

## Review

# Land Distribution and Renewal of Sustainable Economic Activities for Rural Poverty Alleviation in Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

The poverty is proliferating at a rapid pace in Pakistan and its incidence in the rural areas is more pronounced. Besides other factors, poverty alleviation involves new ways of developing economies, usually this implies the development of the agriculture defined in a broader sense to include all uses of land and directly associated productive activities. A package for transforming such lands into viable economic activities was orchestrated. This exercise conceptualizes a realistic framework for the landless and identifies the possible land problems, suggests remedies/measures for land development, recommends potential land use/economic activities, and provides estimates of the costs involved. The technologies and services that can possibly be offered by PARC are also identified. The suggested framework places the major emphasis on components of social mobilization of potential beneficiaries for participatory and sustainable development, and identification of technological packages for different types of distributed lands and linking this entire effort with the district government being organized under the devolution of power program of the government. The tentative per acre cost estimates for land development activities ranged between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 9000 per acre. The cost of recommended economic activity per household ranged from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50, 000 for different land types in various provinces. The total cost of the initial developmental activities and economic activities in the initial year are Rs. 10859 million and Rs. 9433 million respectively. Thus giving a rough grand total of Rs. 20292 million as the overall cost of the package.

**Key Words:** Land distribution; Participatory development; Poverty; Landless; PARC technologies

## INTRODUCTION

The poverty is proliferating at a rapid pace in Pakistan and its incidence in the rural areas is more pronounced after 1990 (Mustafa, 2000; Arif, 2001; Arif *et al.*, 2001). It is only recently that the crucial importance of this has been widely recognized and accepted (Haq, 1997; Action Aid, 1999, 2001; ADP, 2001; APO, 2001; Qureshi & Arif, 2001). In the rural area agriculture is the livelihood of the communities. It is the mainstay of the economy of Pakistan. It contributes 25% Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employees 44% of country work force and contributes substantially to export earning. It also provides labors, raw materials for the industrial sector and market for industrial products. The performance of agriculture is extremely affected the overall growth of GDP (Government of Pakistan, 2001). The agriculture in developing countries as well as in Pakistan is subsistence, land holding are small, production is labor intensive with relatively low intensity of farm inputs, irrigation dependent on the vagaries of nature. Consequently, the farm productivity is low. During the last three decades, in spite of the significance of agriculture in the economy and involvement of major segment of population, most of the government policies are discriminatory toward agriculture and there have been a declining share of public investment in agricultural sector

(Khan, 1985; Nabi, *et al.*, 1986; Hamid & Tims, 1990; Aziz, 1990; Chaudhry, 1995; Faruqees, 1998; ADP, 2001; Mustafa, 2001a). No doubt these policies retarded growth depressed the value of agriculture and possibly also lowered rural wages, implicitly transferring income from rural to the urban areas. These resulted in migration from rural to urban centers, increase in unemployment whereas decrease in real wages, high dependency ratio etc. The urban industrial sector was not robust to absorb the flux of rural migrants. The situation becomes the worst in the rain fed and marginal areas where substantial small peasant are located. These all are considered as the major determinants of poverty in Pakistan (Amjad & Kemal, 1997; Jafri, 1999; Qureshi & Arif, 1999; Zaidi, 1999; Arif, 2001; Mustafa, 2001b). The investment in increasing agricultural productivity is the prerequisite to economic development.

Besides other factors, poverty alleviation involves new ways of developing economies, usually this implies the development of the agriculture defined in a broader sense to include all uses of land and directly associated productive activities (Thapa & Chhetry, 1997; Chauhan, 1999; Etchegaray *et al.*, 1998; MINFAL, 2000; Mustafa, 2001a). In Pakistan still there is a substantial uncultivated farm area (9.13 million hectares), which is fit for cultivation but was not cropped during the last two years (Government of Pakistan, 2001). Deeply concerned with the poverty issue,

the Government of Pakistan has launched the program of allotting state land to the landless peasants. The major goal of this program is to provide the resource-poor tillers with the sustainable means of earning livelihood and to break the shackles of poverty in the rural areas.

A package for transforming such lands into viable economic activities was orchestrated under the guidance of the Minister for Environment and Local Government in consultation with Ministry of Water and Power, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan, and National Rural Support Program (Malik *et al.* (2001).

The potential beneficiaries of scheme include landless farmers (tenants/'haris'), unemployed agricultural graduates, small and resource-poor farmers, and the rural homeless. There are certain affected landowners whose lands were acquired for various public projects and were not compensated. These affectors and the displaced tenants/haris cultivating their lands (if any) may also be considered under this program.

This paper is heavily drawn from a SSD, PARC report (Malik *et al.*, 2001). The paper conceptualizes a realistic framework for the landless poor in rural areas and identifies the possible land for distribution & its problems, suggests remedies/measures for land development, recommends potential & use/economic activities, and provides estimates of the costs involved for alleviating the poverty in the rural sector. The technologies and services that can possibly be offered by Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) are also identified.

The paper is divided in to different sessions including the first introduction. Followed by the suggested framework section, which places the major emphasis predicates on land distribution and development activities, identification of technological packages for different land types. The conceivable constraints faced in various areas, possible remedies, and potential land use/economic activities along with potential PARC technological packages are also

presented. The package also consists of the components of social mobilization of potential beneficiaries for participatory and sustainable development, and identification of technological packages for different types of distributed lands and linking this entire effort with the district government being organized under the devolution of power program of the government. The package also ensures effective and efficient delivery of farm inputs including the transfer of technology, participation of private sector in the process of development and participatory monitoring and evaluation system. In the last session, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

## FRAMEWORK FOR THE LANDLESS POOR IN RURAL AREAS

It is universally accepted & advocated that without community involvement & participation, development initiatives either in the economic or social sector, have little chances of success/sustainability. Especially at the grassroots level, where the majority of country population resides (AKRSB, 1984, 1999; FAO, 1989; Khan *et al.*, 1984; Brocklesby & Holland, 1998; Mustafa, 1998; Mustafa & Mir, 1999). This is more realistic in case of poverty alleviation especially for helping the poorest amongst poor. In this connection the concept & approaches of community development major work in Pakistan has been tested in Northern Areas of Pakistan and replicated the principles and experiences to some parts of the country by Non Government Organizations (NGOs), different national and international government projects, programme (Mustafa & Grunewald, 1996, NRMP, 1993; NRSP, 1995).

A particularly important example of participatory management is the implementation and maintenance of Productive Physical Infrastructure (PPI) projects and the subsequent planning that might be needed to exploit the opportunities opened up by such projects (AKRSP, 1999). Uncultivated barren land opened up by an irrigation channel, for instance, needs to be divided among the villagers, apportioned into different uses, developed into

**Table I. Allotment of landless peasants the state land and balance land in different provinces and in Pakistan\***

Name of Province	Land allotted up to 7.2.1997	Land allotted from 7.2.1997 to 12.10.1999	Land allotted from 12.10.1999 to November 2000	Total Land Allotted	Balance
Punjab (Total)	-	3236	-	3236	109374
Sindh (Total)	4936497.25	496705.21	56542.38	5489744.94	787221.53
NWFP (Total)	-	-	-	-	270465
Balochistan (Total)	-	77552	-	77552	1454545
PAKIATN (Total)	4936497.25	577493.21	56542.38	5570532.94	2621605.53

\* Sources: - Government of the Punjab, Board of Revenue letter No.43-D-2000/2925-CLI, dated November 01, 2000.

- Government of Sindh, Board of Revenue, letter No.PS/MBR/LU/1028/200, dated November 01, 2000.

- Secretary Board of Revenue, NWFP, Peshawar supplied in the meeting held on 09.02.2000 at Islamabad under the Chairmanship of Senior Member, Federal.

- Government of Balochistan, Board of Revenue letter No.F.1/Special Cell/BOR/2000, dated November 01, 2000

cultivable land, planted with appropriate crops or trees and then cultivated with the help of productive inputs. The output, then, has to be marketed profitably (AKRSP, 1984 & 1999; NRMP, 1993; LIFE, 1998; Mustafa, 1999, 2000).

There is more than 2621 thousands of arable land available in the countries for the distribution. This is spread in different provinces as 1454, 787, 270 and 109 thousands acres in Balochistan, NWFP, Sindh, and Punjab, respectively (Table I). Up to date maximum land distributed is in 5570 thousand acres in Pakistan, out of this 5489, 77 and 3 thousands acres were distributed in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab provinces, respectively. Where are no distribution of land was reported in NWFP (Table I). The big chunk of the land to be distributed consists of riverine and non-riverine areas, within Canal Command Area (CCA); out of CCA; hill tolerant area (Rodkahi) and Coastal Area of Balochistan and Sindh Provinces. The target beneficiaries constitute the heterogeneous groups representing diverse socioeconomic conditions, agro-ecological situations and religio-cultural patterns. However, they share certain commonalities and own little/poor resources or are without any resource base, with limited opportunities available to earn incomes that are hardly sufficient to sustain their families. The allotment of land (mostly marginal and problem lands) would be of little help in alleviation of the poverty confronting to the target groups unless accompanied by a supervised and guided package of development and economic activities at these lands. The proposed package contains the following:

- Land development activities;
- Financial and technological package for land development and economic activity;
- Social mobilization of the beneficiaries i.e. new allot ties;
- Participation of private sector in the process of development; and
- Monitoring and evaluation of performance of involved agencies and allot ties.

**Land Developmental Activities.** There are two types of land namely riverine and non-riverine lands to be distributed among the landless. Non-riverine lands include plateaus, with in canal command area (CCA), out of CCA, hill torrent areas (Rod kahi), and coastal areas. The constraints/problems of these types of lands and proposed remedial measures were identified and are presented in Table II. Potential land uses/possible economic activities for each type of land are also proposed in the same table. The potential PARC technological package ready to be offered to the potential allottees is also mentioned in Table II. The tentative cost per acre for the initial land development and operation is as well computed which ranges from Rs. 1500-9000 for various problems/activities (Table II). Investment in infrastructures such as the following is too an important component of the program:

- Market link roads, education, health, market

infrastructures and drinking water;

- Irrigation infrastructure like canals/watercourses (including improvement), tube wells, rain water harvesting structures and new irrigation methods/equipment;
- Heavy machinery for expeditious clearing and development of lands and farm machinery for rental services; and
- Revision of tested farm technologies and ensure availability of quality farm inputs.

**Financial and Technological Package.** Finances for land development activities like leveling, terracing, check damming, water reservoir/ponds, reclamation/improvement of land and fertility restoration, expected number of beneficiaries, cost of the proposed economic activities per household and total estimated cost of proposed economic activities were computed and are presented in Table III. These estimates were computed for each province separately. Total estimated cost of proposed economic activities for expected beneficiaries in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and NWFP came out to be Rs. 763/- million, Rs. 5840/- million, Rs. 11873/- million, and Rs. 1816/- million, respectively. This implies that the proposed package in total will cost Rs. 20292/- millions. The components of the package are briefly outlined here:

- Working capital to finance inputs required for initiation of economic activities;
- Finances to support family consumption (if needed/deserving cases only);
- Support services (financial and technical) through establishment of farm centers ultimately sustained and run by farmer organizations; and
- Ensured prices and marketing of products.

The local government at district level may be entrusted with the responsibility of managing the above components through farm centers and with the help/guidance of agricultural research, extension and other line departments. In areas where local or provincial departments lack expertise, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council can offer the technical services to resolve the issues. Adequate provisions need to be made in budgets of the respective institutions for this purpose.

**Social Mobilization.** The component of social mobilization is based on conceptual utilization of a realistic framework of participatory development through formulation of grassroots-level community institutions and their collaboration with government and non-government development agencies. The organizational approach to development relies on institutional capacity building at the community level [UNDP (2000)]. The social mobilization consists of social organization based on people's identified needs; human capital/resource development, up-gradation of their indigenous skills; capital generation through savings and development of effective linkages with the line agencies. The social mobilization of the target groups has been successfully used in the process of participatory development. The aim of social mobilization is to stimulate

**Table II. Frame work for landless farmers: constraints, suggested remedies, potential land use, and technological package**

Land type	Possible constraints	Suggested remedies	Tentative Estimated Cost/ac	Potential land Use/economic Activities	Potential parc technological package
Riverine Areas	Seasonal inundation Seasonal water shortage Sandy soil irregular relief Shallow depths to sand Poor infrastructure	Protection bunds Moveable/immovable irrigation systems Minor land forming  No remedy Roads, health & education services	Rs. 2500 Rs. 3500 Rs. 1500  --- Not available	Oilseed, leguminous, vegetable and fodder crops Tree plantation Raising small & large ruminants, Floriculture especially cupflowers. Raising date palm orchards. Fish farming Poultry farming	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc. for all these economic activities.
Non-Riverine Areas	Accelerated erosion/ gullied land Seasonal water shortage (e.g. in Potohar) Lack of water (e.g. in Balochistan) Undulated topography  Lack of vegetation cover Shallow soils	Check damming  Check damming & reservoirs/ pond development Catchments basin water harvesting Minor terracing & water harvesting Plantation  No remedy	Rs. 3000  Rs. 4000 Rs. 1500 Rs. 2000 Rs. 6000 ---	Cereal, oilseed, and fodder crops Herbal/medicinal crops Grasses, plantation and bushes Raising small and large ruminants Fancy birds, poultry, quail and mushroom farming Bee keeping	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc. for all these economic activities.
2. Within Canal Command Areas (CCA)	Highly saline/sodic soils Unfavorable relief Sandy soils	Economically feasible partial reclamation Water-lifting devices No remedy	Rs. 6000 Rs. 3500 ---	Salt tolerant varieties of cereals and other crops Salt tolerant grasses Salt tolerant tree for fuel & forage Salt tolerant bushes Raising small ruminants Bee keeping Fish farming	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc. for all these economic activities.
3. Out of CCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor quality ground water</li> <li>High saline/sodic soils</li> <li>Sandy deserts</li> <li>Shallow soils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of tubewell</li> <li>Economically feasible partial water amendment with pumping cost</li> <li>Economical feasible partial soil and water amendment with pumping cost</li> <li>No remedy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rs. 4000</li> <li>Rs. 5000</li> <li>Rs. 9000</li> <li>----</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salt tolerant varieties of cereal and other crops</li> <li>Salt tolerant grasses</li> <li>Salt tolerant tree for forage</li> <li>Drought tolerant crops, grasses/bushes</li> <li>Grasses, bushes</li> <li>Raising small and large ruminants</li> <li>Bee keeping</li> <li>Fish farming</li> </ul>	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc. for all these economic activities.
4. Hill Torrent Areas (Rod Kohi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal lack of water</li> <li>Poor management of torrent water</li> <li>Shallow soils &amp; areas covered by boulders</li> <li>Poor infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of water delivery system &amp; provision of water control structures</li> <li>Improved water management</li> <li>No remedy</li> <li>Roads, health and education services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rs. 6000</li> <li>Rs. 1000</li> <li>----</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agronomic drought resistant</li> <li>Grasses/plantation</li> <li>Raising small and large ruminants</li> <li>Bee keeping</li> <li>Fish farming</li> </ul>	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc. for all these economic activities.
5. Coastal Areas (Balochistan & Sindh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water shortage</li> <li>Saline ground water</li> <li>Sandy soils</li> <li>Poor infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of tubewell</li> <li>Use of amended groundwater (by high efficiency irrigation system like pitcher irrigation) along with pumping.</li> <li>Economically feasible partial water amendment.</li> <li>Roads, health and education services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rs. 4000</li> <li>Rs. 6500</li> <li>Rs. 3000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree plantation</li> <li>Salt tolerant varieties of cereal and other crops</li> <li>Salt tolerant grasses</li> <li>Salt tolerant tree for forage</li> <li>Raising small and large ruminants</li> <li>Bee keeping</li> <li>Manufacturing of small fishing boats in coastal areas</li> </ul>	PARC can offer supervised and guided package of production technology for crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries etc.

an urge among the target groups to improve through self-help and to kindle an interest to organize them, generate their own capital through savings and upgrade their skills. The social mobilization consists of the following components:

**Social organization.** In a situation where the target groups are scattered and has essentially given up hope, there is a need to bring them into an organized form. This is key, if the target groups' capacity for improvement is to be created and nurtured. Such organization would provide the

**Table III. Frame work for landless farmers: total cost estimates**

Province	Land Type	Balance State Land (Acre)	Tentative Average Cost/Acre (Rs.)	Total Initial Development Estimated Cost (m. Rs.)	Expected Number of Beneficiaries (HH)	Cost of Recommended Activity/HH Rs.	Total Estimated Cost of Recommended Activities for All Beneficiaries (m. Rs.)	Grand Total (m. Rs.)
Punjab	Riverine area	46447	2599	120.720	3716	50000	185.800	<b>762.829</b>
	Plateau	7581	3300	26.534	606	45000	27.270	
	CCA	1531	4750	7.272	122	50000	6.100	
	Out of CCA	23815	5500	130.983	1905	30000	57.150	
	Hill torrent	30000	3500	105.000	2400	40000	96.000	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>109374</b>		<b>390.509</b>	<b>8750</b>		<b>372.320</b>	
Sindh	Riverine area	115136	2500	287.840	9211	50000	460.550	<b>5839.629</b>
	Plateau	102697	3300	338.900	8216	45000	369.720	
	CCA	27996	4759	133.233	2240	50000	112.000	
	Out of CCA	423392	5500	2328.656	33871	30000	116.130	
	Hill Torrent	108000	3500	378.000	8640	40000	345.600	
	Coastal	10000	4500	45.000	800	30000	24.000	
Balochistan	<b>Total</b>	<b>787221</b>		<b>3511.629</b>	<b>62978</b>		<b>2328.000</b>	<b>11873.375</b>
	Plateau	655535	3300	2163.266	52443	55000	2884.365	
	CCA	21961	4750	104.315	1757	50000	78.850	
	Out of CCA	461616	5500	2538.888	36929	50000	1846.450	
	Hill Torrent	165433	3500	579.016	13235	35000	463.225	
	Coastal	150000	4500	675.000	12000	45000	540.000	
NWFP	<b>Total</b>	<b>1454545</b>		<b>6060.485</b>	<b>116364</b>		<b>5812.890</b>	<b>1816.025</b>
	Riverine	69533	2500	173.833	4843	50000	242.150	
	Plateau	108309	3300	357.420	8665	45000	389.925	
	CCA	5893	4750	27.992	471	50000	23.550	
	Out of CCA	16730	5500	92.015	1338	30000	40.140	
	Hill torrent	70000	3500	245.000	5600	40000	224.000	
<b>G. Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>270465</b>		<b>896.260</b>	<b>20917</b>		<b>919.765</b>	<b>20291.858</b>
	<b>G. Total</b>	<b>2621,605</b>		<b>10858.883</b>	<b>209009</b>		<b>9432.975</b>	

members empowerment and a forum to discuss issues of common interest and plan strategies for solution of those issues. Organizing them into such village/local level institutions will not only develop critical thinking but also conscientization among them.

**Human capital/resource development.** Upgrading the human skills of the target groups such as managerial and cooperative skills is essential to enable them to make the best use of available resources. The focus of human resource development initiatives has to encompass both human and technical skills with accent on the former.

**Capital generation/formation.** Generation of financial capital by the target groups through saving is the third important element of social mobilization. Capital is a power without which the target group can never hope to be self-reliant. The little capacity to generate such capital in the initial stages need to be compensated through raising capital from usher, zakat, markups on credit payments, local cess and land revenues, etc., and reinvesting it for development purposes in the same area.

**Development of effective linkages with line agencies.** For sustainable development it is imperative that communities develop and maintain permanent linkages with the line agencies and departments of the governments, and the NGOs working with rural communities.

**Participation of Private Sector.** Poverty alleviation is a gigantic task and various segments of the society need to join hands for addressing the issue in the most effective

way. The private sector, NGOs, and foreign donors can play an important role in triggering the task of economic revival of the rural poor. The private sector should be provided with necessary inducements for encouraging their participation in the process of economic revival of the beneficiaries of this scheme.

**Monitoring and Evaluation.** The activities of proposed scheme involve huge investments of human, financial and other resources. As the resources are scarce and have alternative uses, therefore, they must be utilized in such a way that brings maximum welfare and benefit to the society. A component of systematic monitoring and economic evaluation of the scheme and activities of the farmers are crucial for success of the scheme and to provide justification for continuation of such activities. The participatory monitoring and evaluation approach has been successfully and widely used by different development projects in various countries.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The program of addressing the issue of poverty through allotting state-owned lands is commendable. The potential beneficiaries of scheme include landless farmers (tenants/'haris'), unemployed agricultural graduates, small and resource-poor farmers, and the rural homeless. There are certain affected landowners whose lands were acquired for various public projects and were not compensated.

These affecters and the displaced tenants/haris cultivating their lands (if any) may also be considered under this program. The major goal of this program is to provide the resource-poor tillers with the sustainable means of earning livelihood and to break the shackles of poverty in the rural areas.

The Government of Pakistan has launched the program of allotting state land to the landless peasants. A package for transforming such lands into viable economic activities was orchestrated under the guidance of the Minister for Environment and Local Government in consultation with Ministry of Water and Power, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan, and National Rural Support Program.

This exercise conceptualizes a realistic framework for the landless and identifies the possible land problems, suggests remedies/measures for land development, recommends potential land use/economic activities, and provides estimates of the costs involved. The technologies and services that can possibly be offered by PARC are also identified. The suggested framework places the major emphasis on components of social mobilization of potential beneficiaries for participatory and sustainable development, and identification of technological packages for different types of distributed lands and linking this entire effort with the district government being organized under the devolution of power program of the government. In order to achieve the goal following two components i.e. social mobilization & identification of technologies were recommended. Beside this tentative per acre cost for land development activities were also estimates.

- The component of social mobilization is based on conceptual utilization of a realistic framework of participatory development through formulation of grassroots-level community institutions and their collaboration with government and non-government development agencies. The organizational approach to development relies on institutional capacity building at the community level. The social mobilization consists of social organization based on people's identified needs; human capital/resource development, up-gradation of their indigenous skills; capital generation through savings and development of effective linkages with the line agencies. The package also ensures effective and efficient delivery of farm inputs including the transfer of technology, and participatory monitoring and evaluation system.

- The second component predicates on identification of technological packages for different land types. The big chunk of the land to be distributed consists of reverine and non-reverine areas, within Canal Command Area (CCA); out of CCA; hill tolerant area (Rodkahi) and Coastal Area of Balochistan and Sindh Provinces. The conceivable constraints faced in various areas, possible remedies, and potential land use/economic activities along with potential PARC technological packages are also presented.

- The tentative per acre cost estimates for land development activities ranged between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 9000 per acre. The cost of recommended economic activity per household ranged from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50, 000 for different land types in various provinces. The total cost of the initial developmental activities and economic activities in the initial year are Rs. 10859 million and Rs. 9433 million, respectively. Thus giving a rough grand total of Rs. 20292 million as the overall cost of the package.

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