

## Farm Investment Support and Rural Migration: Evidence from the Rythu Bandhu Scheme in Telangana, India

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the influence of agricultural investment support on rural migration in Telangana, India, specifically regarding the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS). This study analyzes primary survey data from 420 farmers in the northern (Adilabad), central (Warangal), and southern (Mahabubnagar) agro-climatic zones of Telangana to determine if direct cash transfers for agricultural investment mitigate rural migration. Farmers' perceptions regarding migration decrease were assessed using an ordinal scale and evaluated by an ordered logistic regression model, supplemented with marginal effects estimation.

The findings reveal that farm investment support under RBS has a statistically significant and beneficial impact on decreasing migration. High investment support enhances the likelihood that farmers concur or strongly concur that migration has diminished as a result of the scheme. The size of landholdings and the type of farming are major factors, indicating that farm structure is essential in influencing migration responses. Furtyher, gender, social classification, and agricultural experience significantly affect migration results, underscoring the socio-economic aspects of rural mobility.

The findings suggest that Rythu Bandhu surpasses its primary function as an agricultural input support scheme, facilitating broader livelihood stabilization by alleviating liquidity restrictions and enhancing the economic sustainability of farming. The study recommends that farm investment support can effectively reduce distress-driven migration when combined into a comprehensive rural development framework. These inferences hold significant suggestions for the formulation of income support and agricultural investment policies planned to foster rural stability and inclusive growth.

**Keywords:** Farm investment support, rural migration, Rythu Bandhu Scheme, ordered logistic model, and Telangana

### 1. Introduction

In order to improve the rural livelihoods, reduce the rural migration, and address the structural constraints in agriculture, farm investment support for agriculture has been increasingly recognized for its positive impacts in recent days. Agrarian economies in their turn are frequently constrained by liquidity issues, the increase in the price of inputs, and uncertainty over the income that causes farmers to be unable to invest sufficient funds in growing crops and to be particularly vulnerable. State-sponsored cash investment support of the farm is intended to help loosen these limitations by providing working capital at the most problematic periods of the agricultural cycle. Direct investment support, as opposed to standard subsidies that are fixed according to certain inputs, gives farmers the option to allocate resources as they see fit, thus affecting not only production choices but also livelihoods in general.

Migration is one of the greatest livelihood responses to the agrarian distress, especially rural-to-urban, seasonal, and distress-induced migration. In the event of failure in agriculture to give consistent and sufficient returns, farm families tend to diversify the income streams by migrating as a risk-reduction measure. According to the New



Economics of Labor Migration, household-based income risks and liquidity constraints are strongly connected to the decisions in migration. Farm investment support may change the behavior of migration by either preventing distress migration or altering the timing, duration, and purpose of migration by stabilizing farm incomes and reducing uncertainty.

The theoretical and empirical data about cash transfer and migration show inconsistent evidence. Research surveys, including Gazeaud et al. (2023) and Stecklov et al. (2005), show that cash transfer may decrease migration by alleviating liquidity constraints in the home country, or it can accelerate migration by decreasing credit constraints and allowing households to cover the cost of migration. These two opposing results point to the fact that the impact of cash transfers on migration is situation-specific and varies depending on the situation in the labor market, household, and the structure of the transfer program. Support of farm-specific investments, which directly address agricultural livelihoods, can thus have different implications on migration than when general social assistance programs are being considered.

Farm investment support has taken special significance in the Indian background and specifically in Telangana State, wherein there are a lot of small and marginal farmers and where agrarian distress has been a constant issue. The Rythu Bandhu Scheme, which was implemented as a direct cash transfer to farmers with land, was aimed at enhancing investment in the farm by giving the farm a guaranteed financial support before the beginning of the farming season. Although the main goal of the scheme is to help in timely agricultural investments, the indirect impacts on the allocation of labor, livelihood security, and migration decisions must be taken into consideration as important policy issues.

This chapter analyzes how the support of farm investments in the form of the Rythu Bandhu Scheme affects migration behavior in Telangana. It aims to know through household-level evidence whether distress-motivated migration can be reduced through assured farm investment support by enhancing agricultural viability or can be facilitated by alleviating financial pressures through the encouraged migration. This relationship is important to analyze in order to evaluate more widely the developmental role of farm investment support that cannot be reduced to agricultural productivity, especially in the aspects of rural stability and inclusive growth.

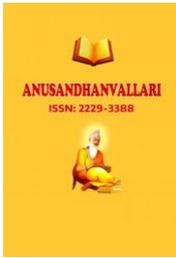
The reminder is that the paper is structured as follows: the second section provides the survey of literature, section 3 provides the data and econometric methodology, section 4 offers the results and discussion, and the fifth section concludes the paper with the policy implications.

## 2. Review of Literature

The correlation between cash transfer and migration in development economics has received rampant research on theoretical and empirical observations with mixed findings. Based on experimental results in the PROGRESA program in Mexico, Stecklov et al. (2005) find that conditional cash transfers are more likely to decrease migration, especially international migration, by raising the opportunity cost of exiting and making livelihoods in a given location more enticing. Their results affirm their belief that income support can alleviate distress migration by balancing household consumption and employment at the source.

But more recent literature has painted a finer picture. Through randomized controlled trial evidence, Gazeaud, Mvukiyehe, and Sterck (2023) demonstrate that cash transfers can simultaneously raise and reduce migration based on household attributes and the economic status in the community. According to them, transfers can unwind the liquidity constraint, allowing migration as an investment strategy, and at the same time decreasing the propensity to migrate due to distress by the poorest households. The two-fold impact of context and program design highlights the critical role of context and program in migration outcomes.

Cash transfers and migration cash transfer dimensions have also acquired prominence in the literature. Hidrobo, Mueller, and Roy (2022) and Hughes (2019, 2021) note that cash transfers also have the potential to change intra-



household bargaining power and gender norms and hence affect migration decisions differently between men and women. These research works point out that it is impossible to explain the migration reaction to transfers without taking the issue of gender roles, labor obligations, and resource control within the home.

On labor market issues, Baird, McKenzie, and Ozler (2018) analyze the impact of cash transfer on the adult labor force, and their results are that cash transfer does not discourage work but may result in the labor reallocation towards more productive work. This has significant implications in the migration process since better local jobs and productivity might decrease local migration that is temporary or seasonal, especially in the countryside.

Indian evidence, in general, and Telangana in particular, is rather scanty but on the increase. Ujjwala (2020) and Priyanka et al. (2025) consider the Rythu Bandhu Scheme and report on its beneficial impact on the economic behavior of the farmers, their input utilization, and their perceived income stability. Nevertheless, these studies pay much attention to farm-level and household welfare and less attention to the migration behavior. This demonstrates that there is an evident research gap concerning the role of farm investment support in influencing the migration decisions in Telangana that the current chapter will fill by establishing the relationship between farm investment, livelihood stability, and migration outcomes at the micro level.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data Source and Sampling Design

The research is founded on primary data that was conducted on 420 sample farmers in Telangana, hence representing all three agro-climatic regions of the state. In order to sample agro-climatic and regional diversity, a single representative district was chosen in every zone: Adilabad district in Northern Telangana, Warangal district in Central Telangana, and Mahabubnagar district in Southern Telangana.

The selection of respondents was done using a multi-stage random sampling method. The three agro-climatic zones were identified in the initial stage, and then one representative district was picked at a time. The second stage was the handling of mandals randomly chosen in each district, and then villages were randomly chosen among the mandals selected. During the last phase, the households of the farms of the villages were randomly chosen to meet the necessary sample size. The samples were distributed broadly proportional to create balance in the allocation across the zones.

The sample is composed of farmers who fit into various categories of landholding, social groups, gender, and farming systems, and the results will allow a holistic evaluation of heterogeneity in the behavior of farm investment and migration outcomes. The data were gathered through a structured and pretested questionnaire, which included information on socio-economic qualities, patterns of farm investments, benefits receipt and utilization under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme, awareness and perceptions, and consequences of migration.

#### 3.2 Measurement of Variables

The dependent variable in this study is farmers' perception of reduction in migration due to farm investment support under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme. This variable is measured on an ordinal scale based on farmers' responses, categorized as:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Given the ordered nature of the dependent variable, an ordered logistic regression model was employed.

The key explanatory variable is the *total farm investment received under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme*. Control variables include age, gender, education, social category, family size, landholding size, type of land, type of farming, primary source of family income, farming experience, and awareness of the scheme. These variables were selected based on theoretical relevance and prior empirical literature on migration and cash transfer programs.

### 3.3 Econometric Model: Ordered Logistic Regression

Since the dependent variable is ordinal, the ordered logit model is appropriate as it accounts for the ranking of responses without assuming equal distance between categories. The model is based on an unobserved latent variable  $y_i^*$ , which represents the underlying propensity of a farmer to perceive a reduction in migration due to farm investment support.

The latent model is specified as:

$$y_i^* = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_k X_{ki} + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

- $y_i^*$  = unobserved propensity for reduced migration,
- $X_{ki}$  = vector of explanatory variables,
- $\beta_k$  = parameters to be estimated,
- $\varepsilon_i$  = error term, assumed to follow a logistic distribution.

The observed ordinal outcome  $y_i$  is related to the latent variable through threshold (cut-point) parameters:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } y_i^* \leq \mu_1 \\ 2 & \text{if } \mu_1 < y_i^* \leq \mu_2 \\ 3 & \text{if } \mu_2 < y_i^* \leq \mu_3 \\ 4 & \text{if } \mu_3 < y_i^* \leq \mu_4 \\ 5 & \text{if } y_i^* > \mu_4 \end{cases}$$

where  $\mu_1, \mu_2, \mu_3, \mu_4$  are the estimated cut points.

The probability that farmer  $i$  falls into category  $j$  is given by:

$$P(y_i = j) = \Lambda(\mu_j - X_i \beta) - \Lambda(\mu_{j-1} - X_i \beta)$$

where  $\Lambda(\cdot)$  is the logistic cumulative distribution function.

### 3.4 Marginal Effects Estimation

While the ordered logit coefficients indicate the direction of influence, they do not directly show the magnitude of change in probabilities across response categories. Therefore, marginal effects were computed to estimate how a unit change in an explanatory variable affects the probability of a farmer belonging to each response category.

The marginal effect of variable  $X_k$  on outcome  $j$  is given by:

$$\frac{\partial P(y_i = j)}{\partial X_{ki}} = [f(\mu_{j-1} - X_i \beta) - f(\mu_j - X_i \beta)] \beta_k$$

where  $f(\cdot)$  is the logistic probability density function.

Marginal effects were estimated for all explanatory variables across the categories *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neutral*, and *Agree* to provide a clearer interpretation of how farm investment support under RBS influences perceived migration reduction.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the study variables.

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
RBS reducing migration (index)	4.045	1.205
Total farm investment received (₹)	124,690.7	73,893.4
Age (years)	46.240	9.890
Farmer category (age group)	2.157	0.629
Gender	1.198	0.657
Education level	1.895	1.162
Social category	2.369	1.015
Family size	1.631	0.598
Landholding size (category)	2.321	1.027
Type of land (irrigated/unirrigated)	1.255	0.436
Type of farming	1.319	0.524
Primary source of family income	4.752	9.830
Farming experience (years)	31.188	12.841
Awareness of Rythu Bandhu scheme	1.138	0.526

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data.

The descriptive statistics in table 1 indicate the social-economic and farm-specific attributes of the sampled household. The dependent variable, RBS lowering migration, has a fairly high mean of 4.05 out of a five-point scale, which means that a majority of the respondents believe that the Rythu Bandhu Scheme is effective in lowering the migration of people out of their villages. The mean total farm investment received is 124,691, and the standard deviation is large, indicating that there is high heterogeneity in the amount of financial assistance or investment that is accessed by the farmers. The age of the respondents is approximately 46 years, which can be construed to mean that the sample is mainly middle-aged farmers, with the mean farming experience of over 31 years implying that the sample households are long-term participants in the agricultural industry.

Considering demographic and structural factors, the average scores of education level, social category, family size, and landholding size reveal a medium level of diversity among farmers, which shows the distinction in terms of human capital and resource endowments. The type of land is characterized by a low standard deviation, implying that the majority of the farmers have a similar condition of land, whereas the distribution of type of farming implies a lack of variation in the farming practice. The awareness of the Rythu Bandhu scheme has a relatively low mean value, which indicates information distribution and provision gaps. Generally, the identified

spread of the essential variables implies the heterogeneous sample, which is reasonable to examine the dissimilar effects of the farm investment and socio-economic variables on the migration results.

Table 2: Results of Variance Inflation Factor.

Variable	VIF	Tolerance (1/VIF)
Farming experience	8.50	0.118
Total farm investment received	7.73	0.129
Landholding size	6.24	0.160
Primary source of family income	5.63	0.178
Age (years)	5.18	0.193
Farmer category (age group)	3.89	0.257
Awareness of Rythu Bandhu scheme	1.55	0.646
Gender	1.49	0.673
Type of farming	1.25	0.800
Education level	1.22	0.818
Social category	1.22	0.823
Family size	1.17	0.854
Type of land (irrigated/unirrigated)	1.07	0.933
Mean VIF	3.55	

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data.

The results of the variance inflation factor (VIF) in table 2 suggest that the problem of multicollinearity is not a critical issue in the model. The VIF values of most explanatory variables are significantly lower than the traditional value of 10, and associated tolerance values are all comfortably above 0.10, indicating that the regressors are not highly linearly dependent on each other. Though farming experience has the highest VIF (8.5) and the lowest tolerance (0.118), it is otherwise assumed that this level is not a sign of severe but moderate multicollinearity and does not indicate that the variable should be dropped. The fact that the mean VIF is 3.55 is also an additional indication that overall multicollinearity in the model is not high, meaning that the coefficients are estimated to be stable and the standard errors are not overstated.

Table 3: Results of ordered logit model.

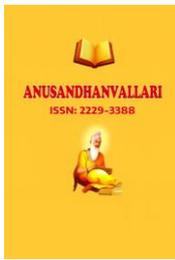
RBS reducing migration	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-statistic	p-value
Total farm investment received	0.000012***	0.000004	3.36	0.001
Age (years)	0.030	0.022	1.36	0.172
Farmer's age	0.079	0.296	0.27	0.789
Gender	0.398*	0.211	1.89	0.059
Education level	-0.096	0.089	-1.07	0.284

RBS reducing migration	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-statistic	p-value
Social category	0.192*	0.101	1.91	0.056
Family size	0.101	0.174	0.58	0.560
Landholding size	-0.553**	0.231	-2.40	0.016
Type of land (irrigated/unirrigated)	-0.219	0.223	-0.98	0.327
Type of farming	-0.921***	0.205	-4.49	0.000
Primary source of family income	0.023	0.024	0.95	0.342
Farming experience	-0.051*	0.027	-1.90	0.057
Awareness of Rythu Bandhu scheme	-0.267	0.241	-1.11	0.267
<b>Cut points (thresholds)</b>				
Cut 1	-3.617	0.841		
Cut 2	-2.617	0.824		
Cut 3	-1.761	0.816		
Cut 4	-0.597	0.810		
<b>Model summary statistics</b>				
Number of observations	420			
Log likelihood	-524.810			
LR $\chi^2$ (13)	53.36			
Prob > $\chi^2$	0.000			
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.048			

Source: Authors' estimation based on field data.

Table 4: Marginal effects of the ordered logit model.

Variable	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.
Dependent: Reduced Migration								
Total farm investment received	-6.28e-07***	0.004	-7.00e-07***	0.002	-7.72e-07***	0.001	-5.83e-07***	0.003
Age (years)	-0.001589	0.186	-0.001771	0.180	-0.001953	0.175	-0.001475	0.177
Farmer's age	-0.004178	0.789	-0.004656	0.789	-0.005135	0.789	-0.003877	0.789
Gender	-0.020948*	0.075	-0.023346*	0.068	-0.025745*	0.062	-0.019441*	0.064



Variable	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.	Coef.	Prob.
Dependent: Reduced Migration								
Education level	0.005041	0.293	0.005618	0.288	0.006195	0.285	0.004678	0.288
Social category	-0.010123*	0.071	-0.011282*	0.064	-0.012442*	0.057	-0.009395*	0.067
Family size	-0.005320	0.562	-0.005929	0.562	-0.006539	0.561	-0.004937	0.561
Landholding size	0.029101**	0.027	0.032433**	0.021	0.035766**	0.018	0.027008**	0.026
Type of land (irrigated/unirrigated)	0.011509	0.334	0.012826	0.333	0.014145	0.329	0.010681	0.325
Type of farming	0.048494***	0.000	0.054046***	0.000	0.059600***	0.000	0.045005***	0.000
Primary source of family income	-0.001197	0.348	-0.001334	0.345	-0.001471	0.344	-0.001111	0.351
Farming experience	0.002707*	0.074	0.003017*	0.067	0.003327*	0.059	0.002512*	0.062
Awareness of Rythu Bandhu scheme	0.014069	0.276	0.015679	0.270	0.017290	0.270	0.013056	0.277

Source: Authors' estimation based on field data.

The marginal effects of the ordered logit model in table 4 help in making significant conclusions about the roles played by farm investment support and household characteristics in shaping the perceptions of the farmers on reduced migration. Most significantly, the marginal effect of total farm investment received is negative and very significant in all types of responses, including strongly disagree, disagree, and agree. This suggests that increased rates of investment by farmers will ease considerably the chances of farmers not concurring or being neutral with regard to migration reduction and conversely enhance the chances of agreement that migration has diminished. Essentially, the support of farm investment in the Rythu Bandhu scheme is vital in enhancing the economic viability of the farms, hence reducing distress-induced migration.

The demographic factors, including age and age of farmers, do not significantly affect the perceptions of reduced migration, implying that the migration-reducing effect of supporting farm investments is more or less the same on both the younger and older age groups. Gender, however, presents a weak but significant negative marginal effect. That means that female-headed households (or women respondents) are less prone to strongly agreeing that migration has reduced, perhaps due to higher livelihood insecurity or labor limitations experienced by women in the agricultural sector.

The level of education does not substantially influence the outcomes of migration, but social category has a weakly significant negative impact, which means that farmers belonging to socially disadvantaged groups are not likely to feel the decline in migration. This underscores the doctrine of structural susceptibility of the marginalized communities despite the availability of income support schemes. It is also noteworthy that household size does not also play a huge role in the process of migration, and thus family dependency ratios are not the drivers of migration behavior in consideration of the impact of economic support.

The structural features of the farm become significant determinants. The marginal effect of landholding size has a positive and significant marginal effect on all categories of responses, and this implies that owners of large landholdings are more likely to respond that migration has decreased, which shows an improved income stability and employment opportunities in the farm. Likewise, the type of farming has a positive effect that is large and highly significant, and this means that farmers who practice intensive or diversified farming systems are significantly more likely to report reduced migration. The experience in farming also has a weak yet positive

effect, indicating that the more experienced farmers can use the investment support to stabilize livelihoods in the area.

Lastly, the type of land, the main source of family income, and awareness of the Rythu Bandhu scheme are statistically insignificant, and therefore, though there is a need to increase awareness, the actual receipt and successful use of farm investment support (together with land and farming characteristics) will eventually determine migration outcomes. All in all, the findings indicate that farm investment subsidies play a significant role in alleviating rural migration because of the enhancement of farm-based livelihood.

Table 5: Results of the multinomial logit model (for robustness check).

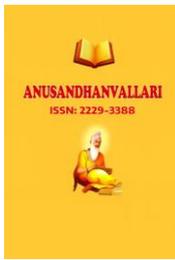
Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Total farm investment received	-0.000026***(0.000010)	-0.000014**(0.000007)	-0.000012**(0.000006)	-0.000009*(0.000005)
Age (years)	-0.136**(0.066)	0.015(0.049)	-0.031(0.041)	-0.090**(0.037)
Farmer category (age group)	-1.648**(0.739)	0.240(0.613)	0.632(0.514)	0.074(0.401)
Gender	-15.165(636.697)	-0.237(0.332)	-0.270(0.352)	-0.316(0.336)
Education level	0.019(0.234)	0.190(0.178)	0.108(0.156)	0.232*(0.120)
Social category	-0.280(0.243)	-0.261(0.222)	-0.079(0.179)	-0.357****(0.135)
Family size	0.225(0.472)	-0.434(0.344)	-0.130(0.313)	0.197(0.242)
Landholding size	0.770(0.571)	0.775*(0.434)	0.541(0.393)	0.230(0.318)
Type of land (irrigated/unirrigated)	0.648(0.532)	0.909**(0.428)	-0.966**(0.483)	-0.127(0.303)
Type of farming	1.838****(0.504)	1.357****(0.404)	0.552(0.350)	0.437(0.292)
Primary source of family income	0.003(0.086)	-0.052(0.044)	-0.040(0.045)	0.028(0.037)
Farming experience	0.210****(0.081)	-0.005(0.055)	0.043(0.047)	0.124****(0.042)
Awareness of Rythu Bandhu scheme	-13.227(723.138)	0.171(0.410)	0.962**(0.405)	-0.232(0.441)
Constant	27.619(963.492)	-4.751****(1.731)	-2.482*(1.388)	0.058(1.176)

Source: Authors' calculation based on field data.

## 5. Conclusion and Policy Implications

### 5.1 Conclusion

The impact of farm investment support through the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) on migration outcomes in Telangana are investigated in this paper, using primary data from 420 farmers from three districts Adilabad, Warangal, and Mahabubnagar across the northern, central, and southern agro-climatic zones, respectively. The evidence from the ordered logistic regression results provides strong support that farm investment support plays a significant role in reducing migration, particularly distress-driven migration from rural areas of Telangana. The



coefficient of total farm investment as obtained under RBS is positive and extremely significant, meaning that the more the farmers are supported to invest, the more probable they will say that there has been more likelihood of reducing migration through the scheme.

Moreover, the results also indicate that the characteristics of farms and livelihood systems play a critical role through which the migration patterns are determined. Moreover, the size and type of landholding have significant impacts, and this indicates that small-scale farmers and those who practice specific farming regimes are more susceptible to investment assistance in their migration choices. The aspect of gender and the social category also come to the fore, bringing out the socio-economic aspects of migration behavior. These findings are supported by marginal effects analysis, which reveals that higher investment support has a significant role in reducing the likelihood of farmers entering the disagreement categories and enhancing the likelihood of farmers entering the agreement categories in relation to less migration.

Thus, the findings suggest Rythu Bandhu is not only an agricultural input support program but also a wider livelihood stabilization program. The scheme increases the viability of the farms by alleviating liquidity constraints at the start of the crop season, boosting employment within the community, and lessening the push towards migration to find other means of livelihood.

## 5.2 Policy Implications

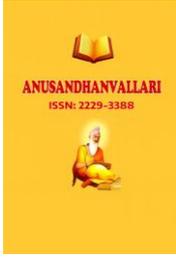
There are significant policy implications of the results. To begin with, government initiatives such as farm investment support schemes such as Rythu Bandhu could be considered effective in lowering the distress migration, particularly in areas that are susceptible to agrarian instabilities. Enhancement and maintenance of such schemes can help in stabilizing the rural areas and alleviating the urban labor market.

Second, since the effects on the small and marginal farmers vary according to their landholding sizes and type of farming, the policy should be designed to include specific pro-poor improvements to the small and marginal farmers with additional support like access to credit, extension services, and irrigation. Third, gender and social category are important enough to show that it is necessary to have inclusive policy frameworks that would guarantee equitable access and benefits for vulnerable groups.

Lastly, it can further boost its migration-reducing impacts by integrating farm investment assistance programs and rural employment schemes, skill generation, and local value-chain growth. An integrated rural development plan combining income support with productivity-enhancing and employment-generating initiatives would reinforce the long-run sustainability of the migration reduction efforts.

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