The Role of School Textbooks in Promoting Peace Education in Punjab

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ABSTRACT

School textbooks play an important role in promoting and disseminating the prominent ideology of society. The government of Punjab has been claiming that it has added tolerance and peace-promoting content to the textbooks. This research examines school textbooks' role in promoting peace education in Punjab, Pakistan to determine the claim made by the government. There has been limited discussion in the literature on the positionality of textbooks in promoting peace in Pakistan. The methodological approach in this research is qualitative, based on discourse analysis to investigate sixth through eighth-grade textbooks. The research has explored various themes relevant to peace education. The findings of this study suggest that variations exist across the various levels of textbooks in terms of content promoting peace and the emphasis on the values of acceptance, sympathy, and tolerance. Based on the findings we recommend that both the quantity and quality of textbook content promoting the role of peace, tolerance, and harmony in shaping inclusive social structures and relations must be improved to promote peace ideology in the youth of Pakistan.

Keywords: Peace, education, curriculum, solidarity, textbooks, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Peace is a sign of prosperity for any society. The constant global war has emphasized the need to promote anti-war attitudes among people across the globe. Despite the global relevance of peace to societal progress, many nations are still confronted with conflict situations that impose severe limitations on national and international stability, mutual peace, and co-existence (Francis, 2007). Not only the victimized but addressees of war equally feel the discomfort. Despite the mass awareness of the alarming situation and the threat to peace, the mindset of the people remains a problem calling for change. It is essential to know how discriminating attitudes have developed among individuals and how they can be changed. The people participating in the socialization of the present generations are embedding preset discriminatory attitudes in the way that were transited to them. So, focusing on the education sector seems to be the foremost need, as the education sector is one of the primary and significant socializing agents.

Education in peace promotion is relatively new but is gaining rapid popularity because of the constant assault on peace and stability across the globe. There is a critical need to create peace-promoting ideas among populations at national and international levels. This was recognized by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which declared 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace". . Events like 9/11 and the holocaust have been the leading reasons for aggravating hatred toward those who belong to a specific racial group or those considered terrorists. Similarly, religious groups, for instance, Muslims, have also begun to be targeted, and attaching negative stereotypical images of them has not been helpful for maintaining peace, and instead promoted discrimination and conflict. Hence, to cope with the emerging situation where intolerance is at its highest point towards other ethnic

and religious groups, there is a need to use the educational sector and national and international curricula for a combined effort to promote tolerance.

Both governmental and non-governmental partnership efforts can be introduced to change people's existing mindset through the educational sector and curriculum. Cross-cultural enriched curriculum and teaching material can bring positive changes. UNESCO has already made efforts in this regard by starting a chain of linked schools in several countries to promote peace education and social justice (Udow et al., 2013). There is a need to promote teaching materials and content that encourage ideas of bringing together all nations, rather than promoting rigid ethnocentric ideologies among the citizens and reference group members.

Pakistan is a country already exposed to many crises like terrorism, religious extremism, political corruption, injustice, and economic and energy downgrading. People from developing and struggling countries can more easily develop intolerant attitudes if they are not supported through the education system to develop tolerance. Stereotypical and discriminatory ideas about minorities within a nation and similar views about neighboring countries are also known to negatively impact tolerance levels. In Pakistan people are already endangered and standing on the verge of division because of the ideologies learnt from families and the education sector (Rehman & Berry, 2012).

Among the present generation of Pakistan, there is excessive intolerance. This intolerance extends to a lack of acceptance and tolerance of people from different: (i) religions and sects, (ii) ethnicities, and (iii) socio-economic and wealth backgrounds. The current curriculum in Pakistan focuses more on didactic and rote learning (Pell, et al., 2010) rather than imparting of moral values (Muhammad & Brett, 2019). Students are not taught to become responsible citizens, law-abiding individuals, and community members, and this also contributes to intolerance and lack of

peace in the country. There is an urgent need to spread peace-promoting ideas among the citizens by revising the curriculum taught at the school level which serves as the building block of an individual's perception. If students are provided with extremist content in their educational curriculum, they are vulnerable to becoming radicals themselves. On the other hand, if students are provided with peace education, and neutral vocabulary, the learning exposure will produce a somewhat positive impact on tolerant behaviors (Guetta, 2013). For this purpose, there is a need to revise the curriculum and train the teachers who will impart education in the country. There is a need for the inclusion of content that focuses on civic education, human rights, and environmental education as the baseline disciplines for peace promotion (Reardon, 1988). To achieve national peace, nonviolent content must be incorporated into curricula, along with advocacy for universal human and women's rights and conflict resolution. This will lead to a successful outcome at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The materials offered at school should also focus on developing citizens' responsibilities, promoting multicultural education, diversity tolerance, conflict resolution techniques, unbiased teaching methodologies, and the ability to detect biased attitudes being disseminated (Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009). The students should also need support for developing critical thinking skills to analyze and synthesize the facts being taught rather than simply accepting didactic information and biased ideologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emphasis on ensuring morality among the citizens is not new. Plato claimed that no peace could exist within a society without promoting moral justice among the societal members (Kohlberg, 1970). Morality refers to the characters, customs and habits which guide general and specific human conduct within a society and moral justice refers to actual human conduct based on their

perception of right or wrong (Imo, 2007). The morality of group conduct is evidenced by what they habitually or customarily do, especially with respect to what they think is right, leading to the fundament relationship between global peace and progress (Okwueze, 2003). The relevancy of unjust structures practiced within a society cannot be overlooked, as just social structures ensure sustainable peace and order. Peace education is needed to eliminate unjust structures and inequitable relationships at the interpersonal, group, national and international levels, with peace research as a value-driven unavoidable necessity (Galtung, 1996). Peace can be established by eliminating structural violence from society, which is embedded in state policies. Hence, peace goes beyond the absence of war to include economic, social, and cultural justice and freedom from discrimination based on race, class, and gender (Husin & ed., 2002). Ultimately, removing structural violence, and improving justice in society is possible through peace education.

The root level of peace promotion and eradication of inequality and inequity from society is possible through educational curricula. Education is the source of helping individuals to develop their moral and intellectual abilities (Obemeata, 2003). Educational curricula can be geared towards producing competent individuals who are balanced with cognition and the requisite skills to ensure peace and justice in society. Education is the aggregate of all processes by which a child or young adult develops positive abilities, attitudes, and behaviors in society (Fafunwa, 1974). In every state, education should be used as valuable tool to prepare their people for nation-building and prosperity through peace. Overall, peace education is accepted as a vehicle for promoting problem-solving, cooperation and conflict-resolution skills in the people of a nation (Audu, 2009).

Peace education empowers individuals and equips them with attitudes and knowledge to create a safe and sustainable world, addresses violence and its causes and effects, and imparts

alternative responses to conflict (Morris & Harris, 2003). Peace education prepares citizens to overcome feelings of powerlessness and confront deep-seated fears and the risks of engaging in violence (Hicks, 1988). It also works indirectly to encourage citizens toward the achievement of freedom, justice, gender equality, human rights, and environmental protection. Some research argues that peace education ultimately is responsible for the development of good governance, leadership, and peacebuilding skills in government officers for maintenance of foreign relations (Pugh, 2005). A close connection between peace education and citizenship has been found, as both empower individuals to become responsible and socially functional members and promote concepts of social justice (Hicks, 2004; Cook, 2008).

Peace education can become an essential solution in conflict resolution by building critical skills and behavioral changes needed to understand the challenges of violence and developing tolerance and respect for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or religion (Kelly, 2016). Nepal has also developed a four-year program that mainstreams civic education and human rights through formal and informal curricula (Bourn & Bamber, 2017). In contrast, Sri Lanka has introduced conflict resolution programs at the primary level and developed teachers' guides to peace education (Cardozo, 2008). Countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, within the South Asian region, are known for their perceived hatred and prejudice against each other, and much of this is due to regressive educational content (Ghazi et al., 2011). Additionally, Pakistan faces major challenges in the three types of educational systems that are operational, which include public schools, private schools, and private madrassa schools. Each of the three has different goals, pedagogies, and curriculum content. All three are also known not to have the promotion of intolerance as their forefront agenda (Nazar et al., 2017)

Under such circumstances, peace education in Pakistan may serve as a critical tool for ending prejudice and discrimination and spreading of tolerance among the citizens. As mentioned above, peace education is known to mitigate the root cause of social conflict, which is intolerance for differences in ethnicity, religion, caste, class, and sect. It is fortunate to note that many universities in Pakistan, including the National Defense University, the National University of Science and Technology, and the National University of Modern Languages, recognize the need to promote peace education (Ahmed, 2017). They are doing so by linking the theory and practice of peace education, which could pave ways for enhancing the tolerance levels among the students who will join various professions in future to become the civic citizens of the state.

Problem statement

The national curriculum of Pakistan needs to include peace education to promote inclusivity and diversity in society. Educational textbooks at the primary and secondary levels offer an opportunity to promote national beliefs and tolerant values to support peacebuilding in Pakistani society. The present study aims to identify the peace concepts included in the textbooks taught in various schools in Punjab, Pakistan. The study focuses on the distinct components involving: (a) the extent to which ethnic and religious differences are discussed using a positive diversified approach, (b) the use of discriminatory vocabulary for delivering the content and how to substitute the derogatory terms with neutral terminology, (c) the extent to which curriculum content promotes peace and tolerant attitudes among the citizens, and (d) the level of ethics and morality being emphasized through textbooks to promote peace within the community.

Significance of the Study

The research findings will be useful for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers at national level. The findings of this study can provide stakeholders with different ideas and methodologies to improvise the content of their textbooks and to include peace education curricula where needed. We hope that national-level educators will find this research helpful in revising the textbooks and promoting peace by addressing the prevailing issues in the textbooks and the curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

Pingel has recommended four ways how to review textbooks and revise curriculum (Pingel, 2010). First, hermeneutic analysis can be used to unearth hidden meanings and messages in textbooks. Second, linguistic analysis can be used to examine words and terminologies with controversial meanings. Third, cross-cultural analysis, which is a bilateral or multilateral analysis, can be used to identify textbook biases across different cultures. Finally, discourse analysis can be used to deconstruct textbook content to determine what information, groups, and events the author values, takes for granted, or regards as unimportant.

This research uses the method of discourse analysis. This technique uncovers the meaning of practices employed to advocate peace elements in the textbooks and how peace and its themes are successfully incorporated into these textbooks. English, Urdu, and Social Studies textbooks from grade 6th to grade 8th published by Punjab Textbook Board were used as the sample to look for the embedded texts and images for promoting peace elements. The elements identified for this study are integration, solidarity, a sense of responsibility and acceptability toward diversity. The textbook's syllabus is designed and developed under the National

Curriculum and Pakistan's educational policy guidelines. These books are generally taught in public schools.

Analysis of Textbooks

The textbooks were analyzed grade-wise, focusing on the themes of integration, solidarity, a sense of responsibility and acceptability based on the following criteria: (a) the range of topics discussed and highlighted the themes using historical events as well as present scenarios, (b) the mode of presentation of the specific information which promotes the main themes, (c) description of roles and participation in the society promoting peace and its identified themes, and (d) the practical and efficient use of gender and distinct minority groups, which promotes and integrates peace and related themes into society.

Textbooks of Grade 6 published by Punjab Textbook Board

The English textbook published by Punjab Textbook Board for grade 6 comprises of thirteen chapters of around 152 pages. Lesson 1, *"Fair Dealing of Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW)"*, teaches us about the core element of the sense of responsibility of an individual towards others living in the society. Lesson 2, *"Surrounded by Trash"*, further extends the knowledge about the importance of being a responsible citizen by using words like civic sense, social values, and preserving the environment. Moreover, Lesson 3, *"Chitral Valley"*, highlights the idea of acceptance of diversity. Finally, lesson 5, *"Travelling Etiquettes"*, exclusively focuses on the prominence of etiquette in one's life.

The peace-related content is promoted more in poems in the Urdu textbook for grade 6. The examples can be seen in the poem *"Hum Eik Hein"* ("We are one")*,* as the poet narrates *",*

Eik Chaman k Phool hein sarey" ("We are the flowers belonging to one garden"), *"Shanji apni khushiyan aur ghum eik hein"* ("We collectively share our joys and sorrows") (p.23), expressing the sense of unity among the citizens. In addition to this, the poem *"Ittefaq"* ("Unity") highlights the importance of integration by narrating *"malaap apus ka ha, sub say baari takut zamaney may"* ("Social relationships are the strongest strength in this world") (p.103). The lesson *"Islami mumalik ki tunzeem"* (Organization of Islamic countries") also promotes the importance of integration.

Similarly, the textbook of Islamiat contains chapters like *Sirat e Tayyaba* ("Noble Characteristics") and *Sadaqat* ("Integrity"), which promote peace by relating it with the events that took place in the lives of prophets. For example, it is mentioned in one of the chapters that *"Jo muashara sadiq ho ga wo pur aman aur qameeyab ho ga"* ("The nation that is honest, will be peaceful and prosperous"). Furthermore, the Islamiat textbooks Lessons *"Haqooq ul Ibaad"* ("Human rights") and *"Hidayaat k Sirchasmey"* ("Source of guidance") highlight the importance of civil rights and a peaceful social system.

"Ethics" of Grade 6 contains twenty-two chapters. It extensively promotes peace among the citizens. The use of words like *Diyanatdari* ("Honesty"), *Khidmut e Khalq* ("Social welfare"), *and Mil Jul ker rehna* ("Living harmoniously") highlight good morals and values. In Lesson 1, *"Insaniat ki tamer"* ("Nation-building"), there is content that promotes integration and solidarity in society. Lesson 3, *Aklaqi Khaniyaan* ("Moral shortcomings"), messages like "*Hein Wohe Log Jahan may achey"* ("Good and virtuous people") stimulate the awareness of helping others as part of social welfare. The textbook also includes a sentence" "*Jo Raqum detien hai aur madaad kertay hai gareeb aur zaroorat mandun ko"* ("Those who help the poor and needy through donations and charity") encourages charitable giving. In another Lesson, *Dosrun k lye*

Jeena ("live for others"), there is an emphasis on being a responsible citizen and making society a peaceful place to live. Terms like *Khidmut e Khaluq* ("Service to humanity")*, Smajhi Zimadaariyan* ("Social responsibilities") and *Aklaqi Ikdaar* ("Moral values")*, are repeatedly used, which emphasize the importance of human rights.

This sense of deliverance can also be seen in poems like *Chund Naseehatein* ("Selective advice") and *Humdardi* ("Sympathy and empathy")*. Adding more to this, chapter *Barabari* ("Equality") communicates the message of equality and acceptance of diversity. The textbook content promotes acceptance of different religions and ethnicities and overall promotes peace. The content of these books adequately promotes sympathy, equality, and tolerance in society. The textbook content is effective in reflecting a rational approach toward peace. The Social Studies textbook for grade 6, contains fourteen chapters, with some chapters including content of peace. However, only a few lines and paragraphs, related to peace education, were found in the History and Geography textbooks.

Textbooks of Grade 7 published by Punjab Textbook Board

The textbook content for grade 7 is divided into different categories to disseminate knowledge among the students. The book of English is spread over thirteen chapters of 180 pages in total, with five chapters sharing content related to peace promotion. Lesson 1, *"the last sermon,"* tells the students about the first-ever *Universal Charter of Human Rights*, which makes students learn about the notion of integration into society and their responsibility as citizens. Furthermore, Lesson no. 3 *"Eid-ul-Azha"* highlights the idea of unity and solidarity through the religious festival of Eid, with words like "*brotherhood", "sacrifice", "devotion", "enthusiasm"* and promoting acceptance towards diversity. Moving on to Lesson No. 5, *"Traffic Sense"* also

propagates the sense of responsibility of individuals while traveling and sharing public space with fellow citizens. In addition to this, Lesson no 8 is a poem, *A Nation's Strength*, which promotes the importance of integration and solidarity among the citizens of a nation. The meanings are easily conveyed through words such as *stand fast and suffer, brave men who work while others sleep* (p.89). Finally, Lesson No. 1, *"the rooster and the fox"*, is a fable that attempts to teach students to help each other. During our review, we also noted that the ideas of peace and solidarity were sufficiently blended with the contents of the English curriculum in grade 7.

Moving on to the Urdu curriculum, the Urdu textbook contained twenty-five chapters spreading over 140 pages. The Lesson *"Dahee and Sehrhi Zindagi ka Farq"* ("Differences in rural and urban lifestyles") deals with the idea of accepting diversity between the urban and rural communities of Pakistan. Another Lesson, *"Nazm o Zabt"* ("Rules and regulations"), highlights the impression of integration and solidarity in a community. Lessons *"Ayen Pakistan ki Serr Karein"* ("Come and travel across Pakistan") and *"Tahreek e Pakistan may Khawatein ka Kirdar"* ("The role of women in Pakistan Movement") focus on acknowledging and accepting diversity in society. Furthermore, the lessons *"Kisaan ki Danaai"* ("Wisdom of farmer") and *"Adab e Muasharat"* ("Societal norms") efficiently incorporate the content of peace education within the textbook. Moreover, the promotion of a sense of responsibility was found in lessons like *"Meri Awaaz Suno"* ("Listen to my voice")*, "Sub Say Ouncha Yeh Jhanda Humara Hai"* ("Our nations flag is the highest")*, "Hai Zindagi ka Maqsad Dosrun k kaam ana"* ("The reason for living is to serve humanity")*,* and *"Khizar ka kaam karo, Rehnuma bun jao"* ("Live like Khyzer, and become a leader")*.*

Along with the textbooks in English and Urdu, textbooks on Islamiat and Ethics were also analyzed. Wirth regards to the Islamiat textbook, chapters like *"Fatah e Makkah"* ("Victory

of Mecca"), *"Khutba Hajj tul Veeda"* ("The last Sermon"), *"Iqlaaq o Adab"* ("Values and morals"), *"Meyana Ravee"* ("Modesty"), and *"Musawat"* ("Equality") promoted peace and tolerance in society. Likewise, in the book of ethics, the element of peace is taught through chapters like *"Akuwaat may Quwat"* ("Strength in unity"), *"Aoo Mil ker Khilein"* ("Let's play together"), *"Hum Eik hein"* ("We are one"), and *"Muasharey may Iman Dari"* ("Honesty in society"). Both the Islamiat and Ethics textbooks covered various topics that taught the concept of peace in society. With regards to the Social Studies textbook which includes sixteen chapters, we found almost no content for peace education. Though there should be a significant emphasis on peace content in this subject area, the content of this book focuses more on the history of the Mughal era and the availability and use of economic resources in Pakistan.

Textbooks of Grade 8 published by Punjab Textbook Board

In the Grade 8 textbooks, lessons regarding peace include *Tolerance of the Rasool (Prophet), Hazrat Umar, and A Great Virtue* in the English textbook. In the Urdu textbook, there is a poem *"Mil k Raho"* ("live in harmony"), where the poet has written "*ranjishein bhool ker apnao muhabbat k asool*" ("forget grievances and adopt love") (p.92), and *"khushiyan Sanji, ansoon sanjey"* ("share happiness and grief") (p.144), both of which advocate unity and empathy. In another part of the Urdu textbook, there is reference to "*Apna Parchum eik*" ("We are united under one flag") and lessons that include "*Mili Wahdut*" ("National unity"), *"Agahi* and *Khawateen ka makaam aur un k hakook"* ("Awareness and women's status in society"), which promote integration, solidarity, and diversity. Content of the Urdu textbook includes: "*Batoor zimadaar shehri humara farz banta ha……….. wo paisa hum sub ki falla per kharach kiya ja sakey*" ("as a citizen it is our responsibility to spend money on social welfare")

(p. 164), to promote social welfare; and also "*zindagi k hr meedan may khawateen, mardun k shaana bashaana kaam ker rahe hein"* ("women are working with men in every field of life, on equal footing") (p.129), to promote women's rights.

The books of Ethics and Islamiat also cover a wide range of peace-promoting content using adequate vocabulary, including words like *milli wahdut* ("national unity")*, iteehad* („⌐ cooperation") to promote national unity. At various other places within the contents of the textbooks there is reference to: *"Allah ki maklooq ko azeeat na di jaye"* ("don't hurt God's humanity") (p. 26, Isl), *"Buzurgoo ka ihteraam kerney waley shehri bun jayen"* ("You should be respectful to elderly members of society") (p. 27, Isl), *"Adul u Insaaf"* ("Justice and equality") and *"Hakook ul Ibaad"* ("human rights"). Collectively, this content serves to promote the importance of human rights and peace. However, unfortunately, as noted in the review of previous grades (6 and 7) of the Social Studies textbook, which comprises fifteen chapters, there is limited coverage of peace education.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explain the role of textbooks in promoting peace education in Punjab. Traces of the dissemination of ethics and peace promotion are found within the textbooks, as revealed through the content review, but things need to be more focused pedagogically. The study findings have shown that our curriculum is not following the guidelines to fulfill the objectives of the National Education Policy 2009 which emphasizes the dissemination of peace in society (Government of Pakistan, 2009). The discourse analysis of the books revealed that the textbooks' peace-related content is less represented. Furthermore, the peace-associated values are not equally promoted compared to other course material.

Governmental and non-governmental sectors can promote peace education through numerous collaborative projects.

It is the primary duty of the government not only to recognize the efforts made by the curriculum developers for peace promotion but also to subsidize such projects, resulting in the smooth promotion of peace education at various levels of society. In addition, local and international organizations can join hands to contribute to the cause with sufficiently funded projects that may intervene to improve curriculum and introduce revised textbooks. There is also a need for investment in the training of educators. Regarding the funding institutions' role, they must investigate the organizations joining hands for peace promotion. Moreover, the initiated projects should be monitored and evaluated at multiple levels to determine the project's authenticity and efficacy over the short and long run.

It is important to introduce content that promotes tolerance among the citizens through mandatory arrangements in curriculum reforms that will ultimately ensure the provision of fundamental human rights. Peace education promotes harmony and coordination among people and nations (Yousuf et al., 2010). However, the activities relevant to peace education are often confined to verbal lectures and information sharing with the students to meet the course requirements. This work adds to existing knowledge , which argues that the school practices are sometimes not positioned to make students peaceful citizens (Harber & Sakade, 2009). Isolated curriculum change is not enough in Pakistan. There is a need for training of teachers and school administrators, and monitoring of revised curriculum being used. Furthermore, regions that are known for gender-bias and religious conflicts should be identified so immediate interventions can be introduced in such areas.

Developers and funding bodies need to carefully review the revised curriculum for peace

education before distribution and implementation. The developers should not overlook the

cultural and religious sensitivities and should make things appear more neutral without any

preconceived biases. This research's findings align with a study that concluded that books often

fail to promote tolerance and may contain biased remarks about other sectors of mainstream

society (Cordesman & Vira, 2011). Moreover, the language of the content should be culturally

appropriate as per the medium of instruction being followed within the relevant institutions as it

has to serve the cause of the native inhabitants. In addition to this, along with the teaching

materials and revised peace education curriculum, appropriate training for the teaching staff is

also needed to avoid biases and discrimination taught through the hidden curriculum.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our findings suggest several courses of action for curriculum developers and

educational policymakers to include peace education content. The reconstruction of the

educational system of Pakistan is necessary to promote peace education in society. In a country

like Pakistan, with so much cultural and ethnic diversity, the peace promotion curriculum needs

to be developed by considering all the local sensitivities to establish social cohesion and

solidarity among the citizens. A key policy priority should be to create a peace-inclusive

curriculum Peace is a social topic that needs to be covered in books such as Social Studies and

Pakistan Studies. The governmental and non-governmental sectors should support the cause of

peace education as a joint effort. The contents of textbooks should be reviewed regularly to

promote the neutral use of language and nondiscriminatory discussions to avoid conflicts. There

also needs to be more addition of images and pictures used to promote peace education, as

images are more effective communication for primary and secondary level students. A range of

activity-based learning should also be introduced into the content of the books to promote peace

education, such as service learning projects and community service activities. Curriculum

developers must also collaborate with eminent religious scholars of different religions to

incorporate multi-religious views.

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Author Contributions Statement
KA and FS conducted this study together and wrote the manuscript together, contributing equal work.

Data sharing and availability statement.
Data is available and can be shared.

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