

Women's Dynamics in Local Economic Development Metro City Case Study: Justice Perspective

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How to cite this article:
Mustofa, Rizal Bahrul. (2025). Women's Dynamics in Local
Economic Development Metro City Case Study: Justice
Perspective. *Journal Discrimination and Injustice*, 1 (2): 162-
173.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70992/2ck9a442>

Abstract: This article discusses the Contribution of Women to the Local Economy of Metro City. Economic development is the main foundation for creating overall community welfare. Women play a crucial role in the economic sector, particularly through their contributions to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, which are the backbone of the local economy. However, women nevertheless face various challenges, including limited access to capital, minimal entrepreneurship training, low financial literacy, and the burden of household responsibilities. The research method used is qualitative with documentation techniques, collecting data from various written sources such as books, journals, reports, and other relevant documents. Content analysis techniques were applied to understand the challenges and contributions of women to the local economy of Metro City. The results show that women contribute to the MSME sector, particularly in the culinary sector, which supports job creation and economic growth. However, they nevertheless face structural and cultural barriers that affect business sustainability. Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurship and financial literacy training programs are needed to support women's empowerment. Recommendations for inclusive government policy support and strengthening the MSME ecosystem can help increase women's contribution to local economic development.

Keywords: Discrimination, Metro City, Local Economy, Women's Contribution.

Introduction

Economic development is the primary foundation for creating overall societal welfare (Qibtiyah et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, the role of women in the economic sector is receiving increasing attention and recognition. This is due to the significant potential women possess in driving the national economy (Ramdlaningrum et al., 2023). However, women nevertheless face various challenges, both structural and cultural, that hinder the optimization of their role in economic development (Kisti et al., 2025).

Women play a crucial role in various economic sectors in Indonesia. In the agricultural sector, they participate as farmers, farm workers, and crop processors, and play a role in providing food for the community (Faizien, 2025). In the industrial sector, women contribute as factory workers, craftspeople, and small and medium-sized business owners, supporting the production of goods and services that drive economic growth (Santo, 2024a). Whereas, in the service sector, women are involved as workers in tourism, healthcare, education, and various other services, making significant contributions to meeting community needs (Santo, 2024b).

The role of women in local economies is gaining increasing attention in many parts of the world, including Indonesia (Rahma, 2022). Although challenges related to gender equality and access to economic resources remain, women's contributions to local economies cannot be underestimated. (Siska Nadia, n.d.) At the micro level, women play a vital role in the informal sector, such as trade, agriculture, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which are the backbone of the economy in many regions, including Metro City. (Wiwik Sri Widiarty, 2024)

Metro City, a small city located in Lampung Province, boasts a unique social and cultural dynamic. Metro City boasts a diverse population of ethnicities from various regions, including Java, West Sumatra, Lampung, and Chinese. This diversity has influenced the development of arts and culture in the city, which evolve in line with the traditions and customs of each region of origin. Metro City offers a wide range of facilities, including education, healthcare, and commerce. *Selayang Pantang Metro*, t.t.)

Women in Metro City face increasingly complex economic challenges, with annual inflation fluctuations a particular challenge. Annual inflation was recorded at 2.53 percent, rising to 5.37 percent in 2022, however then falling to 3.05 percent in 2023. *Metro City TPID given Capacity Building-METRO CITY GOVERNMENT*, 2024) Although inflation has decreased, its impact continues to affect the local economy, including household income and purchasing power. This is one of the obstacles faced by women in driving the local economy. Nevertheless, women in Metro City nevertheless have great potential to play a greater role in improving the local economy, provided they are given adequate opportunities and support. Given these challenges, it is important to further explore how women's contributions can be maximized within the context of Metro City's local economy.

The development of the creative economy sector in Metro City has become an urgent need to address various development challenges. Some of the issues currently being faced include stagnant or although declining economic growth following the economic crisis, high poverty and unemployment rates, and the weak competitiveness of the local industrial sector. In this context, several challenges must be addressed immediately to ensure optimal creative economy development.

One of these is the low level of preparedness of human resources (HR) involved in the creative sector, both in terms of skills, innovation, and managerial capabilities. Furthermore, the role of local governments is not yet fully prepared to provide adequate policy and regulatory support to support the growth of the creative economy. Another challenge lies in the limited access of creative industry players to financial institutions, whether in the form of financing, business capital, or financial assistance appropriate to the characteristics of creative businesses (Suhada, 2013).

At the 2023 Gender Mainstreaming Verification Team Meeting, Metro Deputy Mayor Qomaru Zaman revealed that women are often marginalized and do not receive equal recognition compared to other public sector jobs. This situation is a major factor in the emergence of gender inequality. Therefore, he believes, a proper understanding of the concept of gender is needed to comprehensively address this inequality. *Metro City PPPAPPKB Office Holds 2023 Gender Mainstreaming Verification Team Meeting - Metro City Government*, 2023).

The issue of women's roles and contributions in local economic development, particularly in Metro City, is crucial to examine, given that women's strategic roles are often marginalized in public employment, including economic activities. In the context of Metro City, the Metro City Government actively promotes women's economic empowerment. This is evident in various efforts, such as supporting women-managed MSMEs, establishing women's organizations like IWAPI and Perwanas to enhance

their strategic roles, and programs aimed at improving family quality and gender equality. *Metro City Secretary Hopes IWAPI DPC Organization Will Be Able to Build Economic Sovereignty for the People, Especially Women - Metro City Government, 2022*.

Various previous studies have emphasized the central role of women in the local economy. Hilmy Awalu Faizien, for example, maps the role of women farmers and highlights the structural-cultural barriers that limit their access to land, capital, and training, while emphasizing the need for gender-based empowerment. This paper aligns with this in positioning women as key actors in development, however differs by focusing on Metro City, a small, multi-ethnic city, and encompassing the MSME, service, and creative economy sectors, thus offering an inclusive policy perspective at the regional level. (Faizien, 2025)

Meanwhile, Wahid & Athoillah's research examines women's roles through an Islamic economic framework, emphasizing recognition of women's capacity, ownership rights, and participation in production and equitable distribution. While their research is similar to this article, it strategically acknowledges women's contributions. However, their research is normative and conceptual, while this article examines the real-world conditions of women in Metro City and formulates operational gender equity strategies for the local economic context (Wahid & Athoillah, 2024).

Based on the background explained above, this article aims to analyze in depth the dynamics of women's involvement in local economic development in Metro City. The main focus of this study is to identify the challenges and obstacles faced by women, both structural and cultural, and to explore the real contributions that women have made and can make in various local economic sectors. Furthermore, this study also aims to formulate gender-equity-based strategies that can be implemented in regional economic development policies. The main questions to be answered are: What are the challenges, obstacles, and contributions of women to local economic development in Metro City? and How can gender equity strategies be implemented in local economic development in Metro City?

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research method to analyze women's participation and positionality in local economic development in Metro City from a justice-based perspective. The qualitative approach is employed to examine social realities, gendered economic roles, and policy frameworks that shape women's economic engagement, particularly in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. This method enables an in-depth exploration of structural and cultural factors influencing women's economic agency, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurements alone.

The research is conducted in Metro City, Lampung Province, selected due to its rapid growth in women-led MSMEs, socio-cultural diversity, and the local government's commitment to gender mainstreaming policies. Metro City represents a strategic case for examining how women contribute to local economic development while simultaneously facing systemic constraints. The research was carried out over several months through a structured review of region-specific policy documents, statistical data, and institutional reports related to gender and economic development.

This study relies on secondary data sources as its primary empirical foundation. The data include peer-reviewed journal articles, government regulations, reports from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), local development planning documents, MSME program reports, and gender mainstreaming policy frameworks issued by municipal

and provincial authorities. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and direct linkage to women's economic participation and local development policies.

Data collection was conducted using a documentation technique, involving the systematic identification, compilation, and categorization of relevant texts. Documents were analyzed to extract data on women's economic roles, access to resources, institutional support mechanisms, and prevailing gender norms. The selection of documents was guided by their capacity to provide empirical evidence on women's contributions and challenges within the local economic landscape, making them essential for contextual and policy-oriented analysis.

The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes, patterns, and policy narratives related to gender justice and local economic development. Cross-source triangulation was applied by comparing findings from statistical reports, policy documents, and academic literature to enhance analytical consistency and validity. This analytical strategy enables the study to generate a nuanced understanding of women's economic dynamics and to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at strengthening gender equity and inclusive local economic development.

Findings/Results

Metro City Local Economy

The local economy is an effort to optimize the utilization of existing resources in an area by involving various parties, such as the government, business actors, local communities, and community organizations, in order to encourage economic growth in the region. (Yusri, 2023).

Economic growth and equity are often difficult to achieve simultaneously. One approach to harmonizing the two is through local economic development. This development is not merely a new discourse, however rather reflects a fundamental shift in the roles and activities involved in the economic development process. The essence of local economic development is building partnerships between local governments and stakeholders, including the private sector, to moreover effectively manage natural, human, and institutional resources. The goal is to stimulate regional economic growth and create jobs. The hallmark of this approach lies in its focus on endogenous development, namely the optimal utilization of the region's human, institutional, and physical resource potential (Haryati, 2010).

In this context, local economic development is very relevant to be implemented in areas such as Metro City, which has the potential of human resources and diverse economic sectors. For this reason, it is necessary to get a comprehensive picture of the local economic conditions in Metro City, the following shows the achievements of Metro City in 2024, which can be used as a basis for analysis to understand the extent to which economic development has progressed and the challenges nevertheless faced.

Table 1: Metro City Local Economic Data Table

Indicator	Year	Number	Source
Economic growth	2024	4,88 %	Latest Metro BPS, April 2025
TPAK (Labor Force Participation Rate)	2024	70,08% (90,116 employees)	Latest BPS Metro, March 2025
Poverty	2024	6.78% (Rp503,161 line)	Latest BPS Metro, March 2025

HDI (Human Development Index)	2024	80,41	Latest BPS Metro, March 2025
GRDP per capita	2022	Rp. 5,970,000/capit a/year	Katadata Databox

The table shows that Metro City's economy is supported by the trade, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors, with growth of 4.88% in 2024. The high labor participation rate (70.08%) reflects fairly active economic activity, although the poverty rate remains at 6.78% (Metro, n.d.). The relatively low GRDP per capita (Rp5.97 million) indicates welfare challenges. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening potential sectors and the role of women in local economic development (databoks.katadata.co.id, n.d.).

Challenges and Obstacles for Women in Local Economic Development in Metro Cities

Until now, women's contributions to the local economy have generally been focused on the domestic sector or household work. Although moreover women are now entering the public sector, the types of jobs available are often limited to manual skills, which are essentially an extension of domestic work. Furthermore, many women with low levels of education and limited skills work in the informal sector, such as small-scale trade or home services.

They generally face unstable working conditions, with low wages, irregular hours, and no access to employment rights such as fully paid leave. This demonstrates that although women play a role in the local economy, their position and quality of work remain vulnerable and not fully equal. (Maharani, 2024)

One of the main factors hindering women from pursuing careers in the industrial world is the persistence of gender-biased social constructs. Stereotypical views that place women solely in the domestic sphere burden them with dual roles: having to work in the public sphere while nevertheless bearing full responsibility at home. Furthermore, marginalization often occurs because women are perceived as less capable in certain areas due to perceptions that they are weak, sensitive, or hampered by biological functions such as menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding.

Discrimination also exacerbates this situation, with women often considered unnecessary to pursue higher education and sufficient to play the role of housekeeper. As a result, women are often isolated in the workplace and struggle to access opportunities and achieve self-actualization. Therefore, a shift in mindset and culture is needed that is moreover inclusive and supports gender equality in the workplace and wider society. (Maharani, 2024)

Beyond obstacles and challenges, other factors influence local economic development. Education is key because it can improve women's knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage in economic activities. Technical skills and training also strengthen their capacity, particularly in entrepreneurship. Access to capital, information, technology, and family and community support are crucial for the success of women's businesses.

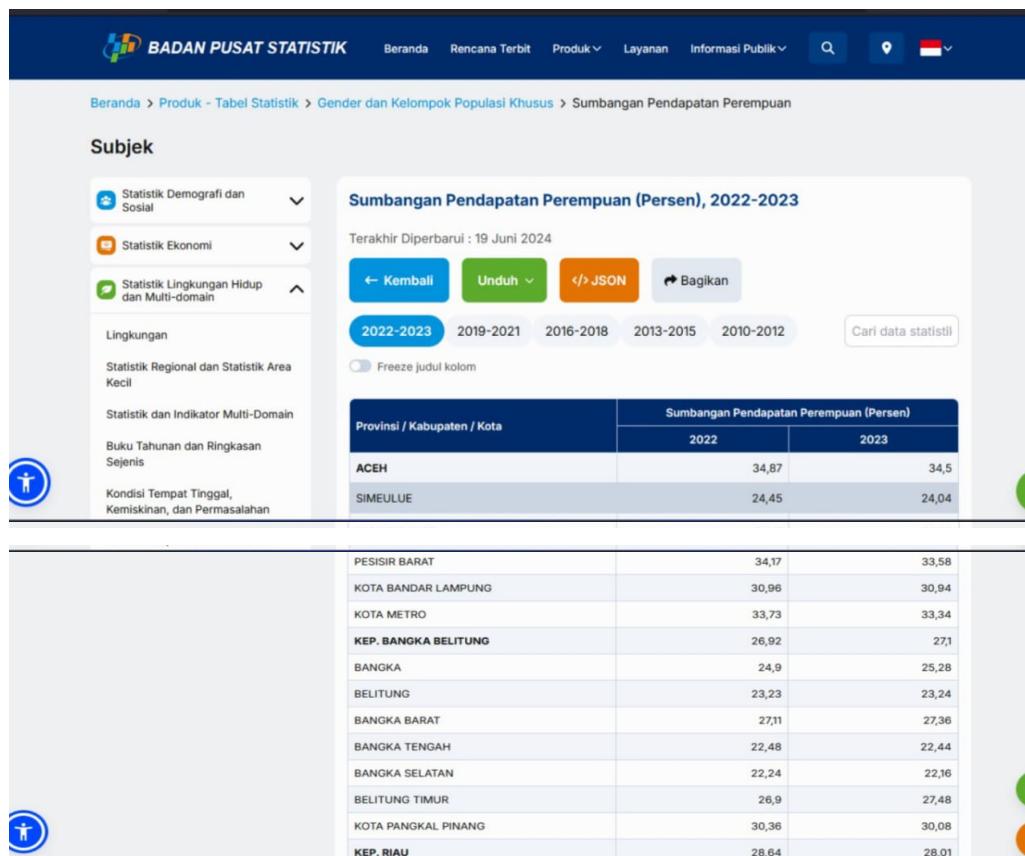
Furthermore, policies that support women's rights, a fair legal environment, and access to markets and business networks strengthen their position in the business world. However, cultural stereotypes and gender inequality remain significant barriers. Therefore, creating an equal and inclusive environment is essential for sustainable women's empowerment. (R. A. Sari & Sulastri, 2024)

Discussion/Analysis

Women's Contribution to the Local Economy in Metro City

The role and contribution of women have a significant impact on overcoming the various challenges faced in the process of economic recovery, reform, and transformation. Therefore, it is crucial to provide equal opportunities for women in the economic sector. In Indonesia, women's contributions to the economy are increasingly evident. In the MSME sector, approximately 53.76% of businesses are owned by women, with 97% of the workforce also being women, and they contribute 61% to the economy. Whereas, in the investment sector, women contribute approximately 60% of the total contribution. (*This is the Contribution of Women to the National Economy*, n.d.) This shows that women have great potential in terms of financial literacy and the capacity to manage family finances, as well as invest in productive sectors and have a real impact on the economy.

Picture 1: Women's Income Contribution



Source: Central Statistics Agency,
<https://www.bps.go.id/id/statisticstable/2/NDY3IzI=/sumbangan-pendapatan-perempuan.html>

In Metro City, women's income contribution showed a downward trend in the 2022-2023 period. In 2022, women's income contribution was recorded at 33.73%, however in 2023, this figure decreased to 33.34%. (Indonesia, n.d.) This decline reflects the economic challenges faced by women in Metro City, although they continue to play a significant role in the local economy. Therefore, it is important to continue to focus on policies that support women's economic empowerment so that their contributions can increase.

One sector that can be maximized in the economic sector of Metro City is the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Metro City is known for having a large number of MSMEs, especially in the Iring Mulyo area, which is a busy center. One

rapidly growing sector is the food and beverage industry, which falls under the culinary MSME category. This industry contributes significantly to job creation and is a very promising business. In the midst of modernization, many entrepreneurs are seizing opportunities to manage culinary MSMEs, leading to the emergence of various new and innovative culinary types. (Ana Septianai et al., 2024, p. 715)

Culinary businesses, both food and beverage, have sustainable prospects because both are basic human needs. When starting or running a culinary business, whether new or established, management must be supported by optimal performance capabilities. Performance, derived from the term "performance," encompasses not only work results or accomplishments however also how work processes are carried out efficiently and effectively. (Ana Septianai et al., 2024)

These MSMEs play a vital role in supporting the economy of the Metro City community. The government also places significant emphasis on the existence of MSMEs. This is reflected in the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs, which specifically serves as a forum for the development of MSMEs and cooperatives. The government's attention to MSMEs is inseparable from their strategic role in supporting the economy of small communities. MSMEs have been proven to have a direct impact on people's lives, especially those in the lower economic sectors. As a vital part of the economy, MSMEs play a number of significant roles. (Admin ekbangsetda, n.d.)

One of the important roles of MSMEs is as a means of alleviating poverty. The high rate of employment absorption by MSMEs is a key reason why this sector is able to help lower-income communities escape poverty. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs shows the significant contribution of MSMEs in creating extensive employment opportunities. Furthermore, MSMEs also play a role in leveling the economic playing field for lower-income communities. Unlike large companies that tend to be concentrated in big cities, MSMEs are spread across various regions, including areas that are difficult to reach by modern developments. (Admin ekbangsetda, n.d.)

Gender Equity Strategy in Local Economic Development in Metro City

In the context of gender equity strategies in local economic development, a gender perspective has been integrated into national development policies through government policies, one of which is Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming (Shulton, n.d.). In this policy, gender is understood as a social construction of the roles and responsibilities between men and women that can change with the social and cultural dynamics of society (Asnawi., 2024).

The gender mainstreaming strategy is the main approach to ensuring equality, by comprehensively integrating gender issues into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs, including in the local economic sector (Asnawi, 2012b, 2024). This approach aims to ensure that development is truly responsive to the needs and interests of all groups, both men and women .

Gender mainstreaming in Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000 is used as a strategy developed to integrate gender into an integral dimension of planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development policies, programs, and activities (Asnawi, 2013). This Presidential Instruction also states that gender mainstreaming aims to organize the planning, preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national development policies and programs with a gender perspective in order to realize gender equality and gender justice in family, community, national, and state life (Asnawi, 2011a).

As an implementation of this national policy, gender mainstreaming strategies also need to be contextually translated at the regional level, including within the local

economic sector (Asnawi, 2012c). In this regard, women's economic empowerment is one concrete step towards achieving gender equity, particularly through strengthening the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, which is predominantly run by women. *Cooperation Agreement PRJ-3/IP/2025, 013/Setmen.birohh/KL.01/03/2025 Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with a Gender Perspective through Financing of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)*, n.d.) Therefore, synergy between gender mainstreaming policies and women's entrepreneurship development programs is important as a strategic effort to encourage moreover inclusive and equitable local economic growth in Metro City.

The role of entrepreneurship is crucial in supporting the national economy, so the government has issued various policies focused on the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), including those managed by women. Currently, MSMEs are a key pillar of the Indonesian economy. In 2019, there were moreover than 64 million MSMEs, contributing up to 60.3 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Interestingly, approximately 60 percent of these MSMEs are managed by women. Therefore, the government is paying special attention to this sector through various programs, such as providing business incubation programs, budget allocations, and social assistance focused on women-owned MSMEs. (Anjani, 2021)

Developing women's entrepreneurship not only aims to improve the economy however also serves as a step to support gender equality and reduce poverty. However, women who run MSMEs often face various challenges that can impact the sustainability of their businesses. One such challenge is the high burden of household responsibilities, where women must manage the household and care for children in addition to running a business. Furthermore, they face other obstacles, such as limited access to entrepreneurship training, a lack of understanding of how to use digital technology, and difficulty obtaining business capital from formal financial institutions. (Anjani, 2021)

Barriers to obtaining capital to start or grow a business. These barriers are often rooted in unequal access to financial services or a lack of assets that can be used as collateral for loans. This situation puts women entrepreneurs at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts in accessing business capital. (Rahma Andita Sari & Rini Sulastri, 2024, p. 50)

Furthermore, limited access to entrepreneurship education and training is a significant inhibiting factor. The lack of formal training or education in entrepreneurship can negatively impact women's ability to manage their businesses. This limitation can be seen in their lack of understanding of marketing strategies, financial management, the use of digital technology, and product innovation. As a result, women entrepreneurs may struggle to compete in an increasingly competitive market. (Rahma Andita Sari & Rini Sulastri, 2024, p. 49)

Furthermore, low levels of financial literacy also present challenges for many women in understanding the loan application process, risk management, and sustainable financial management (Asnawi, 2011b, 2012a). Therefore, moreover targeted efforts are needed to provide entrepreneurship training and financial literacy education for women. This will help them develop managerial skills, capitalize on technological opportunities, and increase their confidence in running their businesses. Broader support, from the government, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations, is crucial to creating an inclusive ecosystem for the development of women's entrepreneurship. (Rahma Andita Sari & Rini Sulastri, 2024, p. 50)

Given the challenges mentioned above, training or classes are needed for women to learn moreover about MSMEs. Skills training, as part of job development, aims

primarily to equip individuals with relevant competencies, enhancing their abilities, productivity, and well-being. This training is designed to improve understanding and effectively enhance performance, while simultaneously encouraging the implementation of meaningful and sustainable training and development programs. *Women's Empowerment Strategy at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service of Enrekang Regency, t.t.)*

Furthermore, training also aims to upgrade individual skills to keep pace with technological developments. Through targeted training, it is hoped that individuals will be able to master and apply new technologies effectively, thereby increasing their contribution. Furthermore, training also focuses on organizational orientation, where individuals are trained to work correctly and efficiently. Therefore, this training is a crucial element in preparing a workforce that is adaptive to technological advances and changing needs in the workplace. *Women's Empowerment Strategy at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service of Enrekang Regency, t.t.)*

Conclusion

Local economic development in Metro City holds significant potential, particularly through leading sectors such as trade, manufacturing, agriculture, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In this context, women play a strategic role, particularly in the MSME sector, which serves as a crucial platform for their economic involvement. However, this involvement nevertheless faces various obstacles, including gender stereotypes, double burdens, discrimination, marginalization, and limited access to education, training, information, and capital. Women have been proven to make significant contributions, particularly in informal sectors such as culinary and service sectors. However, the decline in the percentage of women's income contributions in Metro City indicates the continued weakness of structural support for their economic empowerment. Therefore, a gender equity strategy through the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (PUG), as stipulated in Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000, is crucial. The integration of a gender perspective into the entire local economic development process—from planning to evaluation needs to be strengthened. These efforts must be supported by skills training, increased financial literacy, access to technology, and social and institutional support. Collaboration between central government policies, regional initiatives, and community participation is key to a moreover inclusive, equitable, and sustainable local economy in Metro City.

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