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Public Private Partnership in Infrastructure Development of Rural Areas: Opportunities and Challenges in India

Amirullah

Senior Research Fellow, Department of Political Science
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract:

India got its independence carrying a legacy of around 90 percent of its people living in rural areas, with around 15 percent of the people literate, more than 80 percent population dependent on traditional farming with massive poverty, poor infrastructure, unbalance regional development and backwardness. At the time of independence, sustainable socio-economic development was the utmost priority of the national government. Infrastructure development was obviously a very important component of development. Agriculture continues to be a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The vision of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam of a developed India by 2020 cannot be expected without the development of rural areas as it constitutes 68.84 percent according to the census 2011 (provisional). There is lack of basic infrastructure like roads, transport, power, water supply and sanitation, irrigation, telecommunication, education and health services, etc. in rural villages. Elimination of poverty, ignorance, diseases, inequality of opportunities and providing a better and higher quality of life were the basic premises upon which all the plans and blue-prints of development were built. Many programmes like Indira Awas Yojana, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Bharat Nirman, Central Rural Sanitation Programme, National Rural Health Mission, etc. were initiated by the government to boost infrastructure development. These programmes did not achieve much success in addressing the infrastructure deficit. The government is only restructuring and combining the programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme and allied programmes i.e. Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment, Ganga Kalyan Yojana, Million Wells Scheme, etc. to Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana which was again restructured to National Rural Livelihood Mission to reduce the poverty and improving the quality of life. There is lot of corruption in government initiated programmes and schemes, lack of expertise, absence of coordination and allocation of meagre funds from central, state and local government. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) can supplement the infrastructure deficit as well as sustainable development of rural areas. In the beginning, PPP technique was restricted to the road sector. Presently, the government is resorting to this arrangement in areas such as education, health, transport, power, water supply and sanitation, irrigation, telecommunication and other related infrastructure services to underpin both accelerated sustainable infrastructure development and improved service delivery. As of August 2012, 881 PPP projects have been initiated and most projects are in education, health, roads and power. It helped in revolutionising telecommunication, connecting rural roads with state and national highways, educational, power, water supply and sanitation in rural areas. The government amended many policies for implementing PPP projects, but it still faces people's protest against land acquisition and user charges (tolls), lack of incentives given by governments to private players in rural areas, no fast track approval of projects and many projects are urban centred. PPP can be profitably harnessed to reinforce India's position on the world map.

Key words: sustainable socio-economic development, Infrastructure development, Public Private Partnership

1. Research Methodology

The study relies more on the secondary data. They are collected from various sources like websites of national and international governments, PPP policies, processes, and practices of central as well as state governments, articles published in national and international journals. It also includes a survey of published literature in diverse areas associated with major infrastructure projects, causes of delay, critical success factors, lessons from worldwide PPP models, selection of a suitable contractor and best value selection models.

2. Introduction

Rural infrastructures are the foundation for development in any country. The removal of poverty and the provision of basic civic infrastructure to the population living in rural areas have been the most important goals even in the Plan documents of the National Planning Committee, People's Plan, and Bombay Plan prepared during the period prior to independence. At the time of independence, around 90 percent of the people were living in rural areas and more than 80 percent population dependent on

agriculture for their livelihood which not only formed the backbone of Indian economy but also the way of life of Indian people. In the First Five Year Plan (FYP), the highest priority was given to agriculture development, including irrigation and power as it was recognised that large areas of the country have remained underdeveloped due to the lack of basic services like transport, communication, irrigation and power. The traditional way of farming gave to Green Revolution during the mid 1960s with the introduction of high yielding varieties of crops. The development of roads, irrigation, power, water, seeds and fertilizers, cold storage, godowns and marketing facilities in rural areas were emphasized. These infrastructures are crucial for agriculture, agro-industries and overall economic development of rural areas. Accelerating the development of world class infrastructure is an important pre-condition for sustainable social and economic development. It helps in feeding millions of people and ensuring food security in India.

Now, 12th FYP is going on but there is a lack of basic infrastructure, both social and physical, that continues to remain a major constraint in the progress of many villages and their habitations. There is close linkages between rural infrastructure, poverty reduction and improved livelihoods. Infrastructure development is crucial for high growth and inclusive development of the whole nation. Now, agriculture and allied sectors contributed only 14.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product according to the economic survey 2011-12 but provided employment to 58 percent of the population according to census 2001, inspite of the poor condition of infrastructure in 6,40,930 villages of India. Investment in rural power, roads, irrigation, telecom, and rail freight corridors etc. will provide a significant boost to transform a low productivity agro-economy into a globally competitive agro-industrial economy that will help in increasing productivity and spur growth besides providing employment and other opportunities. However, infrastructure projects involve huge initial investments, long gestation periods, high incremental capital output ratio, high risk and low rate of returns on investment which the government is lacking due to budgetary constraints.

3. Rationale for Development of Rural Infrastructure

The development of infrastructure in rural areas is very important to fulfill the expectations of the poor and down-trodden people and to raise their standard of living as 68.84 percent live in rural areas and do not have access to basic needs. The basic infrastructures needed in rural areas are- roads, education, health, drinking water supply and sanitation, telecommunication, irrigation and power. The condition of housing, education and health are very poor. Many people are uneducated and illiterate. The Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate, Child Mortality Rate, etc. is very poor in comparison to urban areas. The economic development goes hand in hand with a sound and efficient infrastructure. It is important to remove poverty, regional imbalance and unemployment. It is very essential for agricultural development which is the main occupation of rural people and its success has a direct impact on nation's prosperity. It is very important to check urban migration as lack of opportunities in village's forces rural people to migrate to urban areas for better opportunities. The international organisations also pressurize the Indian government to attain the various programmes within stipulated time like United Nation Millennium Development Goals.

4. PPP initiatives in India

PPP are seen as an important tool for producing an accelerated and larger pipeline of infrastructure investments, and catching up with the infrastructure deficit in the country. PPP projects means a project based on a contract or concession agreement, between a Government or statutory entity on the one side and a private sector company on the other side, for delivering an infrastructure service on payment of user charges, specifically targeted towards financing, designing, implementing, and operating infrastructure facilities and services that were traditionally provided by the public sector. The Government of India has issued guidelines for initiating PPP projects though PPP policy has not been framed yet. The state governments have also framed policies and guidelines to implement projects through PPP mode. Various regulatory, institutional and financial frameworks like PPP Cell, Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC), Viability Gap Funding (VGF), India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd. (IIFCL), etc. have been formed by the government during the last few years to promote the PPP in sector like power, ports, highways, airports, tourism and urban infrastructure. An online database www.pppindia.database.com on PPP projects in the country has been developed to provide comprehensive and current information on the status and extent of PPP initiatives in India at the central, state and sectoral level. Depending on the nature of the infrastructure projects, the contractual structures/agreements used for new projects would include inter-alia Build and Transfer (BT), Build-Lease-Transfer (BLT), Build-Transfer-Operate (BTO), Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT), Build-Own-Operate (BOO), Build-Operate-Share-Transfer (BOST), Build-Own-Operate-Share-Transfer (BOOST), Build-Own-Lease-Transfer (BOLT), Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT) and Rehabilitate-Finance-Operate-Transfer (RFOT). These contracts are usually financed by user fees or tariffs or government subsidies. The procurement and selection process is through competitive bidding process. PPP projects leads to efficient use of resources, availability of modern technology, better project design and implementation, faster implementation, reduced lifecycle costs, optimal risk allocation, increases accountability, incentivizes performance and improved operations combine to deliver efficiency and effectiveness gains which are not readily produced in a public sector projects that results in improved delivery of public services and promotes public sector reforms. The failure to accelerate investments in rural infrastructure will make a mockery of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and in improving the living standard of millions of rural people in India.

5. Government Initiatives in Rural Infrastructure Development

Since independence, the government from time to time initiated many programmes and schemes for infrastructure development of rural areas in order to improve the standard of living of rural people. The programmes were initiated for the development of roads, water supply and sanitation, power, housing, irrigation, information and communication technology. The programmes have been briefly discussed under the following heads:

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** (2006) to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year and strengthening natural resource management.
- **Bharat Nirman** (2005) to build rural infrastructure, mainly roads, water supply, power, housing, irrigation, telecommunication and information technology.
- **Indira Awaas Yojana** (1885-86) to provide financial assistance for construction/upgradation of dwelling units to BPL rural household belonging to SCs, STs and free bonded labourers which was later extended to other groups.
- **Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyukranthi Yojana** (2005) to provide access to electricity to all rural households in five years.
- **National Rural Health Mission** (2005) to provide accessible, affordable and accountable quality health services to the poorest households in the remotest rural regions.
- **Provide Urban Amenities in Rural Areas** (2004-05) to provide livelihood opportunities and urban amenities in rural areas for bridging rural-urban divide and improving the quality of life.
- **Central Rural Sanitation Programme** (1986) aims at improving the quality of life of rural people and to provide privacy and dignity to women in rural areas. It led to the formulation of 'Total Sanitation Campaign' approach in 1999.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** to provide connectivity to all unconnected habitations in rural areas having a population of more than 500 persons in rural areas (250 persons in the hills and desert areas) by good quality all-weather roads.

6. PPP Opportunities in Rural Infrastructure Development

There are many ups and downs in infrastructure spending to GDP ratio since independence. In the early period of independence, India made heavy investment, mainly state-led, in infrastructure, but this cannot be sustained for a long period. There was a severe reduction in spending due to foreign exchange crisis of 1957-58, 1965 war with Pakistan, the drought of 1967/68, and the Bangladesh war of 1971 when infrastructure spending hit a post-independence, low with 3.3 percent of GDP, the oil shock of 1973-74 and 1979-80, and the political crisis associated with the Emergency in 1975-76. During 1984-85, spending on infrastructure to GDP ratio was 5.3 percent despite the year of a failed monsoon. The infrastructure spending to GDP ratio again rose to a new post Independence peak of 5.7 percent in 1991 during the IMF crisis. In 1994-95, there was significant infrastructure spending in telecommunications related FDI and again in 2001-02 when the government supported for the 4-laning of the national highway network. In fact, by 2003-04, infrastructure spending as a share of GDP dipped to its previous post-Independence low of 3.3 percent. According to economic survey 2011-12, investment in infrastructure is expected to increase to around 9 percent of the GDP. It is proposed to invest US \$500 billion in infrastructure sectors through a mix of public and private sectors to reduce deficits in identified infrastructure sectors.

Though there are many ways to raise funds for rural infrastructure like central government grants, micro finance institutions and NGOs, multilateral bank loans, public borrowing, community pooling of resources, commercial bank loans and external assistance, permission of 100 percent FDI in the infrastructure sector, special provision of VGF but PPP is one of the important ways to increasing investments in India's infrastructure. PPP projects in addition to provide finance also lead to efficient use of resources, availability of modern technology, better project design and implementation, faster implementation, reduced lifecycle costs and optimal risk allocation which are not readily produced by other agencies.

The key to global competitiveness of the Indian economy lies in building a high class infrastructure. To accelerate the pace of infrastructure development and reduce the infrastructure deficit, the government has initiated a host of projects and schemes to upgrade physical infrastructure in all crucial sectors on PPP mode. Because infrastructure projects are expensive, governments often seek co-financing through public-private partnerships and multilateral institutions. These partners can also supply valuable oversight and technical expertise-an important ingredient in avoiding corruption, cost overruns and failed projects.

The central as well as state governments have made PPP policy guidelines in the areas where private partners can take infrastructure projects. Agri-infrastructure, education, energy, healthcare, industrial infrastructure, irrigation, public markets, tourism, transportation and logistics, urban and municipal infrastructure are the main sectors to be taken through PPP route.

6.1. Roads

This sector has most of the projects in India under various stages of implementation. It accounts for 53.4 percent of the total number of projects and 46 percent by total value. Most of the road projects have been confined to development, maintenance and operation of national and state highways, expressways, bridges and bypasses. Rural roads, particularly, those needed to link remote, hilly and backward settlements are neglected as they are not profitable to the private operator. Most of the roads like national and state highways; district roads that pass through rural areas have benefitted these areas only. The East-West and North-South corridors of National Highway Development Project (NHDP) connecting the four metro capitals and the port connectivity though, some parts were implemented through PPP mode and other PPP roads projects have increased the frequency of traffic speed. Most of the projects are being executed under BOT, BOT-Toll, BOT-Annuity, Annuity, DBFOT type.

So, there are vast opportunities to tap the PPP route for operation and maintenance of rural roads. Special emphasis should be given to North-Eastern state and central Indian states. This is needed to link remote, hilly and backward settlements, as neglected during the reforms decade, has to be financed through PPP mode in a time bound manner, if only to prevent further rise in urban-rural disparities in growth and resultant dysfunctionalities.

6.2. Education

For infrastructure expansion and improvement in quality education, the recommendations made by Kothari Education Commission for investment up to six percent of the GDP will not fill the gap in the demand and supply of finance for educational institutions. This can only be solved by attracting private capital through PPP route. All the state governments are encouraging private sectors to take the task for building infrastructure in promoting quality education. PPP can deliver high-quality education at a low cost, increased the enrollment ratio, provide quality education, upgrading and setting of new elementary and secondary schools, ITIs, polytechnics, libraries, synergy between private players will improve the standard of education in rural areas.

The Eleventh FYP termed as "India's educational plan" launched a scheme in November, 2008 for setting up 6000 model schools as benchmarks of excellence at block level with one school per block for providing quality education to talented rural children. Of these, 2500 schools are to be set up under PPP mode in blocks that are not educationally backward and will start from Twelfth FYP. The revised centrally sponsored vocationalisation of Secondary Education scheme aims to address the weaknesses of the earlier scheme to strengthen vocational education in Classes XI-XII and assistance is provided to 500 vocational schools under the PPP mode. To address the increasing skill challenges of the Indian IT industry, the government has approved setting up of twenty new IIITs on a PPP basis.

The various projects under construction are engineering College (lease) in Assam, full facility management under ICT scheme (BOT) and comprehensive Computer Education Project under ICT scheme in 213 Govt. Sr. Secondary Schools (BOT) in Haryana, ITIs upgradation (BOT) in MP, secondary schools (BOT) in Maharashtra, Biotech Park (BOOT) at Andharua, Bhubaneswar, Indira Gandhi Centre for Advanced Research on Livestock (BOOT) in Andhra Pradesh, polytechnics and ITIs (concession/BOT) in Punjab, etc. which opens a vast opportunities for PPP in rural areas.

6.3. Healthcare

The Government of India has decided to increase healthcare expenditure to 2.5 percent of the GDP by the end of the 12th FYP. However, the government alone cannot meet the infrastructure, capacity and delivery shortages existing in the current healthcare system. There has to be increased participation of private sector through PPP route. The NRHM was launched in 2005 to provide accessible, affordable and accountable quality health services to the poorest households in the remotest rural regions. Its strategy includes promotion of PPP for gaining managerial efficiency and ensuring achievement of public health goals. The government has allowed the private sector for investing in manufacturing of medical equipment, setting up training centre's for medical professionals (nurses, paramedics etc.) in rural areas; super-specialty and multi-specialty care services, medical colleges as well as medi-cities in the urban and semi-urban areas. Some of the successful PPP involves laboratory services (pathology, radiology, CT scan, MRI etc.), mobile medical units, PHC management and telemedicine services. The models that have been experimented with by the states are: contracting out, contracting in, lease, service agreements (outsourcing), buying of a product/service, joint venture company, social marketing and franchising. The advances in telecommunication and information technology are offering wide opportunities for improved rural health care in India as the doctors do not want to serve in the rural areas due to lack of basic amenities. This requires expensive and sophisticated infrastructure to be set up in rural areas. In addition, service delivery through telemedicine, high end tertiary care; innovative models for delivery in rural areas, community insurance schemes are other opportunities where private sector will need to participate.

6.4. Irrigation

Assured irrigation is very important for agricultural development as well as village prosperity as the monsoon rain is erratic, uncertain, unreliable, seasonal, irregular and unevenly distributed. India is a vast country and presently, the sources of irrigation are not adequate to meet the growing demands. The government has taken sole responsibility for the operation and maintenance of rivers, canals, tube wells, tanks and ponds. Many canals were built like Indira Gandhi Canal which brought prosperity in the western part of Rajasthan mainly Ganga Nagar and Hanuman Ghar which now called the "Granary of Rajasthan". This sector is not profitable as it requires a regular operation and maintenance which is too costly. The success of the first Green Revolution in northwestern and southern states has led to the launch of second Green Revolution, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odhisa, Assam and West Bengal. Water harvesting, interlinking of rives, building and maintenance of dams, canals, requires huge funds that can be fulfilled through PPP routes. It can be made profitable when excess water is efficiently utilized for building small hydro power plants on dams, for fishing, eco-tourism, etc. This will also give way to judicious, scientific, better water management and minimum wastage of water in addition to revenue.

6.5. Drinking Water and Sanitation

Surface water as well as underground water is used for drinking purpose in rural areas. The main sources are rivers, ponds, canals and wells have also been used for drinking, irrigation, sanitation and other day to day purposes. Due to increase in population, use of fertilizers, chemicals, and industrialization, all the sources have been polluted in the form of excess arsenic, fluoride, iron, salinity or biological contamination. Now, there is a shortage of quality water in both urban as well as in rural areas. UN MDG-7 targets that the proportion of people (baseline 1990) without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation be halved by 2015 and 100 per cent access by 2025. Many states have initiated PPP projects that are under various stages of implementation. Tirupur Water Supply (BOOT), 100 MLD Sea Water Desalination Plant-A Reverse Osmosis (BOOT) in Tamil Nadu is under operation. Visakhapatnam Bulk Water Supply Project, Andhra Pradesh, Water Supply and Sewerage System at Salt Lake, Operation and Management and Management of 25 million gallons-per-day Water Treatment Plant in West Bengal is under construction. The new National Water Policy-2012 also encourages PPP wherever the state governments or local governing

bodies so decide. Tirupur Water Supply project in TN is the first water sector related project developed under the PPP. This is providing water supply access to the dyeing and bleaching industries in Tirupur and the domestic consumers in the Tirupur Local Planning Area comprising Tirupur municipality, 15 village panchayats and three town panchayats.

About 60 percent of open defecation in the world is in India and rural area shares a significant part of it. Pay and use Toilets under PPP mode being developed in Andhra Pradesh. The Types of participation in the toilet are being envisaged through BOT. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that every U.S. dollar invested in water and sanitation generates an economic benefit of \$3 to \$34, depending on the type of water system installed and the region where the investment is made. Water and sanitation not only improves service and quality of life, but also has a direct impact on the economy generally. The government has set a target of full sanitation in rural India by 2022 under Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan which opens a vast opportunity for PPP projects.

6.6. Power

Power has become the lifeblood of the modern world, without which the world will come to a virtual standstill. Any sluggishness in the growth of the power sector can make the region far backward than other regions in industrial, economic and social growth. It is a critical infrastructure for the socioeconomic development of the country. The rural areas often suffer from shortages of power. Installed capacity has greatly increased since independence, but the gap between supply and demand remains wide due to inadequacies in generation, transmission and distribution as well as inefficient use of electricity. About 83.7 percent of rural households has been electrified but they do not get assured supply during peak cultivation periods. Many states had taken PPP projects to reduce the power deficit like GVK Jegurupadu Combined Cycle Power Project (BOO), Jegurupadu, Andhra Pradesh is under operation, 1000-1320 MW Coal based power plant (BOO), Karnataka and 2 MW Hydel Power (BOT), Assam is under bidding. The 60 MW thermal Power Project (BOT), Assam, Mahatma Gandhi, Thermal Power Project (BOT) at Jhajjar, Haryana and Ringyang Hydro Power Plant, Kissim Khola HEP Power plant, Hee Khola HEP Power plant, Kalez Khola HEP power plants all under BOOT in Sikkim is under construction. Due to environmental concern, emphasis has been made for harnessing the renewable energy which is at nascent stage in India. PPP has the opportunity to operate and maintain this sector with its finance, risk and technology for sustainable and secure energy. In order to encourage private participation, the government has framed Electricity Act, 2003, National Electricity Policy-2006, Rural Electrification Policy-2006, New Hydro policy-2008 and Mega power projects-2008 and allowed 100 percent private participation through automatic route.

6.7. Telecommunication

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the potential to bring in socioeconomic development to rural areas. It has changed the way people think, act, react, talk, work, communicate and live. It has the potential to connect rural and isolated areas with the rest of the country. It can synergize delivery of various social services to rural areas like health and education through tele-medicine and tele-education. The share of rural subscribers is 34.77 percent in comparison to urban subscribers of 65.23 percent in the month of March 2012. Rural tele-density increased from 38.53 to 39.22 but it is very low from urban tele-density of 169.55 at the end of March 2012. Universal Service Obligations (USO) was established in the telecom sector to raise funds for rural and remote areas, phone connectivity at affordable prices. Its scope has been widened to access to all types of telephony services including mobile services and broadband connectivity and for creation of infrastructure like optical fibre cables in rural and remote areas. There is much scope to synergise the existing infrastructure of various operators to optimize the resources and efforts in improving the tele-density of rural India. The government has allowed investment from the private sector, both for providing different services and for manufacturing of broadband-related telecom equipment.

7. Challenges of PPP in India

There are mixed responses about the success of PPP projects in India. There is lack of knowledge about the PPP. Still, policies for PPP are not framed. Many states have framed their own policies and guidelines that give a lot of confusion for private sectors. Some of the challenges being faced are as follows:

- People's protest in land acquisition, difficulties in land acquisition and long delays discourage fresh investments resulting in slow growth.
- Lack of clear PPP policies and guidelines in the states.
- Protest against user charges (tolls) by the people.
- Lack of incentives given by governments to private players in rural areas.
- No fast track approval of projects.
- Many projects are urban centred.
- Rural areas are constrained by sparse population, poor people, not profitable to private sectors which invest huge amount of funds.
- Common lack of clarity on the roles of public and private sectors.
- Insignificant involvement of the people at the grass root level in the decision-making process.
- Law and order problems due to Naxalite, terrorism, secessionist and separatist movements which discourages investment in these regions.
- The project development activities such as, detailed feasibility study, environmental/forest clearances etc., are not given adequate importance by the concession authorities.

- The limited institutional capacity to undertake large and complex projects at various Central ministries and especially at state and local bodies level, hinder the translation of targets into projects.

8. Suggestions and Conclusion

PPP is in nascent stage and its growth is hampered by institutional, legal, and regulatory constraints, though it provides vast opportunities for rural infrastructure development in India. For successful harnessing the benefits of PPP, there must be a robust regulatory environment to foster efficiency and transparency in the bidding process, ensure the sanctity of contracts, ease of the approval process ('single window'), encourage competition, promote market-driven tariffs, and separate regulatory and adjudication authorities. Supportive regulations, strong project management, transparent procurement procedures, and careful consideration of environmental and social impacts all are essential to a project's success. The cabinet committee on investment headed by the Prime Minister was made which will expedite projects over Rs. 1,000 crore by setting timelines for concerned ministries.

The government must give priority to the backward regions of North-East, Bundelkhand, Saurashtra, Vidarbha and BIMARU regions. It is expected that India will become the most populous state by 2050, if infrastructure does not take place, it will further deteriorate the condition of rural areas. PPP should be regarded as a mean and not as an end. It is the need of the hour to maintain India as the fastest growing economy of the world. The Rural Development Ministry is ready with a proposal to provide thirty five percent subsidies to the private sector to set up key infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals, drinking water and broadband in the rural areas. PPP has been successful in many developed countries and urban areas. So, there is no denial to the fact that PPP has great scope in India, particularly in the infrastructural development of rural areas.

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