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Digital Versus Classical Teaching-Learning: Role of Library in Pre and Post Pandemic Era, A Case Study from Rammohan College

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Abstract: ***This research work emphasizes the importance of libraries in the digital age, both before and after pandemics. According to the report, in the post-pandemic age, libraries simply cannot afford to stop fulfilling their official obligation to provide people with information. Through a variety of online and web sources, the libraries gave teachers, students, and researchers access to vital information and knowledge sources during the lockdown. According to the study, the function of libraries is unchanged from the pre-pandemic to the post-pandemic period.***
Keywords: Libraries, COVID-19, Teaching-Learning, Pandemic, Books, Digital Learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

The main information sources for instructors, researchers, and students are the academic libraries, which are located in colleges and universities. Students from all educational disciplines rely on libraries to provide them with the most relevant and trustworthy sources of knowledge. To meet users' information demands, libraries keep a vast amount of books and journals on hand (Kalra and Singh, 2009). In addition to books and journals, certain information searchers are drawn to other periodicals, reports, and newspapers (Baker & Evans, 2011). Newspapers, periodicals, and booklets are readily available for general library customers, prepared to provide seekers with current and reliable information. There has been a recent surge in scientific inventions (Nicolson, 2017). The information seekers' goals and requirements have evolved. Mobile phones, tablets, and other new information-delivery devices are becoming commonplace. Still, throughout the ages, libraries have managed to preserve their relevance and authenticity. Historically, online learning has been seen as an alternate route, especially for adult learners looking for chances for higher education. But since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, teachers and students at all educational levels have had to swiftly adjust to taking classes virtually (Barbara, 2021).

A. The Crisis of the COVID 19 Corona Virus

The advanced corona virus, known as COVID 19, was initially discovered in China. The fact that COVID 19 is far more deadly than the typical corona virus sets it apart from the corona virus that was previously in existence. While the normal corona virus causes cough, colds, and mild fevers, the COVID-19 has more serious side effects and can even be fatal in some situations. The elderly and those with pre-existing chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, hypertension, tuberculosis, etc., are more vulnerable to this virus and have a higher likelihood of becoming infected. From November 2019 to June 2020, it expanded throughout 110 nations worldwide, beginning in Wuhan, China (WHO).

Expert confirmation has been given that the COVID-19 virus is contagious. It spreads from one person to another when that person's mucus or saliva, particularly from speaking, coughing, or sneezing, reaches another person or people. There is a very high risk of the virus spreading if the infected person's mucus or saliva sits on his hands or any other part of his body and comes into contact with another person. The World Health Organization reports that COVID-19's R0, a mathematical measure of a disease's level of infection, is 3.77. According to medical science jargon, an individual infected with COVID-19 has the potential to infect 3.77 people who come into touch with them. As such, in order to manage the spread of COVID-19 from an infected individual to other others, several nations began formulating plans for doing so. Every nation closed down its public areas where crowds could congregate and the risk of the virus spreading worsened.

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B. Impact of COVID-19 on Libraries

Libraries were quickly closed when it was declared that all public spaces would be closed indefinitely. There was no prior notice given to the library staff about the temporary but abrupt closure, therefore no preparations was made for handling the current situation. The users had been given the books for a set period of time, but they could no longer be returned. Books, magazines, and other goods weren't yet in their proper places. It was impossible to maintain the sanitation and hygienic conditions of the libraries because of the sudden and indefinite shutdown. More concerning thing was, the inability to meet the demands of patrons or information searchers raised the possibility that libraries would be thought to be nonexistent during pandemics. Maintaining the relevance of libraries both during and after crises has proven to be a tremendous problem for librarians and other library personnel to this day (Brar, Singh, and Kaur, 2019).

C. Role of Libraries during the Pandemic of COVID-19

During the COVID-19 crisis, students make up the largest and most defenceless group of victims. Lockdowns were imposed suddenly across the nation, leaving students with little time to organise gathering information from alternate sources and consolidating their knowledge during the lockdown. Students rely on libraries a lot. The needed books are given to students at their library pass-books for additional reading. Additionally, pupils read in the library's reading halls. Students are currently denied access to the most dependable and common source of information during lockdowns and even curfews in several regions of the world. In light of this strange and unwanted situation, librarians and other library employees play a critical role in meeting the informational needs of students associated with certain libraries. The information technology era is the one we live in now. Given their awareness of the latest advancements in information science, almost all libraries have created a variety of web-based and online resources for information and knowledge (Singh, Kaur, and Brar, 2017). As things are right now, students can get free access to e-books. These days, the libraries are connected to one another via the INFLIBNET or another system. For this aim, a database of pupils connected to the library can be prepared. Students can be informed about online or web sources for acquiring data relating to their studies after their email addresses or What's app numbers are obtained(Hodges, Moore, and Lockee, 2020).

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Rammohan College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India is having a well equipped library with more than 28000 books in collection. The regular users include students, teachers and non teaching staffs of the College. A systematic data has been collected from library, on various parameters of “use of library as resource centre”. The data has been collected focusing the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic period.

III. RESULTS

Infrastructure investment on book purchase

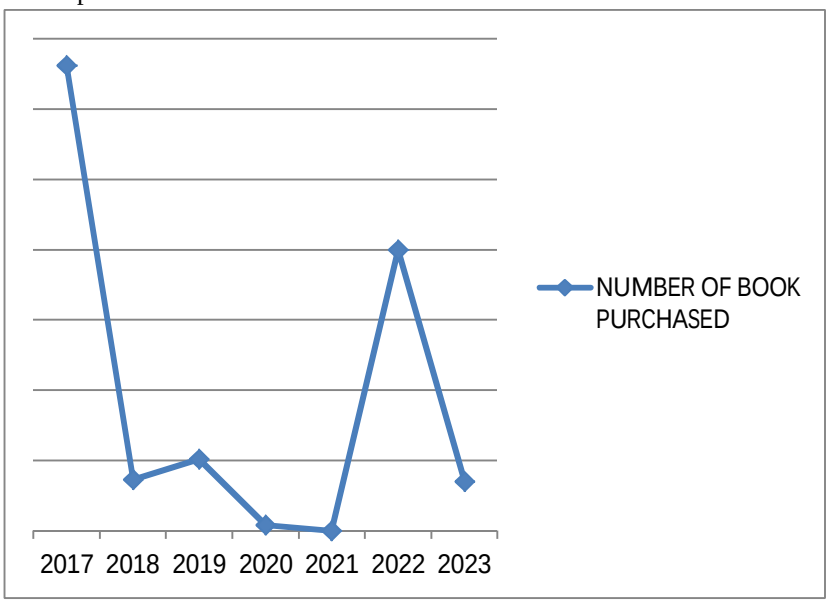


Fig1. Investment on library by College Authority

The investment pattern depends upon the introduction of new syllabus or change of syllabus and the space of library. It has been found that demand of purchase of new books has been increased in post pandemic period.

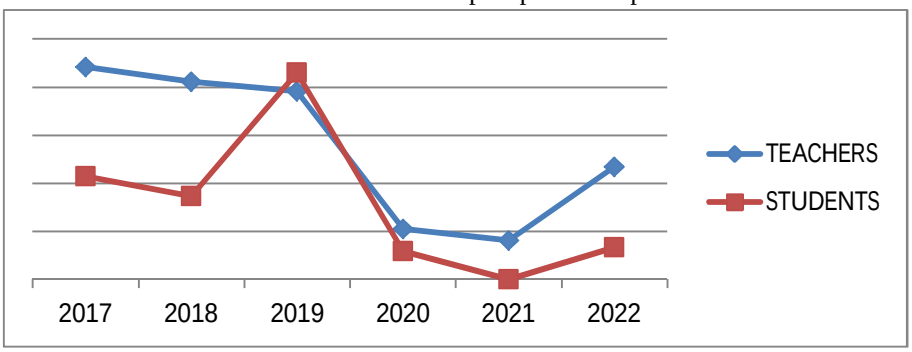


Fig.2. BOOKS ISSUED TO TEACHERS & STUDENTS FOR REFERENCE PURPOSE (Table issue)

Highest number books issued to teachers in the year of **2017** , highest number of books issued to students in the year **2019** and gradually the number is declining and in the pandemic era where only 163 teachers avail the reference service and only one students access the reference service in the Central Library. But as the figure shows, the graph is once again moving upward after the pandemic phase, when all colleges reopened to their new regular circumstances.

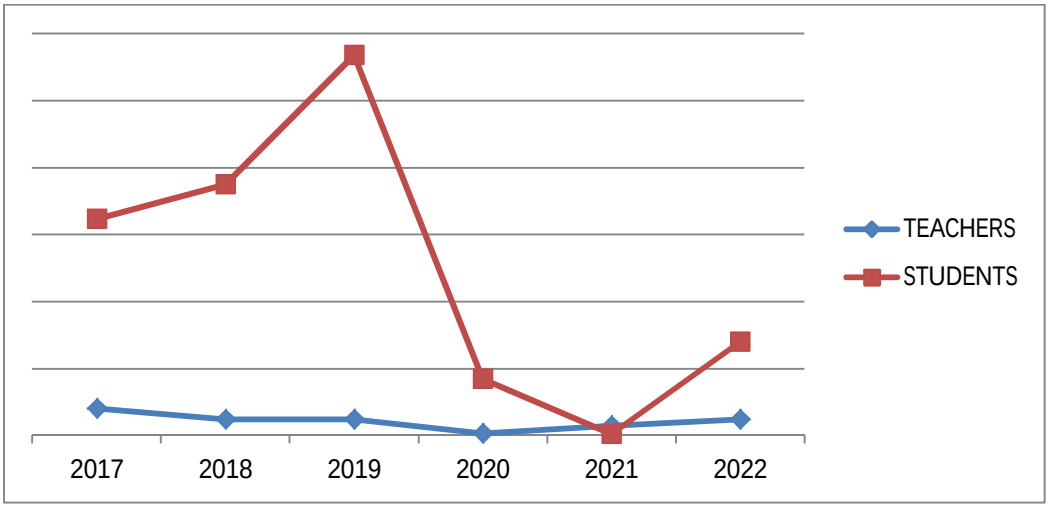


Fig.3. BOOKS ISSUED TO TEACHERS & STUDENTS FOR LENDING PURPOSE (HOME ISSUE)

In case of Home Issues, it has been found that the highest number books issued to students in the year of 2019 and highest number of books issued to teachers in the year 2017 and gradually the number is declining and in the pandemic era where only 6 teachers and 168 students avail the lending service from the Central Library. But as the figure shows, the graph is once again moving upward after the pandemic phase, when all colleges reopened to their new normal phase.

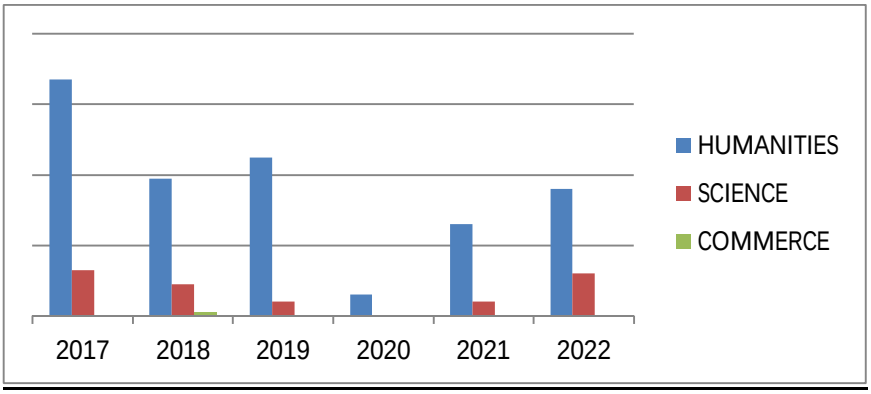


Fig. 4. Pattern of Book Issued by the teachers of Different Streams (Home Issue)

Over the years of study, it has been found that, the subjects that is frequently used by faculty for home issue purposes are from humanities followed by science and commerce. This pattern is dependent on the presence of books in the departmental seminar library.

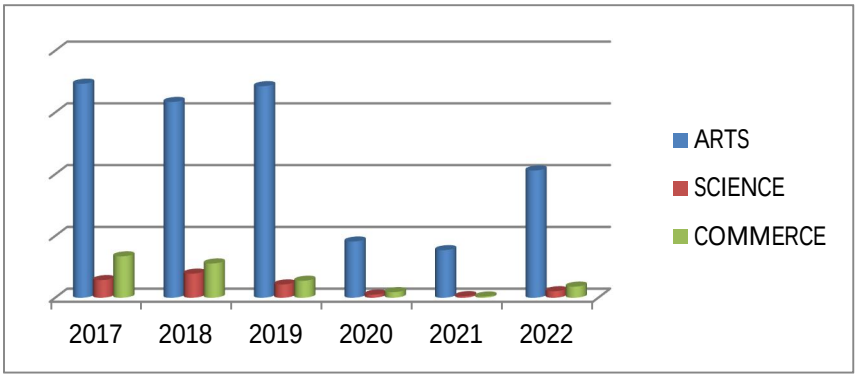


Fig. 5 Pattern of Book Issued by the teachers of Different Streams (Table Issue)

From 2017 to 2022, the subject that is frequently used by faculty for reference purposes is humanities and after that commerce books are highly issued but science books issued in a very low graph.

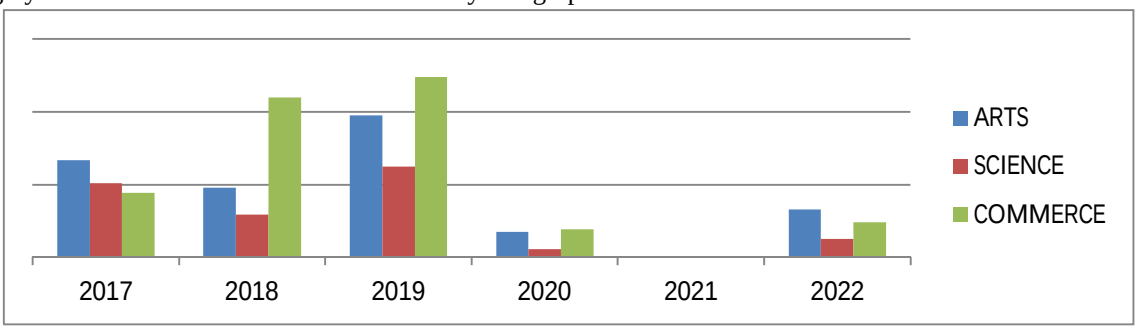


Fig.6. SUBJECT THAT HOME ISSUED HIGHEST IN NUMBER AMONG STUDENTS [Home Issue]

Figure 6 shows that over the six years of study, from 2017 to 2022, Commerce books are the most used/ home issued by students, followed by humanities but science books are home issued by very less number of students.

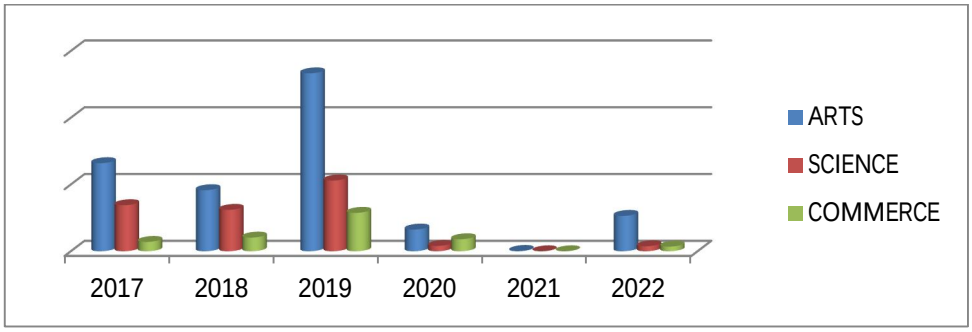


Fig. 7. SUBJECT THAT REFERENCE ISSUED HIGHEST IN NUMBER AMONG STUDENTS (Table Issue)

Figure 7 shows that over the six years of study, from 2017 to 2022, Humanities books are the most used/ issued by students as reference, followed by Bio-science and Physical Science Students but in case of reference books issues, the commerce stream students are lowest in number.

IV. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has frequently put our social norms and routines to the test, forcing us to change our way of life and shift a lot of our activities online. However, recent polls indicate that college students' reading habits reveal an astonishing degree of persistence.

Despite the adjustments brought about by the pandemic, many college students have kept or even improved their reading habits. It's shocking to learn that, in the era of social distancing, students spend a significant amount of time in front of screens for communication and enjoyment in addition to their online coursework. It would have been natural to anticipate a reduction in traditional reading activities given the emphasis on technology.

Research, however, indicates that students have resorted to the pages of books as a source of solace and an escape from their social isolation and anxieties associated with the pandemic. In addition to being a great way to decompress, it has given consumers a respite from screen-based activities and given them greater freedom to let their imaginations run wild.

V. CONCLUSION

Teachers and students alike have benefited immensely from the college libraries' shift to digital resources in maintaining their reading habits. Libraries should provide users with access to reading lists, research papers, and academic articles through digital and online archives. They should also make sure that users have the tools they need to pursue further education and personal development.

A good number of e-books, e-journals, and other databases are accessible to users via links on the college website. in order to make these online resources easily accessible to anybody at any time. To support this development, regular training sessions or workshops on "How to access Online E-Resources" for educators and college students alike must be organized.

We can see from the analytical study that students studying science, business, and the humanities do not all use the library in the same way. For this reason, libraries ought to set up an orientation programme.

Additionally, a subject instructor can visit the library with their regular pupils to help them become accustomed to using its resources on a daily basis.

In the event of a pandemic in the future, libraries should always be ready by gathering students' email addresses and phone numbers. This way, staff members can help students and users via email if needed.

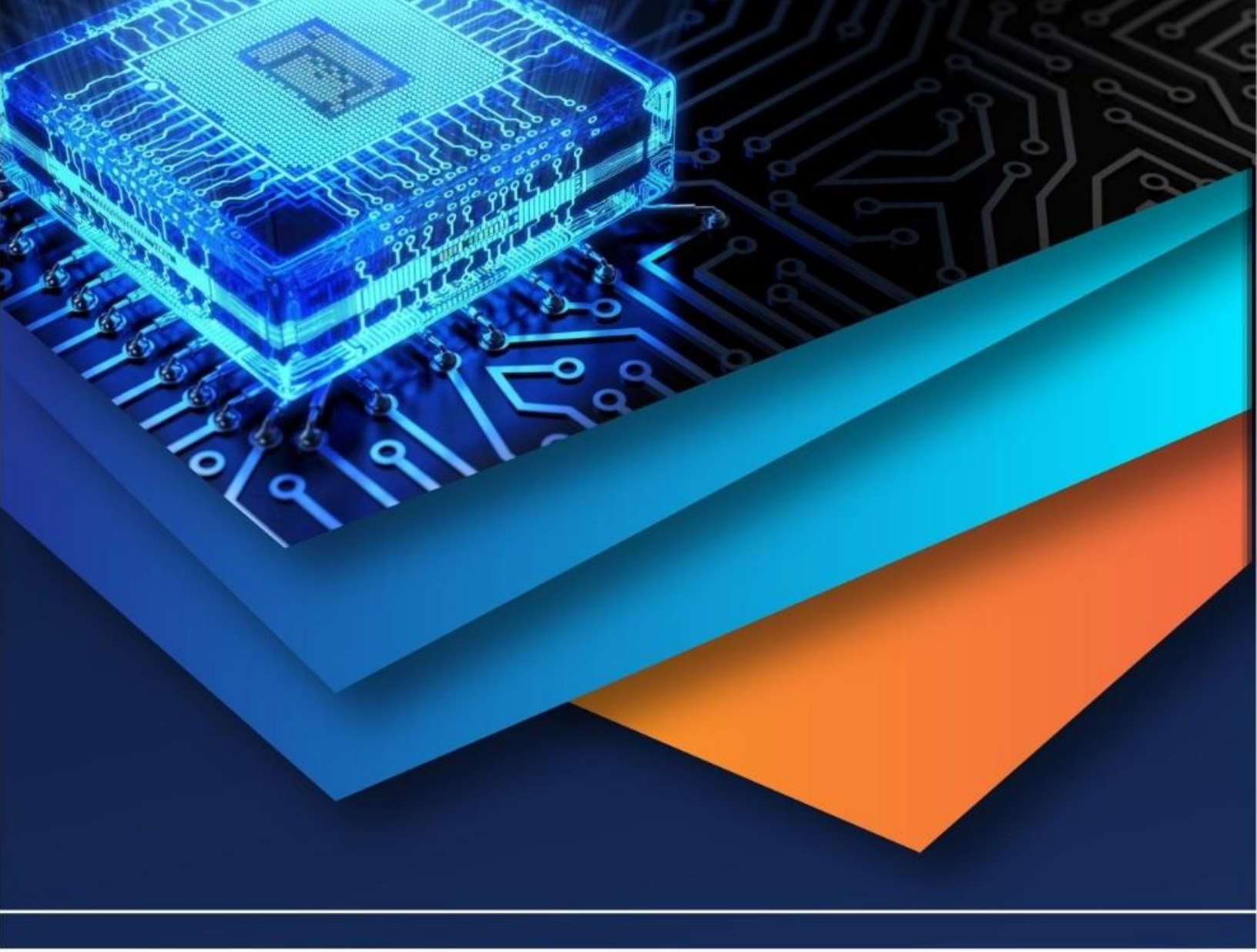
Not to mention, the statistics and graph demonstrate that teacher and student library usage peaked prior to the epidemic and increased thereafter. It is therefore shown that users' offline reading habits are not negatively impacted in the slightest. While some people discovered reading as a new hobby, others fell in love with books again.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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