

## **Restructuring the Federating Units in Pakistan: (A Case Study of Punjab)**

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### **Abstract**

*Creation of new provinces is an important subject of the developing countries and Pakistan is no exception in this regard. Many countries of the world like turkey, New Zealand, Afghanistan and Iran have less population and land area but more administrative units for the better service delivery of the government. Factors including population, imbalance political structure, development discrepancies and grievances of the far areas emphasize the admission of new provinces in the country. This paper will examine the political, administrative and economic resources of South Punjab. Qualitative research method is used in this research to collect data from primary and secondary sources based on some interviews and published works. The creation of additional provinces by overcoming the constitutional, administrative, and economic challenges will not*

*only help eliminating the regional acrimony and discontent but also ensure the effective and efficient public service delivery.*

**Keywords:** New Provinces, better administration, development discrepancy, grievances, administrative, political and economic viability.

## **Introduction**

Decentralization and admission of additional administrative units are considered the main aspects of better service delivery and performance of the governments. One of the major political phenomenon of the last two decades in Pakistan has been the tremendous expansion of the functions and responsibilities of the government and awareness of the necessity for economic development. Highly imbalanced political structure, population, bad governance, development discrepancies and grievances, are the main issues which stimulate the flung areas for the admission of addition federating units to address their grave concerns at their door step. Whenever the talks regarding the creation of new provinces took place, Punjab became limelight.

Punjab is the oldest region of the subcontinent and always remain the hub of all the social, political and economic activities. Sultan Mahmood ghaznvi (1026-1030 A.D) was the first Muslim ruler afterward the power was wrested by the Shahab uddib Ghauri in 1186. From the twelfth century, it was controlled by the Dehli Sultanate and continued to be a part of Mughal dynasty until the mid of eighteenth century. Punjab was also the last region of the Indian subcontinent that brought under British suzerainty after a hundred years struggle from 1757 to 1857. After the war of 1857, the British remain the absolute authority of the subcontinent until the partition of 1947.<sup>i</sup>

Punjab always remain a Muslim dominated region. More than 57% population of the subcontinent belongs to the Muslim religion mainly settled in the West and North Punjab while 22% Hindus and 21% Sikhs, Christians and other scheduled cast were mainly concentrated in the East and South Punjab. Being the Muslim populated region, it was considered indispensable for the creation of Pakistan. A prominent writer Ian Talbot believes that “if the Punjabi Muslims haven’t supported the Muslim

league, Pakistan could never have come to existence". The Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also acknowledged it by calling "the corner stone of Muslim homeland".<sup>ii</sup> After the partition of the subcontinent, Punjab was the most populated province of Pakistan. And due to its social, political and economic character it remain in all fronts. The top political, bureaucratic and military elite belongs to Punjab. As Ayesha Saddiqa described that, "75 percent of Pakistan Army allegedly comes from Punjab, mainly a few districts of North and Central Punjab"<sup>iii</sup>. As number of seats of the National assembly are distributed as per the population, with the inhabitation of more than half of the total population of the country, Punjab has a loin share in the National Assembly.<sup>iv</sup> The national assembly of Pakistan has 183 seats from Punjab from the total membership of 342 personnel.<sup>v</sup> Similarly Punjab has considerable share in bureaucracy of Pakistan.<sup>vi</sup>

As well as the population concerned, the Punjab province is the most populated one from a score of different developed and developing countries. Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Canada, Germany, Chile and France etc. have less population than Punjab but are comprised of many administrative units. While Punjab province inhibited by 110 million population just comprised a single constitutional administrative unit. It is difficult for the only chief minister (executive head of the province) to govern the stretched and populated region. The far area from provincial capitals remain deprived from the basic health, economic, educational and political essentialities.

Being the provincial capital, Lahore is the largest populated and least deprived district. The district of more than 11 million people is still growing not only with the increasing birth rate but also due to the migration from the poor and far areas for better economic and educational opportunities. The major share of provincial budget disbursed in the provincial capital leaving nothing behind for the advancement of remote areas.

### **Development Discrepancies and Grievances**

The word development means the process of improving the quality of all human lives capabilities by raising people's level

of living, self-esteem and freedom. The first objective of development is to increase the availability and widen the life sustaining goods, food, shelter, health and protection. Secondly, to raise level of living in addition to high income, more jobs and also to generate individual and national self-esteem. Lastly, to expand the range of economic and social choices and assure the availability to the individual and nation.

The concept of development modifies from time to time and vary from place to place. For instance, in 1950s the concept of development was an increase in the income of all the people. But in 1960s when the Arab countries started the oil production the income of individual and nation increased but the living standard didn't improved. Then the commission of united nation, headed by Dr. Mehboob, a Pakistani national, was formed to adjust a share of health and education in the definition of development. The commission concluded a new concept of HDi (human development index).

$$\text{HDi} = 1/3 \text{ income} + 1/3 \text{ health} + 1/3 \text{ education}^{\text{vii}}$$

In 1990s, the concept of development again modified and this time freedom along with self-esteem were added with the HDi to measure the development. Freedom concerned that the people must enjoy the freedom among the available choices and negate the concept of monopoly. While self-esteem shows the mutual respect, ego and loyalty to one's country.

The districts of Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot are the most developed districts. Being the provincial capital, Lahore, is the most developed one. Considerable share of annual budget is spent in the Lahore. While, districts of South Punjab like, Rahim Yar Khan, D. G. Khan and Muzaffargarh are the most deprived district. All the social indicators like child mortality rate, antenatal cases and immunization are worst in these regions. For instance, the ratio of boys who never enrolled in school is the highest in south Punjab with the 30% of boys and 44% of girls.<sup>viii</sup>

Poverty, unemployment, weak healthcare system, underdeveloped communication system and poor infrastructure mounted the tides of crimes, sectarianism and extremism. Out of 40 million people living below the poverty line, 10 million are

inhibited in south Punjab. Although every government took many initiatives to improve the life standards of this region but due to lack of long term planning, continuation of policies and political instability the situation is getting worst with the passage of time.<sup>ix</sup>

The zoning formula concept was introduced in the constitution of 1973. The purpose of this formula was to make sure about the distribution of jobs in all the provinces and within the different divisions of the province. Without this formula, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala are procuring more representations in the government jobs due to excellent educational facilities comparing with the South Punjab where the unemployment is still on its peak.<sup>x</sup>

### **South Punjab vs. Bahawalpur Province**

As the Princely states were duly authorized to join any one of the two states or to remain an independent territory. Bahawalpur State was the only princely state that was located in the Punjab region which acceded to Pakistan on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1947 under the leadership of Nawab Sir Sadiq Khan Abbasi V and in 1952 the state became a province of Pakistan.<sup>xi</sup> To balance the political disparity among the two wings of Pakistan, the West Pakistan was constitutionalized as One Unit and the state of Bahawalpur was merged into the West Pakistan but with the annulment of one unit the provincial status of Bahawalpur didn't restore.<sup>xii</sup>

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) remained dominant in the region of Bahawalpur and south Punjab. Even in the general elections of 1970s, PPP was bestowed political mandate due to the cause of "restoration of Bahawalpur province". Likewise in the elections of 2008, PPP hold a strong stance regarding the admission of South Punjab province. But after assuming the power they did not take any constitutional steps regarding the provincial status of Bahawalpur.<sup>xiii</sup> Same as the south Punjab was the only region of Punjab from where PPP granted political mandate in the provincial assembly in the general elections of 2018. But instead to carve out additional province for administrative efficiency, the governments always indulged into non issues.

The feasibility of south Punjab province is more than the restoration of Bahawalpur province. The first slogan of Saraiki movement was raised by Sajjad Qureshi who took over a Punjabi speaking opponent, Farooq Sheikh. A number of senior bureaucrats of president Ayyub Khan's cabinet like Qudrat Ullah Shahab and Syed Noor Ali Zaman Haideri, irrigation officer also supported Multani as a separate language.<sup>xiv</sup> The former PM, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, also stressed to carve out additional provinces purely on administrative roots. PPP also has passed a resolution regarding the addition of seats for South Punjab in the Senate.<sup>xv</sup>

Some People believed that the inclusion of Bahawalpur province is not possible. Because the creation of two provinces in South Punjab will imbalance the upper house, of the country. There would be the dual representation of the Saraiki people in the Senate. Due to this point PPP withdrew from the promise of two new provinces in the province of Punjab. On the other hand, the incumbent government, PTI, is constituting the two separate civil secretariat each in the Multan and Bahawalpur. Ministries would be divided among these two different secretariat. It would be fruitless exercise. Because the coordination among the administrative hierarchy is the most important element for the smooth, effective and efficient working of the government. So, the only province of "South Punjab" can assure to eliminate the dissatisfaction and deprivation sense among the inhabitants of this region.<sup>xvi</sup>

PPP constituted a parliamentary commission in May 2012, to constitute additional province in the Punjab province. The commission proposed three models regarding the creation of additional provinces. Firstly, the commission proposed the three divisions of Bahawalpur, Multan and D. G. Khan to carve. These three divisions stretched on the 49% land and comprised 30% population of Punjab. Secondly, addition of two districts, Mianwali and Bakhar into the divisions of Multan, Bahawalpur and D. G. Khan. These regions sheltered more than one-third of the population and stretched the half land area of Punjab province. Thirdly, the commission proposed only Bahawalpur

province. Because Bahawalpur division is comprised of 22% population and 10% of the land area of Punjab.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **Administrative Set-Up of South Punjab**

The Punjab province is divided into many administrative tiers like divisions, districts and tehsils. But with the mushroom growth of the population, expansion of the governmental responsibilities and growing political and economic disparities these administrative structure couldn't revised, improved and furnished the official machinery to meet the basic problems general public. The South Punjab has 110 million population it composed almost half of the total population of the province. According to the statistics of the 2017 census, urban population of the Punjab province increased to 63% while 37% population is living in the rural sector of the province. (Javed & Khan, 2018)

<b>Administrative comparison of Punjab and South Punjab</b>		
<b>Administrative division</b>	<b>Total in Punjab</b>	<b>South Punjab</b>
Divisions	09	03
Districts	36	11
Tehsils	143	42
Metropolitan corporation	09	03
Municipal corporation	11	04
Municipal committees	182	39
Cantonment boards	20	02
Police stations	716	218
Police posts	226	74

The region of south Punjab comprised three divisions of the Punjab province Multan, Bahawalpur and D. G. Khan. Geographically, the Bahawalpur division is the largest division

of the Punjab province. The majority population of this region belongs to the Saraiki speaking ethnic group that is demanding their separate identity till from the 1960s. This movement was started in Multan when the Sajjad Qureshi took over a Punjabi speaking opponent in the elections of 1962.

<b>Divisions of South Punjab</b>		<b>Population (2017)</b>
Sr. No.	Name of the division	(in million)
1.	Multan	10.22
2	Bahawalpur	10.14
3.	D. G. Khan	10.04
4.	Total	30.4

Notes: Punjab Statistics Department, Lahore, published the census data.

Eight out of ten most populated districts of the country is located in the Punjab province. These includes Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh and Sialkot. Lahore with 11 million residents is the most populated district of Punjab. While two other districts Karachi and Peshawar belongs to Sindh and KPK province. Along with high population, its density is also highest in this Punjab with 536 residents per sq. km.<sup>xviii</sup> Whereas, the population of South Punjab is considered, three out of eight most populated districts are located in South Punjab's region. These are Multan, Muzaffargarh and Rahim Yar Khan's districts. Among three divisions Multan is the most populated division of South Punjab with 12.26 million population followed by D. G. Khan and Bahawalpur with 11.46 million and 11.01 million residents, respectively. These divisions are further divided into many districts, tehsils, metropolitan corporations, municipal corporations, town committees and cantonment boards.

<b>Divisions of south Punjab</b>	<b>Multan</b>	<b>Bahawalpur</b>	<b>D. G. Khan</b>	
Districts	04	03	04	
Tehsils	14	15	15	
Union councils	495	383	343	
Metropolitan corporation	01	01	01	
Municipal corporation	01	02	01	
Municipal committees	11	12	16	
Town councils	21	18	26	
Tehsil councils	13	14	15	
Village panchayat	2183	2969	2489	
Neighborhood councils	350	294	339	

Notes: Development Statistics of South Punjab were published by government of Punjab, Lahore.

### **Political Share of South Punjab**

The number of seats in the lower house of the country is according to the population. Punjab province had more than half of the electoral share i.e. 183 seats in the national assembly. While rest of the federating units have 149 seats in combine.<sup>xix</sup> Without the political mandate of Punjab, no political party cannot form the federal government. Rest of the provinces, many times, expressed their reservations regarding quantum of representation. In every general elections, the sole focus of every political party remain to gain more seats from Punjab province.<sup>xx</sup> As the electoral share of south Punjab concerned, it has 45 general seats in the national assembly. So, the seats of south Punjab region in the assembly is more than the KPK and Balochistan as 43 and 17 seats. 16 seats are allocated to Multan division while Bahawalpur and D. G. Khan divisions have 15

and 14 seats in the national assembly. Currently party affiliation wise, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is the largest political party of south Punjab with 25 seats in the national assembly followed by Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and PPPP with 11 and 5 number of seats respectively. Three candidates won independently the only member of PML (Q), Muhammad Tariq Bashir Cheema got success to secure seat in the assembly from the south Punjab's region.

<b>Name of division</b>	<b>Total seats of NA</b>	<b>PT I</b>	<b>PML(N)</b>	<b>PPP P</b>	<b>PML(Q)</b>	<b>Independent</b>
<b>Multan</b>	16	11	05	-	-	-
<b>Bahawalpur</b>	15	05	06	02	01	1
<b>D. G. Khan</b>	14	09	-	03	-	2
<b>Total</b>	45	25	11	05	01	03

Notes: data was acquired from the National assembly of Pakistan's official webpage.

**i. In the provincial Assembly**

There are 371 total members of Punjab Provincial Assembly. 297 are general seats while the reserved seats for women and non-Muslims are 66 and 8, respectively. The electoral share of south Punjab, according to general seats, is 31% with 94 seats.

<b>Name of division</b>	<b>Total seats of PA</b>	<b>PT I</b>	<b>PML(N)</b>	<b>PPP P</b>	<b>PML(Q)</b>	<b>Independent</b>
<b>Multan</b>	33	18	13	1		1
<b>Bahawalpur</b>	31	12	13	4	2	
<b>D. G. Khan</b>	30	25	4			1

<b>Total seats from SP</b>	94	55	30	5	2	2
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Presently Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, is the largest party of south Punjab with 58% electoral share. Whereas, PML (N) is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest political party with 31% electoral share of south Punjab region. The share of south Punjab in provincial assembly is more than the total membership of Baluchistan Assembly and near to equal with KPK Assembly. This strength shows the importance of separate province for the region.

### **Economic Resources of South Punjab**

The area of south Punjab is enrich with the agricultural resources. All the three divisions of Multan, Bahawalpur and D. G. Khan possessed a large area of cultivation. The production of Rabi and Kharif crops are also excellent in these areas. Kharif and Rabi Crops seasons run from April to September and October to march, respectively. Land utilization, total cropped area, cultivated area, production of crops and resources of irrigation all are quiet valuable and well managed. Industrial, minerals and precious stones, in addition with agricultural resources, are improving the economic viability of the south Punjab. Multan is the largest industrial division with the production of textile manufacturing in south Punjab. The rest of the south Punjab's divisions of Bahawalpur and D. G. Khan also have plenty of industrial units that provides employment and other economic opportunities to these areas.

Despite the enrichment of cultivated land, there are still a large scale area stretched on thousands of hectares of uncultivated land. South Punjab is producing more than one-third crops of Punjab province. Still there are thousands of hectares of uncultivated land is available that can increase the share of the region and can create the more economic opportunity.

<b>Province/ division</b>	<b>Cropped Area</b>			<b>Uncultivated land</b>
	<b>Rabi</b>	<b>Kharif</b>	<b>Total</b>	
<b>Punjab</b>	9051	7376	16427	4900
<b>South Punjab</b>	3234	3158	6392	1930

<b>Bahawalpur</b>	1094	1174	2268	443
<b>D.G. Khan</b>	1132	936	2068	1252
<b>Multan</b>	1008	1048	2056	235

Notes: the data was acquired by Director General Agriculture (Extension & A.R.), Punjab, Lahore.

**i. Production of Wheat, Cotton, Sugarcane and Rice**

Four major crops of south Punjab are wheat, cotton, sugarcane and rice that transported all across country. Fortunately, Pakistan is self-dependent for the production of their crops. The production of wheat during the year of 2018-2019 was 8069 thousand tons while the production of Rice, Sugarcane and Cotton were 698 thousand tons, 23144 thousand tons and 6217 thousand bales, regardless of some fluctuations, the per year yield of these Crops are increasing every year.<sup>xxi</sup>

Another notable feature of south Punjab region, is the surplus balance of trade. The region of south Punjab is producing more income than what is spending on it. For instance, Bahawalpur is one of the major cotton producers but the income earned from it is not spent there that cause the dissatisfaction and a sense of deprivation for their natives. Despite these excellent production, the sense of being exploited economically is prevailing in these regions.<sup>xxii</sup>

<b>Division/dist rict</b>	<b>Yea r</b>	<b>Wheat thousa nd tons</b>	<b>Cotton thousa nd bales</b>	<b>Rice thousa nd tons</b>	<b>Sugarca ne thousand tons</b>
<b>The Punjab</b>	<b>201 8- 201 9</b>	<b>17568</b>	<b>6826</b>	<b>3979</b>	<b>44906</b>
<b>The South Punjab</b>	<b>201 8- 201 9</b>	<b>8069</b>	<b>6217</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>23144</b>
<b>Bahawalpur Division</b>	<b>201 8- 201 9</b>	<b>3024</b>	<b>2353</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>14474</b>

Bahawalpur	201 8- 201 9	861	992	26	1027
Bahawalnagar	201 8- 201 9	1153	686	179	621
R.Y Khan	201 8- 201 9	1010	675	40	12826
<b>D.G Khan Division</b>	<b>201 8- 201 9</b>	<b>2546</b>	<b>1505</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>7125</b>
D.G Khan	201 8- 201 9	515	346	91	822
Layyah	201 8- 201 9	569	103	20	1154
Muzaffargarh	201 8- 201 9	903	431	70	3136
Rajanpur	201 8- 201 9	559	625	21	2013
<b>Multan Division</b>	<b>201 8- 201 9</b>	<b>2499</b>	<b>2359</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>1545</b>
Multan	201 8-	582	531	67	293

	201 9				
Khanewal	201 8- 201 9	598	623	68	373
Lodhran	201 8- 201 9	663	676	30	262
Vehari	201 8- 201 9	656	529	86	617

**Notes: the data was acquired by the Directorate of Agriculture, Crop Reporting Service Punjab, Lahore.**

**ii. Water Resources**

Water is the life line in agriculture sector. The region of south Punjab is enriched with water resources. Despite the rain water the canals and drains system are also supplying water efficiently.

Serial No	Name	Canals Channels	Drains
01	The Punjab	4096	6707
02	The South Punjab	1859	1728
03	Bahawalpur	865	607
04	D. G. Khan	442	439
05	Multan	552	682

Source: Development Statistics of South Punjab

**Constitutional framework for the admission of South Punjab**

Two-third membership of the parliament is obligatory to amend the constitution regarding the alteration of the boundaries of any administrative unit of the country. As the article 239 depicts that "a bill to amend the constitution may originate in either house, and when the bill has passed by the votes of not less than two third of the total membership of the house, it shall be transmitted to the other house". Further the clause (3) of the same article

depicts that “a bill to amend the constitution which would have the effect of altering the limits of a province shall not be presented to the president for assent unless it has been passed by the provincial assembly of that province by the votes of not less than two-third of its total membership”. The obligation of two-third majority makes it difficult and more complex to admit new provinces within the existing boundary of any province. The merger of FATA into the KPK province was also took place with the same obligation of two-third membership.<sup>xxiii</sup>

On May 3, 2012 PPP passed a resolution for the admission of south Punjab as a separate province in the national assembly of Pakistan. Subsequently, a parliamentary commission was constituted to submit feasibility report and possibilities of the new province (s). But after the elections of 2013, this issue was also put aside.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Member of the parliament from PML (N), Rana Sanaullah, Ahsan Iqbal and Rana Tanveer presented a constitutional amendment Bill in 2019 to carve out three new provinces within the existing boundary of Punjab. They also recalled the two previous resolutions passed by the provincial assembly to restore the Bahawalpur province and to carve out Janoobi Punjab province. The suggestions were “Bahawalpur province would comprised the existing boundaries of Bahawalpur division while South Punjab would stretched the existing divisions of Multan and D. G. Khan divisions”. Articles 1, 51, 59, 106, 175A, 198 and 218 too were sought to be amended.<sup>xxv</sup> For the alteration of the limits of a province, it required more articles to be amended. For instance, when PML (N) proposed the Hazara province resolution in the provincial assembly of KPK they mentioned more articles to be amended. Article 1, the republic and its territories, would be amended to add the name of new province in the constitution. Article 51, National Assembly, would be amended to add the number of seats in the National assembly of Pakistan. Article 59, the senate, too need to amend to grant the political share in the senate. PML (N) proposed to raise the number of senators to 142. Article 106, constitution of provincial assembly, PM (N) too mentioned this article to allocate the provincial assembly seats to new carved province.<sup>xxvi</sup>

MQM also suggested the same articles in addition with the article 175, “the appointment of the judges to Supreme Court”, High Court and Federal Sharia Court. They proposed to increase the 332 seats of national assembly to 335 by readapting the 38 seats for south Punjab province, 32 for southern Sindh, 43 for Northern Sindh, 20 for Balochistan, 9 for Hazara province, 3 for Islamabad, 55 and 117 for KPK and rest of the Punjab, respectively. To raise the number of senators from 104 to 188 was too suggested in the resolution presented in the assembly.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Mr. Farhatullah Babar said that, “the Pakistan people’s party (PPP) had tabled a constitutional amendment bill to create south Punjab Province along the lines of a bill that was passed by the upper house of the parliament in 2013. The new province will comprise the Multan, D. G. Khan and Bahawalpur divisions and districts of Mianwali and Bakhar”. The senator also recalled the assurance of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to create south Punjab province, that’s why they won 30 out of 50 seats of National Assembly from the Saraiki belt.<sup>xxviii</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Development discrepancies, imbalanced political structure, lack of socio-economic opportunities, poor health and educational facilities are the grave concerns of different areas of Pakistan. The development funds of these areas are not sufficient for the development of these areas. This unequal and marginalized development has created multiple political consequences. If the restructuring was not done on the administrative basis their consequents will create ethno-lingual issues that will create more problems for federation.

All the political elite of the country have expressed their willingness to constitute south Punjab as a separate administrative unit. For instance the incumbent government, PTI, acquired the political mandate from the region of south Punjab on the promise of new separate province. PML (N) and PPP also have presented several resolutions in the parliament regarding the admission of additional province of south Punjab. Meanwhile, MQM-Pakistan too have showed its consent for

separate province. Despite these efforts the creation of south Punjab is still a dream to achieve. A joint and mutual endeavor is still required. The only way to create additional province, is the consensus in the parliament and provincial assembly of Punjab due to constitutional obligation of two-third membership of the houses. Without the mutual efforts, the creation of south Punjab will remain a dream.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Keeping in view the increase of population, creation of new federating units is the need of time for better service delivery.
- ii. A parliamentary commission should be constituted with consensus for establishment of new provinces, like it was constituted for 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment.
- iii. The report of 2013 commission for new provinces, chaired by Senator Farhat Ullah Babar should analyze carefully.
- iv. The findings of the commission should presented before the parliament.
- v. With the consent of all the stakeholders, a joint and mutual resolution regarding the creation of new province, should introduce in the parliament.
- vi. The creation of new province must be on administrative basis, the ethnic and linguistic movements should discourage.

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