerely and effectively covered by various media outlets. Among all of these reporting beats Health reporting is rapidly emerging in the last few years. Health communication is a crucial element in disease prevention and health promotions campaigns because the province of the relevant and persuasive health communication is the primary social process that can empower individuals to take charge of their health" (Maibach et al., 1993). Nowadays people become more conscious about their health issues and concerns

as compared to earlier situations. People want to know much more about healthy life practices and techniques through which they can maintain in various ways. Through applying these ways try to improve their lifestyle and make it a healthy lifestyle. In the present era of time listeners and spectators are no longer only receivers, but they also act as an alert personality towards media content. People use their media literacy sense to get updated themselves. In this way, the media have to put their best efforts into the same field. Media use various ways to make their shows more beneficial and informative for the public. Health reporting is now becoming a major part of various media platforms. In developing countries like Population, surveys show that mass media are the leading source of information about important health issues, such as weight control, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, asthma, family planning, and mammography (Chapman, 1995). In developing countries like India, a health issue is never seen as a prominent issue like others beats politics and entertainment. News articles related to health are rarely found on web pages of different media platforms. But after Covid happened, the whole perspective is totally changed. The number of articles on health-related issues on media web portals increased than before. The disease pattern in India is changing; non-communicable diseases (NCDs) today make up for a greater share of deaths than do communicable diseases (Prachi, 2021). This shows the necessity of health communication in the country.

Research Objectives

Research objectives are derived from the purpose. They set out what is to be achieved in a research study in specific terms. They are crucial in any research since they determine the kind of questions and procedures to be used in data collection, and analysis. In stating objectives, just like in purpose of the study, non-biased verbs should be used. To determine, to find out, to investigate, to examine, to explore, to test, to establish, to differentiate, to inquire, to compare etc (Wanjohi, 2014).

The objectives of this research papers are-

- To determine the relevancy of Health communication
- To highlight the role of Media in Health communication
- To evaluate the Indian media health reporting
- To detect the impact of covid-19 on Health Reporting
- To examined the media dependency theory in initial phase of pandemic.

Research methodology

‘A review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not be used to analyse and summarise the results of the included studies’ (Cochrane Collaboration, 2014).

This research is purely based on systematic literature review methodology. A systematic review is therefore a piece of research in its own right and, by its nature, is able to address much broader questions than single empirical studies ever can (e.g., uncovering connections among many empirical findings; (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). Through systematic research methodology researcher had overgone through the various research papers in the same field. The data collected by applying filter bubbles & retrieving news links from google news. During procedure of data collection papers are searched by applying some keywords like Health

Reporting, Health communication, Health reports. While studying on this topic, various web portals are studied and evaluated the changing patterns of health reporting & their increased consistency rate on it. The time span of this study is just one year before pandemic and post period of pandemic. The both types of paper are taken for this study national and international. Through this research paper, researcher try to highlight various aspects of health reporting before the pandemic and post pandemic period. Along with this also focus on health reporting of Indian media and impact of covid-19 on it. In future with help of this research paper, researchers will get the idea about health reporting relevancy and how it has been affected by covid-19. The research gap of this study, to find out which types of health reports are most publish during post pandemic period by different media outlets. The main moto of this research paper, to enhance the information on health reporting relevancy in human beings. Along with this it also gives light on the role of media in health promotions and during the time of pandemic.

Analysis and Interpretation

In the year of 2020, global pandemic covid-19 is spreaded at large scale in all over the world. Covid-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. The first human cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19, subsequently named SARS-CoV-2 were first reported by officials in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019 (Situation report of WHO, 2019). This pandemic changed the whole scenario of reporting in the health sector. Before covid happened, it had been seen that the health reporting is just part of lifestyle beat and not get much more privileged like others beats like entertainment, politics, and sports. But when covid comes the importance of health beat becomes more prominent as compared to earlier situation and practices in the same field. It is said that people realize the problem only when it comes to the front on them until it seems useless. In the same way, people do not show any awareness until it becomes a major problem like an epidemic. But after coming the fear of death automatically exposes the awareness of health in them. The same situation happened in the time of Covid-19. After Covid, people want to know much more about each & every aspect related to covid. With this also tried to know about various precautions and safety measures that are related to Covid -19, so that they can protect themselves from such a global pandemic. So, the relevancy and demand of health news automatically become more prominent than others issues of reporting. In such a time of crisis, for the purpose of filling the information gap within people, media worked actively in the health sector and try to provide much more information to the people. Hence the role of media becomes more prominent in the same field after such an epidemic.

Health communication and its relevancy

Health communication may include verbal and written strategies to influence and empower individuals, populations, and communities to make healthier choices. Health communication is related to social marketing, which involves the development of activities and interventions designed to positively change behaviours. (Rural Health Information Hub). Through this communication, people make choices about their health and make it more beautiful than earlier. Communication on health also helps in maintaining our lifestyle healthier and overall quality of our life. Health communication is the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individuals, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues. Its scope includes disease prevention, health promotion, health care policy, business as well as

enhancement of quality of life and health of individuals within the community (Ratzan et al 1994). Public health goals can only be achieved by advancement in the same field. In promotions of health communication media played a key role to updating people. It provides a different platform through which information can easily disseminate. Much of public understanding of health and health policy occurs not from their direct experience but through what they read and by watching in media (Rukhsana, 2013). In effect, health writers help in translating or transferring scientific knowledge about disease and health to the appearing in mass media – newspaper, radio, television, and the internet is important as it plays a crucial role in health communication, which has a direct bearing on disease prevention, health promotion and quality of life advancement (Rajiv, 2009). Existing evidence indicated that mass media efforts to improve public health can and have accomplished the following tasks: (1) increase awareness of health problems, (2) raise the information about the health topics, (3) make a health topic or problem more salient, thereby sensitizing the audience to other efforts, such as personal selling, group education or direct-mail brochures, (4) stimulate interpersonal influence via conversation with family, friends, doctors and other experts, (5) generate forms of self-initiated information seeking, and (6) reinforce existing attitudes and behaviours (Schlinger, 1976). So, in this way, the relevancy of health reporting becomes more prominent for the benefit of public health worldwide.

Media can be the delivery mechanism for getting the right information to the right people in the right direction at the right time to promote personal change (Lawrence, 2000). The main motive of media is to inform and educate the people about developments, growth, socially, politically, economically and try to upgrade their health by providing information related to it. The importance of health reporting in mass media is unimaginable, it is a crucial aspect of media. The mass media frequently cover health-related topics and are targeted by those who aim to influence the behaviour of health professionals and patients (Freemantle, 1994). Therefore, qualitative coverage of health issues is much more required. It is a basic necessity for the development of any nation. When it comes to the situation of pandemics then it becomes a more needful and basic requirement. Because people want to know factual & reliable information during in such crucial time period. In the time of crisis, there is greater demand for accurate, relevant, rapid, and impartial public health information by people and a growing reliance on mass media as the main source of information (Gupta & Sinha, 2017). A survey done by the Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press showed that attention to health news ranked sixth in popularity among news topics. It is outranked only by news about the weather, crime, community, the environment, and politics (Andrew, 2009). It shows the relevancy of health reporting and health communication within the people on a global level. It should be truthful and accurate so that people rely on that easily and adopt it in their lifestyle.

Health Reporting in India and Post impact of Covid-19 on it.

The quality of media coverage of health issues in India is a thoughtful problem. This is the major area of concern for the health sector of Indian society. These things can also be estimated through the total expenditure being made by India on its public health sector. “India just spends a little over one percent of its GDP on public health despite an increase in health expenditure since 2009, according to the latest National Health Profile (NHP) data. While India’s per capita public expenditure on health has increased more than twice from Rs 621 per person in 2009-10 to Rs 1,657 in 2017-18, it still remains very low compared to other countries” (Chandra, H 2019). Although there has been a significant increase in this field as compared to the last



decade, still more progress is necessary for the same direction to advance our public health system. “A report by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that 7.5 percent of the Indian population suffers from some form of mental disorder. Mental illnesses constitute one-sixth of all health-related disorders and India accounted for nearly 15% of the global mental, neurological, and substance abuse disorder burden. The treatment gap, which is defined as the prevalence of mental illnesses and the proportion of patients that get treatment, is over 70 percent. WHO also predicts that by 2020, roughly 20 percent of India will suffer from mental illnesses” (Birla, N 2019). Developing nations are still facing problems in providing basic primary health care facilities within the nation completely, public health services, stable health infrastructure, and effective infection control mechanism which results in losses of people in terms of increase in their deaths ratio (GPMB, 2019). This report shows how much health reporting is required from time to time within developing nations like India. So that accessibility range and reaching power of public towards information becomes easier. Through this, they make themselves healthy all the time and take decisions in appropriate directions, so that they also enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

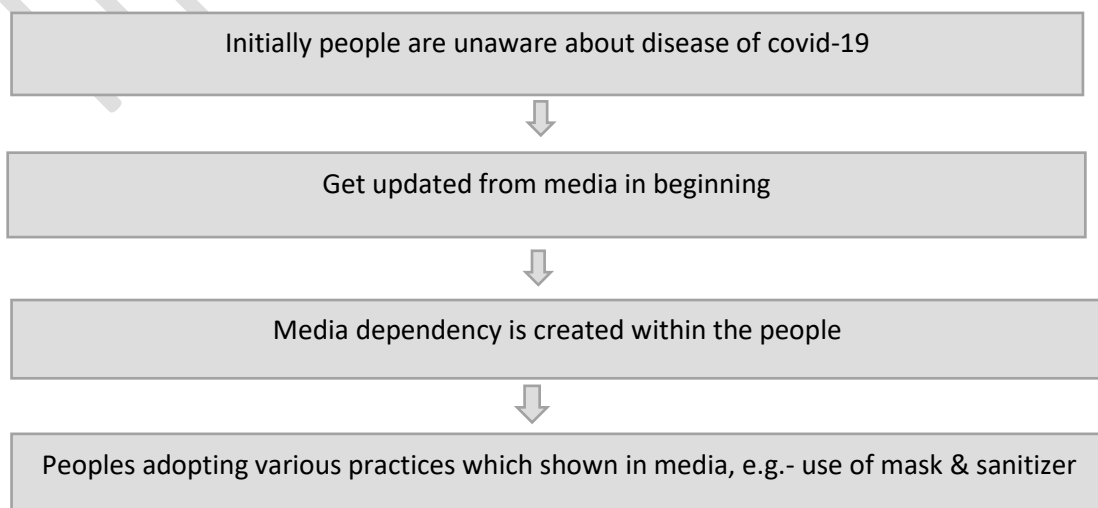
However, in India health reporting also faced many problems like transparency, barriers correct information flow, false information, and many more. Technical and research jargons words are not correctly translated inaccurate manner, so this will generate myths, inaccurate information, and false information created in the same field. In India, whereas no special training program is provided to the health reporters, thus this will result in inconsistency in their reporting. Just for getting higher TRP soon, many media outlets published low-quality news in the same field, due to lack of time, space, and form of knowledge. “Difficulty in translating medical documents, interpreting special terms and expressions used by medical experts, lack of competence to identify sources for reliable medical information, unwillingness/nonavailability of experts for verification of health-related news, and many other difficulties faced by journalists to authenticate their finding while writing medical news” (Vidyapeeth, 2021). It is also quite true that health reporting must be free from all types of biases in all senses so that people can apply that information in their daily routine lifestyle. On a global level, health communication is one of the most popular topics among people. Likewise, other countries from the last few years have also focused on their health communication. Govt and health authorities try to increase the reaching power of health communication all over the country and enhance its practices within the people of the nation as well. In doing so from time to time with help of the media, govt organized various campaigning programs in the same direction for the benefit of the people. Through such programs, they try to educate and inform people about various health diseases. “Media campaigns have been used in an attempt to affect various health behaviors in mass populations and Such campaigns have most notably been aimed at tobacco use and heart-disease prevention, but have also addressed alcohol and illicit drug use, cancer screening and prevention, sex-related behaviors, child survival, and many other health-related issues (Wakefield, 2014).

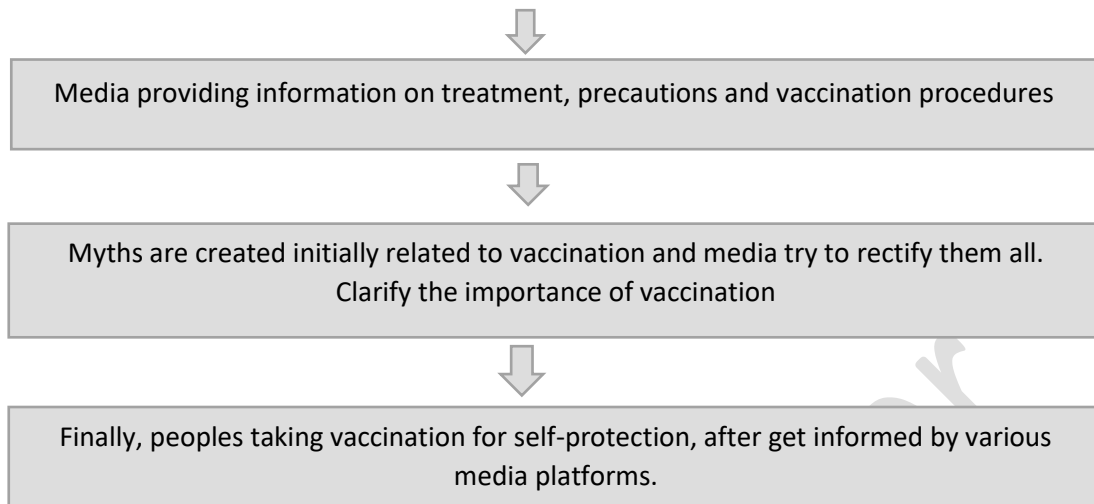
People already faced global pandemic that is covid-19, which taught us many chapters for the future perspective. From initial phase to till the date media played very important role in educating people through their different platforms. Even while covering health issues during pandemic many journalists lost their lives too in India. “As many as three journalists have been dying in India every day out of COVID-19 complications, the Press Emblem Campaign has reported. As of April 26, as many as 107 journalists had died in India, which is only behind Brazil (with 181 casualties) and Peru (with 140). Forty-five of India’s journalists have passed

away in the last two weeks alone, the report notes” (The Wire, 2021). The role of media during covid-19 becomes more important than in earlier situations. Covid-19 is the biggest pandemic for all nations and it turns the reporting pattern of various media outlets and health reporting becomes one of the most searchable beats in the time of the pandemic. There has been a substantial increase in news consumption in India (Banka, 2020; Jha 2020).

The Role of Media in Health Communication

Journalist seeing the world in their own frame and in this frame they have good sense of story selection for the betterment of the peoples. Mass media can be referred to as a technology which helps to uplift the communication system and transfer information in all directions. Media agencies and organizations engaged in promoting a better uptake of research information in clinical practice should consider mass media as one of the tools that may encourage the use of effective services and discourage those of unproved effectiveness (Grilli et al., 2001). The media serves as a backbone in health communication. From time to time, the media through its various dimensions continues the flow of information to us. But in the time of pandemic the role of media becomes more important. Mass media plays a very important role in creating awareness among the general public and dissemination of the govt orders/ guidelines to the health workers, sanitation workers, including the police at the grassroots levels (WHO, 2020). In health communication, it is necessary to use valid content for making a trustworthy consistency within the various media platforms. The basic requirement for health communication is must to be error free and fact checked, all the time so that people use that information in their care and health growth. "We have never before seen a pandemic sparked by a coronavirus. And we have never before seen a pandemic that can be controlled at the same time," A pandemic is defined as the "worldwide spread" of a new disease. Whereas, an outbreak is the occurrence of disease cases in excess of what's normally expected and an epidemic is more than a normal number of cases of an illness, specific health-related behavior, or other health-related events in a community or region (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of data and science to build back more resilient health systems and equitably accelerate towards our shared global goals (Ghebreyesus, 2021). In terms of health promotion, mass media are seen by many to be an all-pervading and all-powerful medium that affects our 'whole world' (Egger et al. 1990). The following flow chart is a better representation of the media's role during the time of the pandemic.



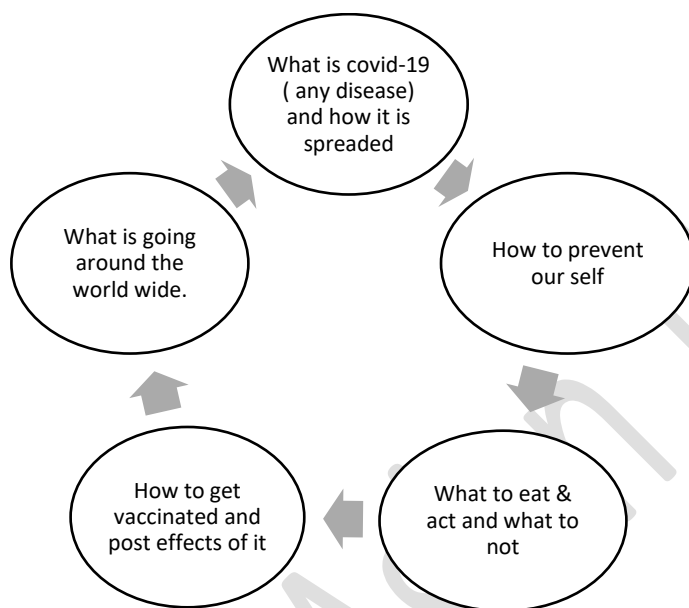


Above flow chart is showing better representations of the stages, which followed by media followed by media step by step in making peoples aware and updated. Media is powerful tool through which information is spread in their maximum speed to the all-geographical regions. During such pandemic situation, media is the only way through which maximum number of peoples can be informed at one time. Media is also worked as a mood changer and create positive environment during crisis. The ever-evolving climate of technology and increasing reliance on mass communication has further reinforced the positions of mass media initiatives. The enormous potential for mass media resources to reach a certain audience and influence their health-related behaviour has become particularly well established (Whitehead, 2000). Media and government jointly worked together in promotion of health communications (Dhanashree et al., 2021). Even people change their attitude after watching something in media. It is noticed that who normally avoid consuming of news in general, are increased their consumption of the media coverage on health news.

Data from the COVID-19 World Symptoms survey shows an increased in preventive behaviours such as physical distancing, mask-wearing, and handwashing as household overcrowding increases. Among people living in uncrowded households, 79% reported trying to physically distance themselves compared with 71% in moderately overcrowded and 65% in extremely overcrowded households. Similar trends were observed for hand washing and mask-wearing, underscoring vulnerabilities due to socioeconomic status (WHO, 2021). Along with this, it has been seen that the no of health reports related to our health on various web portals is increased after the impact of covid-19. Because the insensitive attitude of people towards health after covid has changed now. People are now eager to know information related to health before now. With this we can analysis that, the how much health reporting is required in our life and people are much more concern about their health now, as compare to earlier days of pandemic. In doing so media playing their role very effectively. This pandemic thought us very clearly that nothing is important than health, so people have to take precautions and adopt such practices, to enjoy their healthy livelihood with their family members.

Peoples' Dependency on media in time of Pandemic- Media Dependency theory.

The media dependency theory was proposed by Sandra ball- Rokeach and Melvin De Fleur under their article which is “A Dependency Model or Mass Media Effects”. This theory explains the concept that there is a strong connection is present between the audience, mass media, and the social system in which they exist (Sinha,2017). These three are interdependent to each other and affect each other in many ways. In the initial phase of Covid-19, when nobody knows what to do and what to not, on that phase everyone is totally relied on the media to get information on it. “In India, during the time of lockdown which is enforced from 25th march to 31st May in 2020. In this time period dependency on television channels becomes more prominent. In starting phase of the lockdown, when almost everyone was unfamiliar with this dreadful disease, they resorted to media for their information needs” (Dhanashree, 2020).



This cyclic process is tried to give light on Media and audience behaviour during the time of the pandemic. just like covid-19 which is a global threat, changed the whole scenario of all sectors. This unknown disease initially creates lots of myths within the people but still, the media tried their best efforts to overcome such issues and updated people from time to time. During pandemics, people are totally dependent on media for their daily updates and to fill their information gap. gap.

The impact of novel coronavirus (covid-19) is widespread and will likely shape business and consumer behaviour for months to come. With this work from home and staying home was significantly affected on media consumption, which is rise approx. 60% in many parts of Asia. (Nielson report, 2020). In the initial phase of the pandemic, when people were feeling helpless due to lack of information, it was the media that supported the people emotionally and psychologically. The role of the media is to keep people connected, well informed and entertained. The positive impact of the media was shown in the covid-19 crisis in promoting emotionally stability among the people (Anwar et al., 2020). Apart from this, some others things are also responsible for increasing dependency on media during the time of pandemic. in the covid-19 era, telemedicine is also one of the factors which promoted dependency on media during that time. People became scared of going to hospitals so they relied on television news for their treatment at home safely. Even helpline was also set up, enabling people to

decide whether their symptoms accounted for covid-19 testing, in this way media maintained the norms and promote health care facilities (Anwar et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Health communication is the way through which meaningful input towards value of people's life. A good health is a basic necessity of all human beings. In this way prominence of health reporting becomes more powerful and media helps to promote and circulate the messages related to our health. Media can be referred as powerful system which can help to promote any field and idea or concept. In promotions of health communication media played a vital role. From last one decade it is noticed that media highlight the importance of healthier lifestyle in our life. And reporting various issues which related to it. However, it is not as much in consistency, but still have in it. Surprisingly covid-19 changed this scenario. Generally, before covid-19, discussion can be seen on common health issues in the media, but after covid-19. Priority was given to all health issues. Although the media has the different sway in the field of information flow, but its usefulness increased during the covid-19 period. Media giving more priority to their health beat likewise other beats like politics, entertainment and business. Before the corona period, very few people used to focus that much on health-related issues, but covid has transformed it as if. People started paying attention to health-related issues and became more conscious about their health than ever before. Due to this, it is first time seen in media, that number of health articles & reports are much more published on their various platforms, as compared to earlier days before pandemic. Somehow this pandemic taught us the importance of life and how to make it more beautiful, by adopting some healthy lifestyle patterns in it. Role of media in pandemic is unforgettable, without media it is impossible to get information regarding it. Media making people aware during those times, with various aspects of the same field. Media have a such potential through which it can initiate behavioural changes within the public, related to their health practices. Through this, all the people were able to become aware of various information related to corona and were able to take decisions in the interest of their own safety. In initial phase of pandemic people were dependent on media for their daily updates and issues regarding to covid-19. In this way dependency created within the people on media. People rely on media for their information gap. Scilicet, the contribution of media is very important in the awaking of people with information transformation. Due to this, At the time of pandemic, the utility and importance of media is bound to increase naturally.

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