



The Transformation Of Diverse Spousal Selection Practices: The Influence Of Social Media And Matrimonial Websites: A Sociological Analysis In Delhi City

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Abstract

This sociological study explores the profound impact of globalization on the surge of social media platforms contributing to the diversification of marriage forms within urban settings, specifically focusing on Lucknow city. Investigating the evolving dynamics of relationships facilitated by online platforms, the study explores the potential future developments of these relationships by looking at how social media, globalization, and marital trends interact, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the changing landscape of marriage in metropolitan areas, offering implications for societal development and future research directions. Digital media have significantly reduced the distance and isolation between countries; the world is now considered one community. The presented research paper also explains the opinions of young couples who meet through dating and matrimonial apps. This study is devoted to explaining the changes in relationships formed through offline and online mediums and how changing the medium of marriage affects marital problems after marriage.

Index Terms: Globalization, Online Marriage system, Gender, Religion, Tradition

Introduction

The effects of globalization, which have pushed society towards marketization, have now bonded the world together. We live where travellers, refugees, migrants, and visitors can move freely between nations or settle down permanently. These individuals are influenced and affected by the political, social, and cultural systems of the countries they visit. With the development of technology over the past few centuries, while seated at home, people can communicate with each other and get even the smallest amount of news from around the globe. People's mutual social links among themselves in cities are dwindling in the new globalized world. In this scenario, a new digital platform has taken the role of mutual social life. Many sociologists do not deny this possibility; the local people are familiar with all the global ambient places, individuals, thoughts, and values, and the things that exist are happening. Due to the increasing importance of global coordination and dissemination, it is also possible that the patterns of local culture will become universal. Melead (2014), "There is a complete possibility with traditional symbols, practices, fantasies, and behaviours that they turn themselves into the princesses of modernity". (globalization: A sociological perspective page no. 57) Indian marriage tradition reflects the influence of Western culture using social networking sites for the selection of a life partner, new practices indicate

a new form of culture, including creating attractive IDs on social media, paying to websites for search a bride and groom, hiring a wedding planner, hiring a marriage consultant to solve the marital problems between couples, and more of things. In traditional India, elderly people try to save the relationship after having some issues, by creating social pressure in traditional society because earlier marriages were under the protection of some special relationship, and if both couples are not at all willing to maintain their relationship, then that marital relationship is broken with the mediator sitting in front, which is why the mediator's responsibility was considered. There is no mutual mediator on social platforms who can talk to each other if any problem arises. The presented research paper is based on the households established in south Delhi that match through the digital online platform. Modern social systems emerged, which included working women, high education qualifications, individuals' importance, equal opportunities, and self-dependent youth, showing a new dimension to social mobility. Since then, the expectations of future partners from each other have changed. Globalization has both positive and negative consequences. Global media has influenced cultural content in different countries, and local cultures have changed their forms on a global scale. "If looked seriously, this process has also threatened the cultural identity of many countries or cultural groups. Like other markets, a market of culture has also emerged". (Naresh Bhargav, 2014, Globalization: A Sociological Perspective page no.97) Basic Hindu marriage customs, religious beliefs, and many other aspects of Indian Hindu society have altered as a result of Western cultural impact. Marriage was viewed as a virtue in Indian society. This is the reason the mediator, who planned the marriage, felt that God had selected me to perform this holy function for the bride and groom. The mediator did not accept payment of any type in exchange for meeting the bride's and groom's sides. For him, it was selfless work that was both social and holy. All of the neighbours or members of the community collaborated to finish the marriage program throughout the wedding planning, which further demonstrated the spirit of the neighbourhood. Digital matrimonial websites and online dating platforms have supplanted the intermediary in today's global society, and they charge hefty fees for their offerings. Wedding planners today prepare the weddings. People are spending huge amounts of money on weddings. But the question would be after meeting the bride and groom with this digital platform and spending time with each other, are the married couples living a happy life after marriage without any disharmony? Men and women willing to marry are themselves searching for their life partners; they are sharing their plans and their lifestyles before marriage through online chatting. The customary framework of Indian marriage is evolving as a result of this new way of living. Indian girls and boys are using online platforms to choose foreign partners. In Indian cities, it is common for boys and girls to date before marriage in order to get to know and understand their future husbands. Dating was introduced to India from other nations. Gandharva marriage, a type of Hindu marriage found in the Vedas, would appear to be somewhat comparable to this as there is no concrete proof of such a practice even in Vedic India prior to this. However, Gandharva marriage is entirely distinct. Up until the 1990s, the bride's parents mostly the father were in charge of finding their daughter a suitable husband. As a result, it is possible to argue that Western culture has influenced dating customs. Due to the spread of these new methods of selecting a spouse, not only is the identity of the Indian native culture in crisis, but boys and girls are also experiencing a number of issues with online dating apps, including disharmony, fraud, cheating, traumas, and relationship breakups. In April 2019, Atul Subhash, a software engineer from the Samastipur area of Bihar, married Nikita Singhanian from Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, in a tragic suicide case. Their union was facilitated by the marriage website Shaadi.com. Following their marriage, the couple relocated to Bengaluru, where Atul was employed. This case highlights the need for due diligence and legal protections, as well as the possible dangers of weddings arranged through matchmaking websites. It highlights the emotional toll of protracted court fights, the intricacies of dowry-related conflicts, and the abuse of legal provisions. The necessity of fair matrimony rules to safeguard both parties is brought home by this case. Most people send obscene videos to entertain each other for a long time, in the promise of marriage, by messaging each other and making relationships. Fritz- Maria Titzmann (2013), "The number of interreligious marriages and the divorce rate are comparatively high in India's megacities. Cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore

feature a buzzing nightlife frequented by married and unmarried couples, singles, and groups of young people". Titzmann, F.-M. (2013) Changing patterns of matchmaking: The Indian online matrimonial market. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*. Societal transformation is not isolated to urban areas. In South Asia's disconnected and rural locations, family structure and household practices are also changing. Pertierra A. C (2019), "The emergence of digital technology has transformed human connection and blurred the lines between the virtual and the real" (*The digital imaginary: How we make sense of our lives with images and media*). This paradigm change is best exemplified by online marriage agencies, which provide a new way for people to work through the complex web of personal preferences, cultural norms, and family expectations that support the institution of marriage. By overcoming regional limitations and facilitating cross-cultural interactions, these platforms enable a wider range of marital options, upending long-standing customs and encouraging more freedom in choosing a mate. Online marriage companies have become significant change agents in the digital age, transforming traditional marriage systems around the globe. These platforms function as online marketplaces where people looking for a life partner may engage, communicate, and arrange marriages in previously unthinkable ways. This study explores how online marriage-related websites have changed traditional marital systems, providing insight into how partner choice, family dynamics, and social expectations function in the modern world. Delhi is a flourishing urban hub that perfectly captures the complexity of both tradition and modernity, making it a globalised place to examine how marital relationships are changing over time. A growing trend toward non-traditional unions has been observed in Delhi in recent years, partly due to the digital connectivity made possible by globalization. The city showcases a diverse spectrum of marital arrangements influenced by cultural, social, and technical factors. These include same-sex unions, polyamorous partnerships, and multicultural unions. This study aims to document the lived experiences, perspectives, and desires of people navigating Delhi's convergence of globalization, social media, and marriage choices through qualitative interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of social media platforms. This study aims to teach policymakers, scholars, and the general public about the changing nature of marriage in a world that is becoming more interconnected by illuminating the complex structure of modern unions. The rise of digital platforms for spousal selection initially appeared to offer a transformative space where individuals could transcend long-standing social taboos such as caste, religion, skin color, and physical attributes. With the increasing use of matrimonial websites and social media, there was an expectation of greater autonomy, transparency, and inclusivity in the partner selection process. Digital interfaces allow users to explore compatibility through education, interests, and lifestyle preferences, seemingly moving beyond rigid social constructs. This shift is often interpreted as a sign of modernization and a break from the traditional dominance of family and community-based matchmaking systems. The rise of digital platforms for spousal selection initially appeared to offer a transformative space where individuals could transcend long standing social taboos such as caste, religion, skin colour, and physical attributes. 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Mishra and Dutta's 2024 paper, "Expectation of Young Adults from Marital Lives/Marriage: A Case Study," examines the changing views of young Indian adults about marriage, emphasizing the change from conventional norms to more individualistic aspirations. The study, while not limited to Delhi, provides interesting findings that align with more general urban developments, particularly in technologically driven metropolitan contexts like Delhi. The authors examine what marriage means to educated young Indians using qualitative interviews and survey methods, with the results emphasising

personal compatibility, mutual respect, emotional attachment, and autonomy over conventional household obligations and caste or group rules and regulations. This emphasis on emotional compatibility above institutional constraints reflects the societal shift seen in Delhi's urban marital milieu. According to Mishra and Dutta, young adults today seek companionship that promotes individualism and job advancement, which is aided by social media and matrimony services. These platforms enable users to express preferences that extend beyond traditional socio-cultural borders, increasing their influence over the process of selecting a mate. However, the article also adds that, while values of liberty and equality are vocalized, they frequently coexist with implicit deference to caste, profession, and family approval, resulting in a dual-value system a fact reflected in matrimonial platform user behaviours in Delhi.

Contribution of Indian Cinema: Cinema is a global platform, so it definitely should be mentioned here. The cultural structure of the marriage institution started to show a new shape. Indian cinema has made a huge contribution to spreading new trends in marriage. *Monsoon Wedding 2001* (comedy-drama written by Sabrina Dhawan), Mira Nair's fifth theatrical feature, is a multi-generational epic centred around a single Indian wedding and uses the setting to examine class structures, closeted skeletons, and an oncoming cultural identity crisis of India amid globalization and the emergence of a new generation. The story depicts romantic entanglements during a traditional Punjabi Hindu wedding in Delhi. Devjyoti Ghosh Vol. 7, 2022. "This was the first movie in which it was shown how Indian arranged marriage is overshadowing foreign culture." After this, many movies, drama shows, and series were released, due to which even the person sitting at home becomes familiar with things they didn't know about. (Like dating on digital platforms, live-in-relation relationships, breakups, loyalties break, and many others). *Manmarziyaan*, 2018 (Anurag Kashyap) A passionate love tale featuring one of the greatest soundtracks of the modern era. A love of immobility and a love of desire. The conflict between the world, morals, emotions, and the mind. Cinema is a global platform where Anglophone audiences around the world can learn about the specifics of culture. It is a good option, but cinema has also contributed to disintegrating the religious beliefs of Indian marriage culture. The new generation sitting at home learns from TV actors and actresses and tries their best to maintain that kind of lifestyle. In TV serials and films, romantic dates before marriage engagement meetings are presented in a very exciting manner. The TV actors adopt very different personas, but people can't see them. TV actors are also selling their wedding photos on social media. Every single ritual of marriage has been arranged for the benefit of business. Indian movies, TV adds promote Western matrimonial culture to all regions of the country. The presented article focuses on the online marriage system, and all associated materials will be available to the public. The purpose of the paper is not to describe cinema life; therefore, only some facts are being pointed out here.

Research Methods

This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to offer a thorough sociological analysis of digital-era marital selection. The main goal is to learn about urban youths' pragmatic approach to choosing a life partner via digital platforms and contrast these contemporary options with customary marriage traditions. The way that these changes are altering Indian society's social structure and cultural fabric is also examined. Open ended semi-structured interviews were used for getting qualitative insights, while structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. Both quantifiable analysis and a more profound interpretive comprehension of the lived experiences and views of the respondents were guaranteed by this methodological combination.

Population and Sample

The universe of the study comprises residents of South Delhi, with Lajpat Nagar serving as the central field site. This location was intentionally selected for its demographic diversity—a microcosm of urban Delhi that includes individuals from varied socioeconomic classes (upper, middle, and lower), different regional backgrounds, and Hindu religious communities, along with representation from LGBTQ+ groups. The study's use of a stratified random selection technique ensured that it accurately represented

the diverse socioeconomic realities of urban Delhi. Because stratified random sampling ensures that all population segments are equally represented and minimizes sample bias, it is particularly effective in sociological research. This method ensured that reliable and balanced data was collected by allowing respondents from different socioeconomic classes to be included in a systematic manner. For this study, three wards of South Delhi- Badarpur, Amar Colony, and Lajpat Nagar, were especially selected as the field sites. These wards were chosen because they are representative of Delhi's urban population, which includes individuals from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, occupational groups, and cultural orientations. Each of these wards, where contemporary, global influences blend with traditional traditions, reflects Delhi's social diversity. This combination enabled an examination of the evolution of spousal selection in the digital age. Within each ward, the population was further divided into three socioeconomic classes: upper, middle, and lower class. Because of this stratification, it was possible to express differences in the experiences and perspectives of people belonging to different social groups. In contrast to people from upper-class backgrounds, who usually have greater access to digital technology and global exposure, it was expected that people from middle-class or lower-class segments, where traditional social norms and financial constraints still have a greater influence, would have different attitudes toward online matchmaking. From each group of these three wards, A total of 150 responders were chosen at random. Due to this method, every area and class within the selected wards had an equal chance to be represented. Because of the stratified structure, the results were more representative and reliable. It also allowed for the informative cross-comparative study across different socioeconomic categories. With this approach, the study may effectively examine how class, education, and lifestyle interact with the growing digitization of marital practices in Delhi's urban population.

Respondents' Age Structure

The sample predominantly consisted of young adults aged 25 to 55 years, representing the active marriage-seeking and early marital phase of life.

- Ages 25–35: Comprised the largest group, primarily those seeking partners or newly married through online platforms.
- Ages 36–45: Included individuals balancing professional and marital life, reflecting transitional perspectives between traditional and modern forms.
- Ages 46–55: Represented mature respondents with established family lives, providing comparative insights into generational shifts.

Data/Sources of Data

Data were collected using a combination of structured questionnaires and open-ended semi structured interviews conducted in the selected wards.

1. Questionnaire:

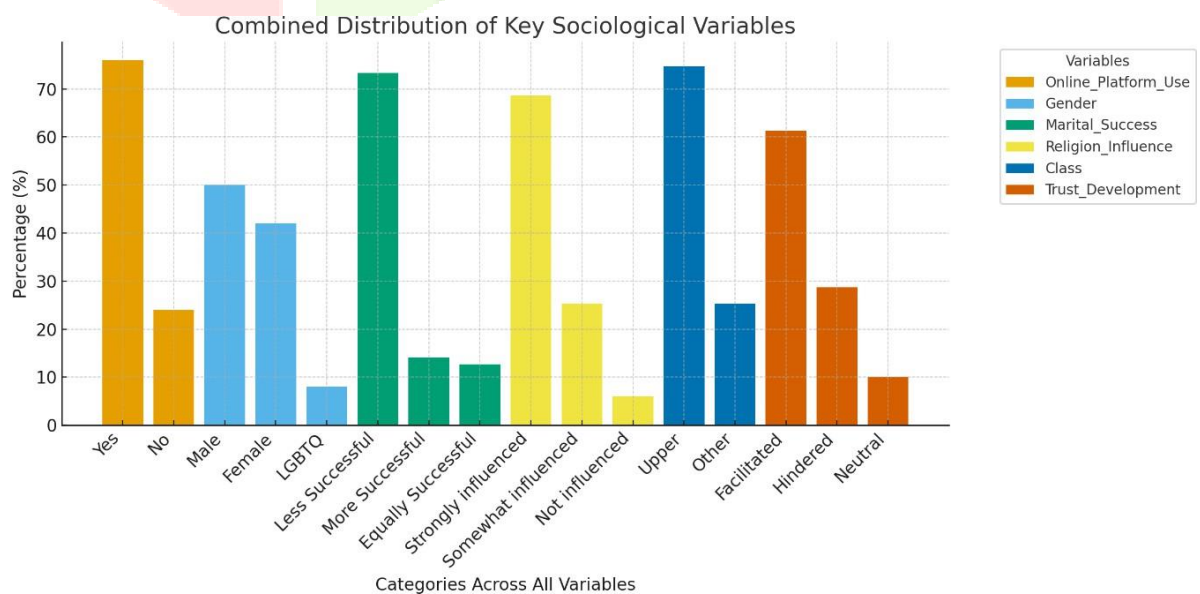
- Included both closed-ended questions (to generate quantifiable data) and open-ended questions (to capture nuanced responses).
- Key variables studied were: Online platform use, gender, class, religion influence, trust development, and marital success.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews:

- These interviews focused on motivations, trust, family approval, and challenges faced in online relationship.
- Conducted with selected respondents to explore deeper emotional, social, and cultural aspects of digital making.

Findings

Variables	Category	Count	Percent
Online Platform Use	Yes	114	76.0
	No	36	24.0
Gender	Male	75	50.0
	Female	63	42.0
	LGBTQ	12	8.0
Marital Success	Less Successful	110	73.33
	More Successful	21	14.0
	Equally Successful	19	12.67
Religion Influence	Strongly influenced	103	68.67
	Somewhat influenced	38	25.33
	Not influenced	9	6.0
Class	Upper	112	75
	Other	38	25
Trust Development	Facilitated	92	61.33
	Hindered	43	28.67
	Neutral	15	10.0



Online Platform Use: A striking majority (114 respondents; 76%) utilize online platforms, highlighting the deep integration of digital media in contemporary relationships. A significant shift in social and marital participation towards digital platforms is highlighted by the fact that only 24% (36 respondents) said they did not use these kinds of sites.

Gender Composition: There are 42% female respondents, 50% male respondents, and 8% LGBTQ respondents in the sample. This equitable distribution of genders makes it possible to analyse marriage and societal attitudes from a number of identities.

Marital Success: A large percentage (73.33%) believed their marriages were "Less Successful," while only 14% and 12.67% said their marriages were "More Successful" and "Equally Successful," respectively. This indicates an increase in marital stress in metropolitan areas, which may be a result of globalization, digital mediation, and professional stress.

Religion Influence: Religion still has a significant influence on respondents—68.67% say it is "Strongly influenced," while another 25.33% say it is "Somewhat influenced." This indicates that religion continues to play a significant role in determining social and marital choices in spite of modernization.

Class Composition: The majority of the group studied (74.67%) is upper class, while 25.33% comes from other socioeconomic groups. The group that primarily uses and engages with digital and online marriage platforms is reflected in this class difference.

Trust Development through Online Platforms: Online platforms are seen by 61.33% as "Facilitating" trust in relationships, while 28.67% find them "Hindering." This suggests that while some respondents are still wary, the majority of respondents see digital tools as helpful for fostering emotional or relational bonds. A society at an intersection of traditional belief systems and digital modernity is depicted in the graph. Technology has improved communication and trust, but it hasn't increased marriage pleasure in line with that. In urban India, the changing patterns of marriage and interpersonal relationships are further shaped by the persistent influence of religion and socioeconomic status.

Result and Discussion

The conclusions of this study provide a subtle image of modern metropolitan Delhi marriage customs, where modernity and tradition live in a constant state of compromise. Spousal selection procedures have undergone tremendous change as a result of globalization and digital technologies, interpersonal communication, and marital expectations, as the statistics and field interviews make abundantly evident. This change is still unequal, though, as it is influenced by social status, religious beliefs, and attitudes on marriage across generations. Most of those respondents (76%) reported to have used online or digital platforms to choose their partners, indicating that digital media has ingrained itself firmly into urban life's social and marital fabric. This illustrates how technology is increasingly trusted to act as a relationship bridge. Nevertheless, the data also indicates that greater marital stability or pleasure is not always a result of increasing reliance on internet platforms. The fact that more than 73% of respondents classified their marriages as "less successful" underscores the relational, cultural, and emotional challenges that come with working online. Despite the fact that online platforms make communication and suitability assessments simple, they frequently lack the familial and communal mediation that was formerly a stabilizing factor in traditional Indian weddings. These shifting marital trends also show gender and class dynamics to be important factors. The study sample's increasing inclusion is demonstrated by the gender composition (50% male, 42% female, 8% LGBTQ), which indicates that digital platforms are not only changing heterosexual weddings but also making room for people of different gender identities to participate in the institution of marriage. Social hierarchies still exist, though, since respondents from higher socioeconomic classes (75%) use internet platforms more frequently. Given that lower-income groups continue to rely more on conventional, community-centered matchmaking systems, this suggests that access to technology and digital literacy is still based

on class. The most conflicted group is middle-class families, who vacillate between moral prudence and technological comfort as they strive for modern autonomy while adhering to traditional standards. Religion continues to play a significant role in shaping partner selection and marital decision making, even within the rapidly digitalizing landscape of modern India. According to the study, religion continues to have a significant influence on approximately 69% of respondents when selecting a partner, suggesting that personal choices are still guided by the moral and cultural authority of religious principles. Even while dating apps and matrimonial websites are widely used, the majority of users still view religious compatibility, rituals, and a faith-based identity as crucial elements of marriage. This research shows that traditional values have been modified within new digital contexts rather than entirely destroyed by technology and globalization. Even though they are now expressed through online profiles and algorithms, caste, ritual cleanliness, and religious affiliation still play a significant role in determining partner choices. As a result, while digital platforms have expanded communication and choice, they have also perpetuated established social hierarchies in virtual environments. In conclusion, religion continues to be a strong and persistent social force that shapes India's changing marital customs, proving that cultural continuity endures despite advancements in technology. People who live in the Delhi region belong differently to their own culture and tradition. After such rapid development of technology, every person sitting at home has a cell phone that is being used in some way. The middle-class families of India are stuck between culture and modernity. Middle-class families are still not able to trust their children's future spouses on social media, and also on matrimonial websites. Their parents are convinced by their intelligent youngsters, but after cheating on them on social media, they reflect on it and realize that, due to their connection to their parents' experiences, they have also failed to leave their cultural roots in their souls. Because they lack the resources and knowledge of new forms, lower-class families are still forced to use traditional marital customs. Because matrimonial websites ask for a good amount to search for a good life partner, you have to create your ID, now you have to pay Rs—2000 for a one-year membership. There are different plans, such as monthly, half-yearly, or annual. If you do not find a good life partner and face any problem, then the organization will not return your money to you. This kind of responsibility is not taken on by the organization. It has been noted that wealthy families who are too busy to engage in social interaction marry their children through online marriage agencies or other technological means. Since their kids are already capable of making their own decisions, they already look for potential life mates on social media platforms. While middle-class parents like to choose their children's wives according to their traditional forms and customs, younger generations prefer to follow the present culture. The new generation spends most of its time on social media. Hence, they test their future spouses through social websites like Instagram, Facebook, Tinder, and other social sites to see which person they will be comfortable with in the future. However, their parents still believe in traditional marriage forms. Even now, the basis of selection and rejection of partners is the social vices of India of the 90s. Such as racism, class discrimination, dowry demands, etc. Before creating their ID on the matrimonial website, girls and boys mention their physical characteristics, appearance, height, weight, etc. Now, another new feature is that the boy also mentioned job discrimination, mentioning his salary in his profile. A matrimonial website is the medium of arranged marriage in the modern age, where parents are seen getting personal information about their future son-in-law or daughter-in-law by creating IDs for their children. We found that in middle-class families, the parents manage matrimonial websites. The freedom of boys and girls to choose their life partner is still limited by social norms, even in cities. On social media, Children themselves send online requests to people of the opposite sex or the same sex and chat and date them. Mostly young people were seen in this activity on social media platforms. Where traditional facts were studied, it was found that, in the 90s, the selection of life partners was caste, class, and religion. Now the dimensions of selection and rejection have increased further. Caste and religion have not become extinct even in the online marriage culture. Still, now some more dimensions have come into the basis of selection, beauty, Women's education, and job profile, rich earning boy and girl, boy and girl should find a suitable life partner matching their behaviour. The traditional values are being eroded, and the global platform has

also greatly influenced the goals and ceremonies of Hindu marriage. After changing the forms of marriage, the problems in marital life are not changing, but new problems are emerging. The reformers are coming to change the conservative ideas, which is necessary, as the life value in the traditions has also been destroyed. Overall, digital platforms have varied the selection criteria and democratized access to possible mates, but they additionally created up new difficulties, such as class-based exclusion, emotional instability, and trust issues. The sociological ramification of this change is the rise of a marital culture mediated by digital means that reflects the hopes and fears of modern urban India. It represents a reinterpretation of marriage as a social institution that is always changing in response to the larger forces of globalization, technology, and cultural change, rather than a straightforward departure from tradition or an unquestioning embrace of modernity.

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