

## Queen of Hill Station, Ooty - A Study with Reference to “Tourists perception”.

Dr.S.Kumaran<sup>1</sup>, Dr.R. Kannan, Ph.D<sup>2</sup>, Mr.Manjeet Singh<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Alliance School of Business, Alliance University, Bangalore

<sup>2</sup>Professor and Research Guide, Director, Centre for Tourism and Hotel Management, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

<sup>3</sup>Asst. Professor, Department of Tourism and Travel Management, Central University of Jammu, Jammu.

### ABSTRACT

Ooty is a famous hill station in the Western Ghats and it located at the Nilgiri Mountain at an altitude of 2240 meter. Due to the natural beauty with dense forest, green landscape, parks, lakes and tea gardens it has been remarked as the “Queen of Hills” by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This hill station is originally occupied by tribal people and later on it was developed by Sullivan, then Collector of Coimbatore during 1882 and English people started using this place as summer resort during British regime. Sullivan later developed the town and encouraged the establishment of tea, chinchona and teak trees. Now it becomes a famous tourism destination able to attract more than 30 lakh visitor per year. This research paper tries to find out the profile of the tourist visiting and their perception about the tourism attractions in Ooty.

Keywords: Tourism, perception, destination, Tourism facilities, Cost of facilities.

### INTRODUCTION

Ootacamund or Ooty is located in the Nilgiris hill of Western Ghats. It is municipal town situated at altitude of 2240 meter having around one lakh of population and has been remarked as the ‘queen of hill stations’ by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Ooty is surrounded by dense forest, good landscapes and parks and garden. This place is famous for tea gardens and oil extraction industries, using eucalyptus leaf. Lemon grass, clove and camphor.

It is popular tourism hill station originally occupied by the tribal people. Looking at the history of Ooty, it is observed that Nilgiris in general was ruled by Ganga kings and later Hoysala kings, particularly Vishnuvardhana who captured Wynad and Nilgiri area during the 11th century. It was originally a tribal land and was occupied by the Todas along with other tribes who coexisted through specialization and trade. The major tribes of Nilgiri area are **Toda people**, Kotas, Badagas and Alu Kurumbas, who settled in and around Ooty. The first house at Ootacamund was undoubtedly the “stone house” built by

Collector Sullivan in April 1822. He developed town and tea plantations, chinchona and teak trees.

### Udhagamandalam - Tourism Element Details

Ooty is located at the Nilgiri district and its coordinates are 11 0 40' 64"N 76 0 69' 32"E. The total extent of Ooty is 36 square kilometer. According to the Koppan climate classification, Ooty features a subtropical high climate. Despite its location in the tropics, Ooty generally features pleasantly mild conditions throughout the year. However during the month of January and February, especially in the night time the temperature goes up-to zero degree leads to extreme cold condition. Temperature is relatively consistent throughout the year, with recorded high temperature ranging from about 19-25 degree centigrade and recorded low temperature between -2 to 4 degree centigrade. The annual rainfall of this region is 1250mm. Due to natural tourist attractions like Gardens, Lakes, waterfalls, viewpoints tea gardens etc. tourists from cut across the country used to visit this area. The main season is March to June and in the month of May, Department of Horticulture organizes “Flower show” to

\* **Corresponding to:** Dr.S.Kumaran, Alliance University, India; E-mail: subbaraman.kumaran@alliance.edu.in

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attract more tourists. The main flora of this Nilgiri mountains are Tea gardens, grass lands, Pine, Eucalyptus and shola vegetation. Wild boar, Elephant, Tiger, Barking Deer, Nilgiri Tahr, Spotted Deer, Panther, Gour, Mouse and Sambar are the main Fauna of this region. The Avifauna like White-bellied woodpecker, Indian Peafowl, Eurassian Blackbird, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, House Sparrow, Nilgiri Laughing thrush, Grey tit with a prey, Chest nut header Bee eater are observed in this region.

**Table 1: TOURISM ELEMENT DETAILS**

Sl.No.	Elements	Detail
1	Location	Nilgiri district / Tamilnadu state.
2	Coordinates	11 0 40' 64" N 760 69' 32"E
3	Climate	subtropical high climate
4	Elevation	2240 m / 7347 feet.
5	Temperature	7 0 to 200 C in winter and 110 to 240 C in summer
6	Precipitation	1250mm
7	Season	March to June
8	Second season	October to January
9	Attractions	Lake / Waterfall/ View points / Gardens/Tea Estates.
10	Flora	Tea gardens, Grass lands, Pine, Eucalyptus and Shola Vegetation.
11	Fauna	Wild boar, Elephant, Tiger, Barking Deer, Nilgiri Tahr, Spotted Deer, Panther, Gour, Mouse and Sambar.
12	Avifauna	White-bellied woodpecker, Indian Peafowl, Eurassian Blackbird, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, House Sparrow, Nilgiri Laughing thrush, Grey tit with a prey, Chest nut header Bee eater.
13	Specialties	Tea Gardens, Honey, Chocolates.

14	Accommodation	Good Hotels and Resorts are available.
15	Food facilities	Good Restaurants are available
16	Approach road	Roads are good to moderate.
17	Parking	Available
18	Guides	Available
19	Local people hospitality	Moderate to good
20	Shopping facilities	Tea, other spices, Chocolates, honey, Varkey biscuits etc are available.
21	Established	Discovered by British in 1800.
22	Total area	36 sq.km
23	Population	Around One thousand
24	Nearest city	Ciombatore 87 km, Mysore 120 km, Cochin 270 km
25	Nearest Air port	Ciombatore, Cochin and Bangalore.
26	Train facilities	Available up to Mettupalayam and Coimbatore

Good hotels, resorts, guest houses and Homestay facilities are available to accommodate tourist. For dinning, restaurants are available at hotels, resorts, market side, Lakes, Gardens etc. The connecting roads to Ooty from Coimbatore, Mysore and Kerala are good. Parking facilities are available at important tourist attractions like Botanical garden, Lake etc. Tourists guides are available with tourism operators for the facilitation of visitors. The local people are mostly tribal people, Tea garden workers and their hospitality towards tourist are moderate to good. Shopping facilities are available at the main market, adjacent to the destinations like Doddabeta, Botanical Garden, and Ooty Lake. The main products can be purchased at the shops are Tea leaves, chocolates, spices, Honey, varkey biscuits.

**Ooty – Tourism Attractions**

**Table 2: TOURISM ATTRACTIONS**

Sl.No.	Tourism attraction detail	Nature of attraction
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1	Botanical Garden	Colourful flowers, Living collection of trees and Woody plants, Horticultural plants. Flower show in the month of May is very attractive.
2	Doddabetta	Offer beautiful vistas of Nilgiri range and an Observatory at the top of the Hill.
3	Rose Garden	Variety of Rose Flowers
4	Ooty Lake	Artificial Lake with Boating facilities, Toy train and Children park.
5	Avalanche Lake	Natural Lake with rolling landscape with blooming flowers.
6	Upper Bhavani Lake	Natural Lake located in reserved wild life area.
7	Emerald Lake	Water colour is like Emerald. Favorite place for picnic.
8	Pykara Lake	Lake with Boating facilities
9	Pykara waterfalls	Waterfalls cascade down through multiple layers on the rocky bed.
10	Kalhatti waterfalls	Beautiful cascades and two hundred varieties of beautiful birds around the waterfalls.
11	Ooty Tribal Museum	Helps to understand their traditional lifestyle, culture and religious aspects of Tribal peoples in Nilgiris.
12	Ketty Valley view	One of the largest valley in the World
13	Glenmorgan	Famous Tea plantations with special flavor
14	Western Catchment	The green hills and gushing streams make

		Western catchment look more attractive.
15	Parson Valley	Good place for Trekkers, untamed life devotees and naturalist.
16	Wenlock Downs	Best place to watch nature of the Ooty.
17	Kamaraj Sagar Dam	Lake water is greenish. Well known for Fishing and Horse riding.
18	Ooty Deer Park	One of the high altitude fauna parks in India.
19	Cairn Hill	Best Place to refresh and relax.
20	Mukurthi National Park	The park is characterized by montane grasslands and shrub lands mix together with shoals. The objective of the park to protect Nilgiri Tahr.
21	Mudumalai Wild Life sanctuary and National Park	Habitat for varied range of wildlife's.
22	Kodanadu View point	One of the most scenic spot in Nilgiri. Meeting point of western and eastern ghats can be clearly seen.
23	Catherine Waterfalls.	250 feet height attractive waterfall. Reached through trekking.
24	Sims Park, Coonoor	12 Hectares natural gardens with undulating land with clourful flower beds , lawns and rockeries. Also there are naturally occurring trees, shrubs, creepers and many unusual species of plants that have been brought in from various places.

Statistics about number of tourists visiting Ooty: The number of tourists visited Nilgiris district cross 30 lakhs by the year 2016. Nearly 29 ,40000 tourists visited Ooty in 2015, which was more

than 6 lakhs, compare to previous year fin. April and May are peak tourism season, and it continues till mid-June. In April 2016, the number of tourists visited the destination are 3,78,626 as against 3,02,378 April 2015. In May 2016, the number of tourists was 6,51,252 as against 5,87,847 previous year. In November 2016, the number of tourist visited the Botanical Garden, Rose Garden, Sims park and Doddabetta are 2,80,259 which more than that of previous year. Due to Dasara festival, in October 2016, the number of visitors is 4,19,853, mostly are from neighbouring states Karnataka and Kerala. According to Botanical Garden Officials, the number of tourists visited Garden are 31 lakhs in the year 2017 and that of in the year 2019 is 28.69 lakhs.

**Perception of Tourists:** Ooty hills are located in the Nilgiris district, under the western Ghat section. It became familiar tourism destination after the developmental works done by the then Collector of Coimbatore district Sullivan during English regime. Due to the natural valleys, Lakes, Gardens, viewpoints etc., it attracts number of tourist to this place. At present more than 30 lakh people are visiting every year. To understand the perception of the tourists, a research study was conducted among the visitors. The research is focused on tourism issues pertain to visitor's facilities and tourist satisfaction and to get valuable suggestions from tourist for better improvement in the overall management of destination

**Profile of the Tourists:** The profile of the domestic tourists is most important demographic variables which are highly helpful for ideal tourism planning and designing development programmes. It will be highly useful for marketing decisions and it includes demographic characteristics like sex, age, qualification, occupation, income, and the like. It helps the tourism planner to adopt appropriate strategies to attract more tourists to Horsley hills.

**Sex:** Of the 100 tourists surveyed 71 per cent are male and remaining are female. From the study it is understood that most of the visitors are male.

**Age of the Tourists:** Age of the tourists will help to develop a tourism product and assess the needs of the tourists visiting the destination. Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 56 per cent are in the age group of 20 to 40 years, 29 per cent in the age group of 41 to 50 years. 09 per cent in the age group of 51 to 60 years and the remaining 6 per cent are in the age group of above 60 years. The study reveals that majority of the tourists are having age of 20 to 40 years.

**Native State:** Out of the 100 tourists surveyed 51 per cent are coming from Tamil Nadu. 30 per cent of visitors are from Kerala and Karnataka state and remaining from other parts of our country. The research shows that the majority of the tourists are coming from Tamil Nadu.

**Education:** Of the 100 tourists, 51 tourists are high school, 33 are graduates, 07 are postgraduates and remaining are other categories like diploma, certificate courses etc. The study indicates that the majority (51 per cent) of the tourists are high school. It reveals from the study that educated people are showing more interest in visiting tourist places.

**Occupation:** Occupation decides the economic status of a person which in turn decides the quality and cost of the tourism service offered. The study analyses the occupation of the tourists, 23 per cent of the tourists occupation are Business, 52 per cent Private employees, 9 per cent Government officials and the remaining 16 per cent of tourists are from other categories like retired persons, House wife, Agriculturist, etc. The study reveals that most of the visitors are working in the private firm.

**Monthly Income of Tourists:** Earning capacity of the tourists is one of the urging factors inducing people to travel to tourism destinations. People from higher income category are frequently visiting the destination with high spending capacity. Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 20 per cent of the tourists are having monthly income less than Rs.20000, 52 per cent of the tourists have monthly income in the range of Rs20000 to 30000. 20 per cent of tourists have monthly income between Rs.30001 and Rs 40000 and remaining are having monthly income more than Rs40000. The study reveals that the majority of the tourist visited to Ooty hill station has monthly income between Rs. 20000 and Rs 30000.

**Accompany:** Twenty-five per cent of tourists are accompanied by friends, 58 per cent are family members and remaining are mixed groups. The research reveals that majority of the tourists are friends group.

**Purpose of Visit:** Of the 100 tourists surveyed 91 per cent are coming for tourism only, 3 per cent for business plus tourism and remaining are coming to Ooty to visit friends and relatives. The study reveals that majority (91 per cent) of the tourists are come for tourism purpose only.

**Number of visits:** The study gathered information regarding the number of visits of tourists to Horsley Hills. About 87 per cent of the tourists have visited Ooty Hills for the first time, 09 per cent for the second time and remaining have visited more than two times. The study shows that majority of the tourists visited Ooty Hills first time.

**Mode of Transportation:** The study analyses the mode of transport used by the tourists to Ooty Hills. Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 16 per cent used own vehicle to reach Hills, 63 per cent used bus and the remaining used rental vehicle. The study shows that majority of the tourists used Bus as their mode of transport to reach Ooty Hills. Transport plays a vital role in the promotion and development of tourism.

**Accommodation:** Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 12 per cent used Star Hotels, 72 per cent used budget hotels and remaining used other type of accommodation like friends and relatives houses and guest houses. The study reveals that majority (72 per cent) of the tourists used budget hotels.

**Period of stay:** The longer the duration of the stay of tourists, the greater will be the revenue from tourism. Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 90 per cent of the tourists stayed in for 1-2 days and the remaining stayed more than 2 days. The study reveals that majority (90 per cent) of the tourists stayed between 1-2 days. Period of stay varies depending upon the number of destinations visited. The quality of service and destination attraction may be the other reason for length of stay.

Tourism places visited: Tourism places in the destination are important factor to attract more number of tourists. All the tourists have visited Botanical Garden, Ooty Lake and Doddabetta Peak. Of the 100 tourists surveyed, 65 percent visited Sims park, 55 per cent visited Pykara lake, 52 per cent visited viewpoints, 24 percent visited Mukruthi National Park and 10 percent visited waterfalls.

Table 3: TOURISM PLACES VISITED

Place	Yes	No
Botanical Garden	100	00
Ooty Lake	100	00
Doddabetta Peak	100	00
Sims Park	65	35
Pykara Lake	55	45
Viewpoints	52	48
Waterfalls	10	90
Mukruthi National park	24	76

From the table, it is observed that majority of the tourists have visited Botanical garden, Ooty lake and Doddabetta peak.

Opinion about the tourism facilities: . “The Transportation facilities” scored highest points (146) and ranks first followed by “Accommodation” (144 points), “Food” ( 125 points), “Parking” and “local people hospitality” ( 120 points) “security” ( 118 points), and “toilets at public places” ( 100 points).

Table 4: OPINION ABOUT THE TOURISM FACILITIES IN OOTY

VG- Very good, G-Good, M-Moderate, P-Poor, VP- Very Poor

Facilities	OPINION												
	VG (3)	G (2)	M (1)	P (0)	VP (-1)	Tot	Ra						
	Points	Poi	Poi	Poi	Poi	al	nk	No	Sco	No	Sco	No	Sco
		nts	nts	nts	nts								
Security	10	30	36	72	38	38	10	-10	6	-12	118	6	
Food	10	30	40	80	35	35	10	-10	5	-10	125	3	
Transport	15	45	40	80	35	35	6	-6	4	-8	146	1	
Accommodation	18	54	45	90	22	22	12	-12	3	-6	144	2	

Facilities	VG (3)	G (2)	M (1)	P (0)	VP (-1)	Tot	Ra						
	Points	Poi	Poi	Poi	Poi	al	nk	No	Sco	No	Sco	No	Sco
Toilets in Public places	0	0	30	60	40	80	20	-20	10	-20	100	7	
Parking	14	42	30	60	40	40	10	-10	6	-12	120	4	

The bus transportation facilities from Coimbatore, Mettupalayam, Cochin and Mysore are frequent. The trains are available up-to Mettupalayam, Mysore are frequent. The Mountain rail is available from Mettupalayam. The rental cars are available from these all places. For local visits rental cars, vans and jeeps are available at nominal places. Regarding the accommodation the tariff will varies with season. During off season the the price of accommodation is comparatively less. Hotels, resorts, budget hotels, lodges, guest houses and homestays are available ranging from Rs.800 to Rs.10000 per day. The budget hotel cost is between rs.2000 to rs.3000 per day per couple. Regarding the food the high class hotels provide breakfast as a complimentary and good local restaurants are providing traditional food for the tourists from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Regarding the parking the facilities are available at Botanical garden, Doddabetta and Ooty Lake area. But during weekend and important occasions the parking area is not sufficient. During Flower show the entire Ooty is flooded with vehicles and create inconvenience to the tourist as well as local peoples. The local people hospitality is moderate to good. The security arrangements are not sufficient and need to be strengthened. The toilet facilities at important tourist destination are needed to be improved.

Table 5: OPINION ABOUT CLEANLINESS AND HYGIENE

VG- Very good, G-Good, M-Moderate, P-Poor, VP-Very poor

Facilities	OPINION												
	VG (3)	G (2)	M (1)	P (0)	VP (-1)	Tot	Ra						
	Points	Poi	Poi	Poi	Poi	al	nk	No	Sco	No	Sco	No	Sco
		nts	nts	nts	nts								
Bus stand	0	0	11	22	50	50	25	-25	14	-28	19	6	
Hotels	12	36	24	48	47	47	10	-10	07	-14	107	1	

Roadside	0	0	10	20	60	60	10	-10	20	-40	30	4
Restaurants	0	0	10	20	65	65	10	-10	15	-30	45	2
Lake area and Gardens	0	0	15	30	51	51	22	-22	12	-24	35	3
Viewpoints	0	0	15	30	45	45	25	-25	15	-30	20	5

The opinion about cleanliness and hygiene at lake area, hotels, restaurants, bus stand, road side, and marketplace was surveyed among 100 tourists. The cleanliness and hygienic at “Hotels” scored highest points(96) and rank first followed by “Restaurants” (45 points), “Lake area” ( 35 points), “Roadside” (30 points), “Viewpoints” (20 points) and “Bus stand” (19 points). From the table it is observed that majority of the respondents expressed that the overall hygienic and cleanliness at Ooty Hills need to be improved.

**Opinion about the hotel services:**

**Table 6: OPINION ABOUT THE HOTEL SERVICES IN OOTY HILLS**

VG- Very good, G- Good, M-Moderate, P-Poor, VP-Very poor

Ser vic es	OPINION											
	VG (3)		G (2)	M (1)	P (-1)	VP (-2)	Tot al	Ra nk				
	No	Sco re	No	Sco re	No	Sco re			No	Sco re	No	Sco re
Food	43	129	21	42	22	22	6	-6	8	-16	171	2
Room service	22	66	22	44	28	28	13	-13	15	-30	95	5
Accommodation	42	126	23	56	20	20	10	-10	5	-10	182	1
Personalized care	15	45	45	90	20	20	10	-10	10	-20	125	3

Hotel usage	18	54	22	44	43	43	7	-7	10	-20	114	4
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The Hotel facilities in Ooty Hills include Accommodation, House-keeping, Food, Room service and personalized care. The “Accommodation” scored highest points (182) and ranks first followed by “Food” (171 points), “Personalised care” (125 points), “Housekeeping” (114 points), and “Room service” (77 points).

**Findings:**

- Majority of the domestic tourists visiting Ooty Hills are male.
- From the survey it is observed that the majority of the tourists are coming from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.
- The majority (56 per cent) of the tourists are in the age group of 20 to 40 years.
- The majority (51 per cent) of the tourists are high school.
- The majority (52 per cent) of the tourists are private employees.
- The study reveals that the majority of the tourist visited has monthly income Rs.20000 to 30000.
- The majority of the tourists (58 per cent) are accompanied by their family members.
- The majority (91 per cent) of the tourists come for tourism purpose only.
- The study reveals that 36 per cent of the tourists used bus to reach the destination.
- The majority (72 per cent) of the tourists used budget hotels.
- The study reveals that majority (90 per cent) of the tourists stayed between 1-2 days.
- Majority of the tourists visited Botanical Garden, OotyLake, Doddabetta and Viewpoints.
- “The Transportation facilities” scored highest points (146) and ranks first followed by “Accommodation” (144 points), “Food” ( 125 points), “Parking” and “local people hospitality” ( 120 points) “security” ( 118 points), and “toilets at public places” ( 100 points).
- The cost of the facilities includes accommodation, food and local transport. The “Accommodation” cost scored highest points (172) and ranks first followed by “Food” cost” (160 points) and ”Local transport” (150 points). From the survey it is inferred that the cost of accommodation, food and local transport are high and this is due to very limited options.
- The opinion about cleanliness and hygiene at lake area, hotels, restaurants, bus stand, road side, and marketplace was surveyed among 100 tourists. The cleanliness and hygienic at “Hotels” scored highest points(96) and rank first followed by “Restaurants” (45 points), “Lake area” ( 35 points), “Roadside” (30 points), “Viewpoints” (20 points) and “Bus stand” (19 points). From the survey it is observed that majority of the respondents expressed that the overall hygienic and cleanliness at Ooty Hills need to be improved
- The Hotel facilities in Ooty Hills include Accommodation, House-keeping, Food, Room service and personalized care. The “Accommodation” scored highest points (182) and ranks first followed by “Food” (171 points), “Personalized care” (125

points), "Housekeeping" (114 points), and "Room service" (77 points).

## SUGGESTIONS

- There should be exclusive website on each tourism places in Ooty, which depicts information like accommodation facilities in different type of hotels, Food and beverage details, information about tourists' attractions and their photos, the price and testimonials.
- An exclusive information centre should be created at Bus stands in Coimbatore, Mettupalayam and Mysore, Cochin and on entry point from Highway to facilitate the tourist to have successful tourism plan.
- To increase the length of the stay, attractive tourism packages should be designed for the tourists.
- The basic infrastructure components like roads, electricity, water supply, drainage, sewerage, solid waste disposal system and services and facilities like accommodation, restaurants, recreational facilities and shopping facilities are to be developed to attract tourists.
- Cleanliness and hygiene should be maintained at Hotels, restaurants, Bus stand and other tourism spots in Nilgiri.
- A strategy has to be formulated and implemented in-order to attract international tourists.
- Cleanliness is not up to the mark in the destination. It has to be improved by special housekeeping team.
- Toilet facilities at bus stand, viewpoints, Lake area etc. have to be provided for the tourists.
- Local transportation facilities could be arranged to facilitate the tourist for easy access to the all tourists' spots.
- Advertisement hoardings in major cities and towns in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka have to be installed to familiarize the destination.
- Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation has to plan for weekend package tours for the tourist from potential locations like Chennai, Ciombatore, Madurai, Trichy, Mysore, Bangalore, Cochin etc.
- The roads leading to different places in the Horsley Hills need to be improved.
- The cleanliness and hygienic condition has to be improved in the local restaurants.
- Avoid usage of non-degradable plastics and liquor in the tourist's area. Prevent usage of alcohol in the tourism destination.
- Prepare and distribute code of conduct to visitors with the support of local government and the forest department.
- Entertainment and cultural shows has to be organised to increase the length of the stay.
- Visiting tourist should help to preserve the serenity of the place, flora and fauna.
- Visitors should respect the local culture and educated to remove litter and carry back all the non-degradable material.

## CONCLUSION

Nilgiris Hills is an attractive tourism destination among hill stations in Tamil Nadu and it is called as Blue Mountain. The cool climate, Lakes and other viewpoints are popular among travelers and number of tourists visiting this place is increasing every year. A research has been conducted on perception of tourist about hill station to understand the profile of the tourist visiting Nilgiri Hill and their opinion about infrastructure facilities, cost of stay, food and hygienic conditions. The revenue of the Nilgiri Hills can be get improved by effective implementation of the suggestions provided in the research.

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