

**PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN INDIAN TELEVISION DAILY SOAPS AND THEIR
ROLE IN SPREADING STEREOTYPES IN SOCIETY: A STUDY OF ANUPAMA
[EPISODE 1-30]**

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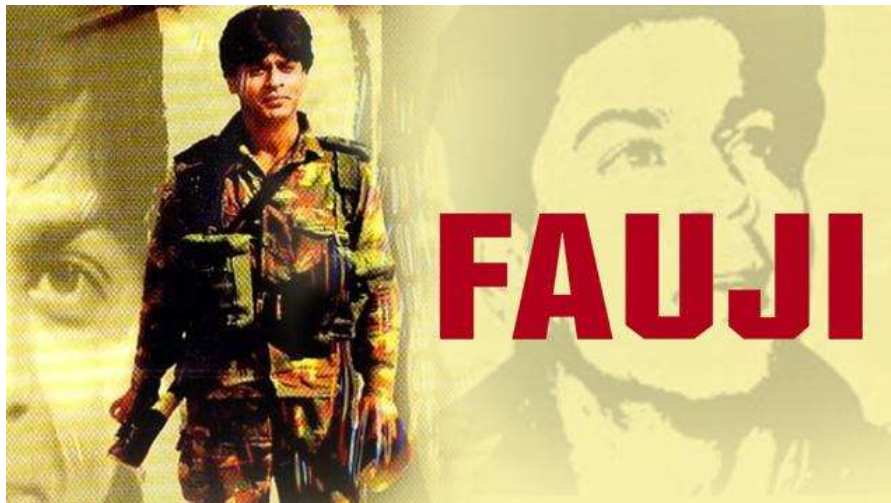
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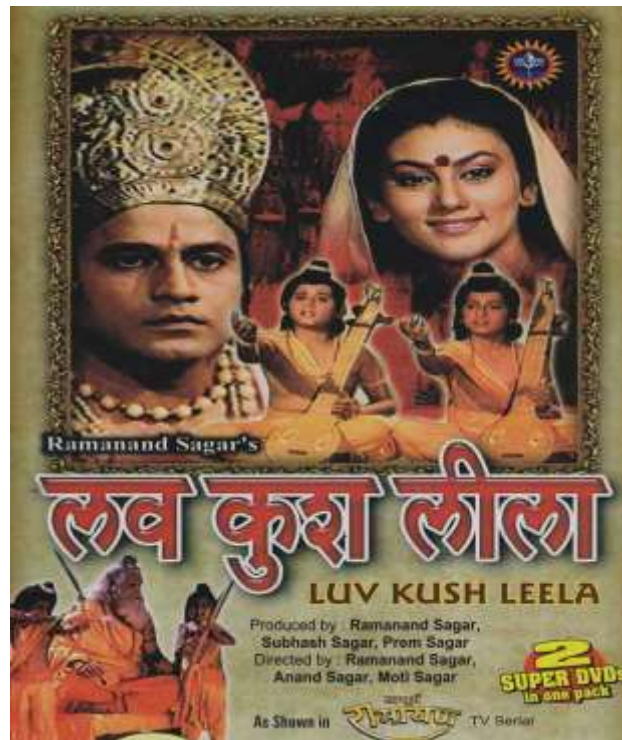
Introduction

Television in India is still the main source of infotainment in rural and urban areas. As per EY FICCI M&E 2022 report Television revenue expected to grow at a CAGR of 4-5% & reach Rs 826 billion by 2024. The report further mentioned that TV ad and subscription revenue is pegged to reach Rs 344 billion and Rs 415 billion in 2022, respectively. The report stated that overall TV connections will keep growing at a healthy pace of over 5% per year to cross 67% of Indian households by 2025. It is a commonly held belief that television has more impact over human psychology than any other media. On 7th September, 1927 first ever television was demonstrated in San Francisco. It was designed by Philo – Taylor Farnsworth, a 21 year old inventor. There was an interesting fact about Farnsworth, he used live in a house without any electricity facility, till the age of 14. In India television introduced on 15th September 1959, it was come with an experiment named as SITE –Satellite Instructional Television Experiment.



It was designed by NASA and Indian Space Research Organization [ISRO]. First Indian television channel was Doordarshan. In Indian television there is long history of TV serials. First Indian television serial was Hum log, it was started on 7th July, 1984. After that serials like Fauji, Mahabharat, Ramayana, Shaktimaan, Luv Kush, Saraswatichandra and etc.came; with time the whole scenario with television changed. Television became a very important part of human life.

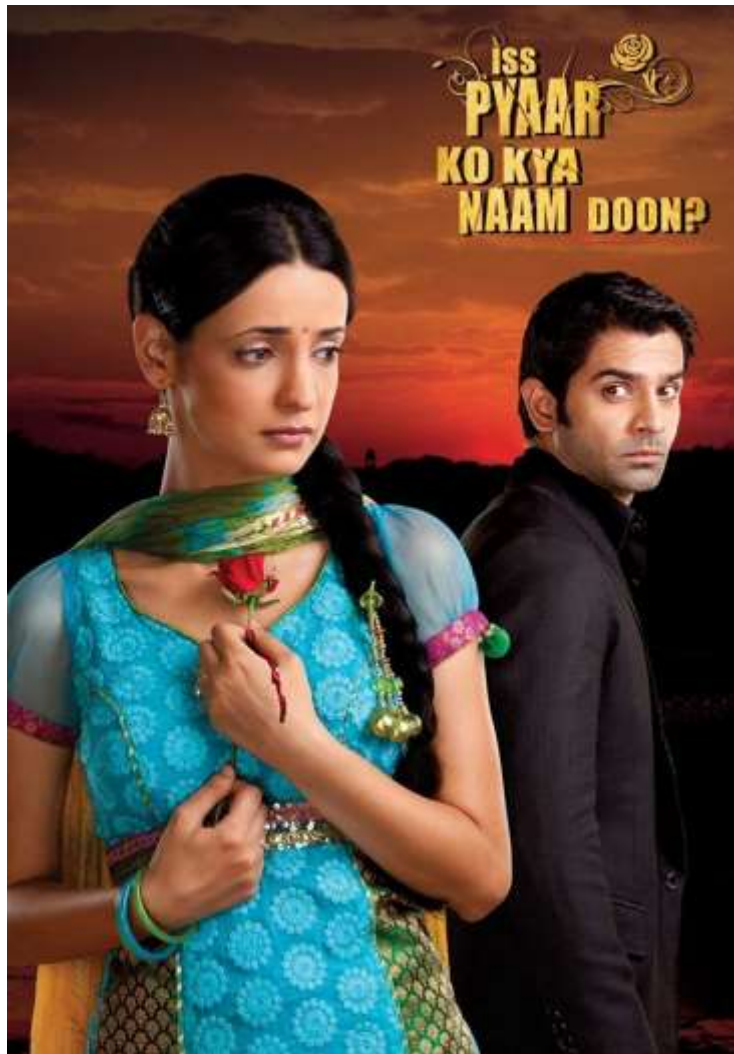






Then in October 1992, the first private channel came in India named as Zee TV. With private channels the need of television increases. Then serials like, Banu main teri dulhan, Ye saas bhi kabhi bahu thi, Bidaai, Saath Phere, Balika Badhu, Iss Pyar ko kya naam doon etc. came and brings people especially ladies more close to television.





There are different genres in serials, with time presentation style for serials change, but presentation of women are still same. TV serials are called as women centric platform but
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they end up showing women in specific type of box. Like from the very starting in TV serials women are shown with household chores only, working women are rarely shown in TV. Also, a girl who goes to temple wears suit – salwar or saari with a soft and emotional character are shown as perfect women. Whereas, women with modern thoughts, dresses, empower, career conscious are presented as wamp. In this way directly or indirectly TV serials creates a stereotype and divide women on the basis of these parameters. TV serials again and again prove that at the end women have are going to end with household chores only. Because of that modification of society became a problem which solution is going and going but final answer is not approachable like Mathematics trigonometry problems. For better understanding of this topic I am going with Anupama TV serial, it is one of the leading Indian TV serial. Anupama basically talks about women's place in society. It shows that society starts from home only.



In this serial Anupama is presented as house wife, it shows the difficulty a house wife face, value she get from her family. It shows that even a woman has a family but still she is alone. There is no one to support, and also a woman is only enemy of another woman.



This serial made us realize that education, being independent is how much important. Anupama is struggling for rights, but still she is surrounded by household chores, as I mentioned in very they portrays women in this way only.



Even her character is strong, she is playing a role of independent women but still her main role revolves around household chores.

Objective

1. To observe presentation of women in Indian Television serials.
2. To analyze stereotypes created by audience due to influence of Indian television serial.
3. To analyze the perception of women about these stereotypes.

Review of Literature

1. **Reality or myth – Presentation of women in Indian TV Serials** by **Debanjali Roy**. Analyzed the two serials that are ‘Balika Vadhu’ and ‘Uttran’ serials telecasted over colors channel. She describes the two different societies, one from rural and other from urban; but the portrayal same ideology of women is same. She defines that how TV serials shows a pitiable, silent, or a girl who goes temple, wears traditional dresses as ideal girl or can say ‘sanskari’. On the other hand, girl with modern thought lifestyle, dresses and etc. as vamp in the show. Like who is just listening to everyone and still she is silent is the heroine. Indian TV serial talks about modern reality but then portrays characters in a very unrealistic way. She explains this by taking examples of Anandi and Gauri from Balika Badhu and Icchha and Tapsya from Uttaran. These examples show that how these TV serials being biased towards specific characters. Indian TV serials present women either as pitiable ‘bahu’ or interpolated ‘saas’ or the home breaker ‘bahar wali’. In reality it is not like at all. She do believe that TV serials should stop showing this and they need to show the real time women, in that way they present reality of today’s time which is required.
2. **Impact Of Indian Television serials on working women – A study of common Prototypes** by **Lakshmi R** represents the difference between a good women and villainous which are commonly show in TV serials; they leaves a strong impact over women in society as well as image of women in society. She also proves that the characteristic of ideal women according to these serials are that she should sacrificing, and extremely innocent. Whereas, women with villainous character are presented

revenge – seeking and wickedness. At the end prototype view obstruct women's empowerment to some minor extent. Viewers get both good and bad elements in serials and comes up with both reality and fantasy of Indian TV serials.

3. **Women Representation in Entertainment World – A study on the Soap Operas in Indian Private TV channels** by **Dr. Anamika Ray** accepted that soap operas or serials are more prominent over Indian Television and they have a very strong impact over people. She represents the dream family concept came from TV serials and now people want those types of families, which includes caring husband, loving kids and extremely rich family. TV serials emphasised women that women are made for domestic work, plays the role of traditional mother, wife and sister etc. with sacrificing nature and innocence on next level. Hardly, any TV serial show women as strong, independent and competent. However, sometimes women are represented as strong character but still her role revolve around household chores and all those traditional activities. Also, even they are strong they are depend upon men to take decisions for them as well. Portrayal of Indian women in television in which they are shown weak and incapable directly or indirectly it affects the confidence of Indian women.
4. **Picture of women as shown in Indian Television soaps and its impact on society** a study by **Suparana Dhar** mentions that Indian TV serial have both positive and negative impact over audience. Characters of hero heroine or the villain/ vamp both affect respondent mind.
5. **Representation of women in TV and films in India** by **Fareed Ahmed**, explained that women in Indian films and serials are presented as prop. They are just for objectification purpose and fulfillment of men desires. She emphasized that now it is high time that makers should not use women just for objectification. Also, it our duty as audience to raise our voice against this hypocrisy.

Research Methodology

The methodology for the research paper is content analysis of first 30 episodes of Anupama. The content will be analyzed as per the following categories:

Content categories

1. Positive presentation of women
2. Negative presentation of women
3. Roles and responsibilities of women
4. Importance of education

Content Analysis

1. Positive presentation of women -

The story of ‘Anupama’ revolves around Anupama the lead actress, which is played by Rupali Ganguly. As she is the lead so her character is presented as goddess, not a single flaw is presented in her personality, which is not possible in human beings. Her character is silent, homely, not so educated; even if someone taunts her she doesn't reply but she helps them unconditionally. ‘Anupama’ focuses that house makers has also their

lives. This show is a step towards women empowerment, but still presentation of women is kind of 90's time.



[Episode – 1]

She does all those things which an ideal should do, she prays for her family in early morning, do all household chores. There are number of members in her family but she is the only who takes care of all of them.



[EPISODE – 2]

This scene comes after Anupama's husband humiliates her, as she was late. She was out for a reunion with her friends because of that she was late. But in this scene she came to him to feed him. This scene gives a feel that whatever happens but it is a duty of woman to feed her husband.



[EPISODE – 8]

This scene from episode 8 shows that whether a mother wants to give a surprise to her kids, you have to give it by permission of your whole family. Here, Anupama's husband is angry with her because she goes to her daughter's school competition to give her a surprise without informing her mother-in-law, father-in-law and her husband. But she kept silent even she was not wrong, there is right of both mother and father on their kids, so it's her right to plan something for her kids.



[EPISODE – 9]

Anupama is not well educated but she has other talents and because of her one of the talent of cooking she got a job offer. In the first instance, because of that job offer there is thunder in the house but then, her husband himself asks her if she wanted to do this or not. She has capability to get a job offer from front, but still she is seeking for permission of family.

2. Negative presentation of women

Indian TV serials are mostly female centric, in which the lead are female and the villain characters are also females; they are called as vamps of the serials. Mostly these vamps are portrayed as modern, open minded, opinionated, independent and liberal women. In "Anupama" Kavya is shown as vamp, mean to say in negative role. These vamps are shown as like they are not human, because they are being portrayed as emotionless and with evil thoughts. Same goes with Kavya, here she has an affair with Anupama's husband. But again it's not only she

is who is in affair, Vanraj is also there. But because she is woman, so she is considered as only guilty.



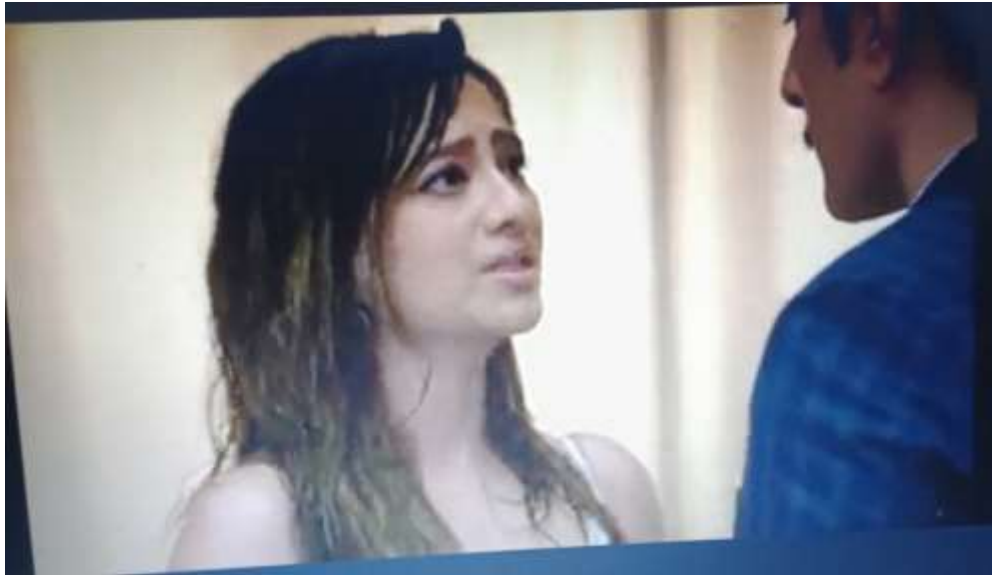
[EPISODE – 4]

In episode four Kavya the modern and beautiful vamp of the show enters in the story. She has a negative role in the show, and interestingly she has an affair with Anupama's husband. So here, the game of one man and two women starts. This is a trend in Indian TV serials



[EPISODE – 7]

In this particular scene, Kavya is a bit insecure as Anupama's husband praises his wife on the stage as she won a trophy. So, she done a kind of manipulation with him by saying that that he is more towards Anupama than her. So as per Indian dramas a woman can do gossip or can manipulate a man, this is only a job left behind for a working woman like Kavya.



[EPISODE – 8]

The character of Kavya is presented as same as old vamp characters, which have an affair or they want to be in relation with lead actress' husband. In this scene too she is just trying to fully fit in Anupama's husband's life by replacing her.

3. Roles and responsibilities of Women

Indian TV serials most of the time portray that women roles and responsibilities revolve around kids, household chores only. In “Anupama” also these responsibilities are shown in the same manner. Whether she is talented, she have different capabilities but still she plays the role of mother, daughter-in-law, wife and a homely woman, whose responsibility is to take care of family and house.



[EPISODE – 1]

This is the very first episode and in this particular scene Anupama's husband is angry to Anupama as she was late to home. He explained the role and responsibilities of a woman.

Responsibilities like taking care of family, cooking for them, always being available for them. It makes realise that there is no personal space in a woman's life.



[EPISODE –5]

In this scene Anupama's father – in – law and her son cheer up Anupama, as she was sad because her daughter's statement made for her. But they both make her realize that those responsibilities which she carries in a beautiful way, no one can carry them in such beautiful manner. They both somehow give respect to the role played by Anupama and responsibilities carried out by Anupama.



[EPISODE – 9]

In this scene everyone is talking about Anupama's younger son's future and studies. Each and every person sitting on the table is contributing in the discussion, but there is Anupama who is just serving them food, taking care whether they want something or not. Even though, she is mother but she didn't contribute anything. It clearly shows that what responsibilities

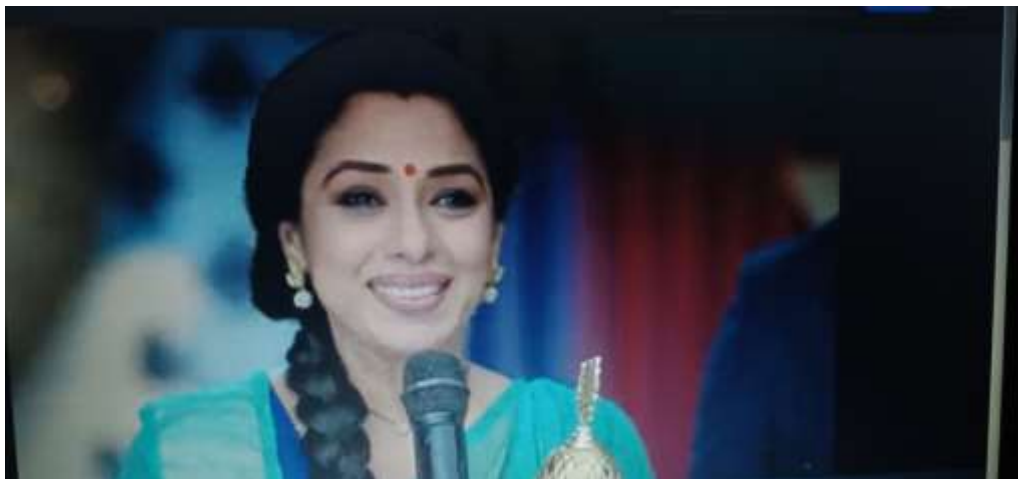
she has. She participates in households chores or every homely activity but she don't participate in matter of her son's future.

4. Importance of proper education



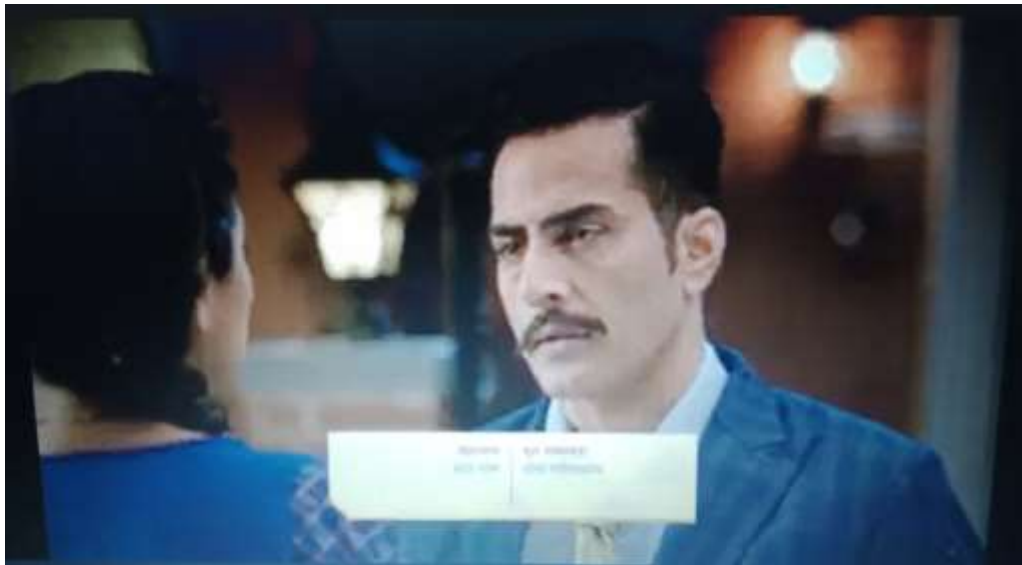
[EPISODE – 5]

As Anupama don't know how to speak English, her daughter somehow hurts her by saying that Anupama can't speak English so she can't come to her school. Because it will be shameful for Anupama's daughter to introduce her mother to her friends, teachers etc. This is a big slap on the face of people who don't support woman education. This part comes up with a great message in itself. Even kids question their parents about their qualification; in answer to this mostly women stay silent.



[EPISODE – 7]

In this scene of Episode seven, Anupama won trophy in her daughter's school. As, she participated in her school's cooking show. There were many participants who have made western dishes. But Anupama goes for Indian food, and she won. This scene leaves a realization factor that women like Anupama can do anything but because they don't get proper education and they are not able to explore the world they lag behind.



[EPISODE – 9]



[EPISODE – 10]

These two scenes from episode nine and ten are basically about Anupama's husband's and Kavya's affairs. In both the scenes she is being made fool by her husband. In first, one her husband comes after meeting Kavya and talked with Anupama in a rude manner. In episode ten, Anupama's husband brings Kavya at home, by introducing her as a good friend. According to storyline she is becoming fool from long time. It means that due to blind trust on her husband she is not aware about their affair, it happened because she don't explore the outer world well.

Conclusion

The study has focused on the presentation of women in Indian TV serials with reference to "Anupama". This serial basically talks about house maker's life, their aspirations and their feeling. In very first category we studied presentation of positive woman, in which it is being observed that a woman with positive role is always shown in Indian traditional sarees, suit salwars etc. Also the heroine is "Sanskari" and 'homely', here by the meaning of word Sanskari is that woman who speaks less, visits temple, take care of family, busy with household chores.

On the other hand, a modern woman is considered of bad character, which is vocal, educated and working. These characters are presented as vamps. Like why they define women in different category, they are making a show like "Anupama" which revolves around women empowerment, it shows that house maker have also their dreams, ambitions; but still they pick up the same type of role, which we have seen number of times in TV serials.

These characterization effects audience thoughts badly, mostly woman. They assumed that women who are modern, they don't have good character. It is because in India still people have a different bonding with television, and TV serials are considered favorite shows of women. And that's reason why mostly social taboos are created by women. Women by herself defined the characteristics of good woman and a bad woman .

Talking about role and responsibilities of women, then by the reference "Anupama" it seems that women roles and responsibility revolves around family and their take care. Whether, the producers show an empower woman, they make a boundary of household chores around that woman. No matter how strong your personality is, how bold you are, how independent you are, you have to do household chores because this is a gift given by God to you. Not a single Man is portrayed taking care of house, cooking food, feeding kids in TV serials, always women are seem to done these jobs; which in a way creates a picture in mind of audience that these works are for women, not for men.

Education has a very important role in everyone's life. For women education is as important as for men. Mostly women face humiliation because they are not well educated. Same shows in this serial. Anupama the lead actress, she don't know how to speak English, so her own daughter questions her capability and refuses to take Anupama school. Also, because Anupama have not explore the world, because she leaves education after marriage and she never tries to work, that's the reason she never catch the smell of her husband's affair. It is true these type of women we find in reality. Somehow, the part of importance of education is presented in a good way in this serial.

Media is considered as mirror of society, but if mirror is not showing the proper reality then surely it would be going on wrong path. TV serials are part of media so it is duty to show reality too, with negative aspect they should show positive aspect too. Most of women in small town, rural areas, still believe that things shown in TV serials are true. So it is big responsibility on the shoulder of serial makers, as they are contribute a lot in shaping the opinion of people.

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