

GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE IN GUSAU METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

Women, especially in Africa, have played a significant role in the sustainable economic development of their communities and countries through agriculture. This study is a descriptive survey of gender division of labour in agriculture among Households in Gusau metropolis. A sample of one hundred and fifty respondents was taken across five wards in Gusau metropolis. Ninety two (92) respondents were males; fifty eight (58) were females. The data was collected through the use of questionnaire guide and was analyzed using frequency and percentage. The results show that there is a rigid division of labour in agriculture, male perform tedious tasks such as land clearing and weeding while women engage in less tedious task such as harvesting and marketing. It showed that the major constraints women have are capital and gender roles. Arising from these findings, it can be concluded that there is a rigid division of labour by task in Gusau metropolis and that women face a lot of constraints in their bid to participate in agriculture and lastly gender division of labour re-enforces gender bias and puts women in disadvantaged position in terms of income and decision making process in agriculture. Therefore we recommend that women should be included and empowered to participate in all agricultural activities.

Keywords: Gender, division of Labour, gender bias, agriculture, sustainable development.

Introduction

One of the most important contributions of agriculture in the world is over the provision of food for the growing population of the world hence food is an important factor that determines the standard of living of any country and contributes significantly to the stability of the nation. Women have historically used agriculture as one of the strategies to address poverty and improve livelihoods, and also to maintain the stability

and sustainability of their families (Fabiya et al, 2007). Women, especially in Africa, have played a significant role in the sustainable and economic development of their communities and countries. They constitute more than half of the agricultural labour. This is more evident in developing countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, etc (Manuh, 1998). Fabiya, et al. (2007) stated that female farmers have played an important role in food production and food

security. Women account for 70 percent of agricultural workers, 80 percent in food production and take up to 60 to 80 percent of marketing, yet they have limited access to agricultural inputs. Kabane (2010) asserts that tradition and cultural norms are the major challenges that limit the access of women to agricultural input, thereby leading to the invisibility of women in agricultural development.

In the last few decades, there has been a greater awareness of gender based constraints to agricultural development. Yet, an important constraint to agricultural development remains neglected and under researched - traditional gender division of labour and the resulting time poverty faced by women. It is well established that the patriarchal norms shape gender roles and responsibilities (Alahira 2014). Usually in rural societies, these roles are rigid and place heavy work burden on women. Outside the sphere of farm production, women are responsible for household maintenance (indirect care) and provision of direct care to their family members. In performing their roles of food producer and homemaker, women receive minimal assistance from men. Consequently, women balance their multiple roles by undertaking different activities simultaneously. The unequal division of labour between men and women and the resulting time constraints on women is not only detrimental to their well-being but it is also a source of inefficiency. Men control cash crop production, relegating the production of food crops and activities related to household maintenance and care work to women. At the same time, women also assist their husbands in cash crop production in return for a small wage (William, 1995).

Most African countries have had gender specific roles in Agricultural production; for example, land clearing is normally assigned to men while women and men participate in

tilling the land (Enete et. al, 2004). Weeding is normally done by women, who are also responsible for transporting crops from the farm to the home or to cooperative units. In terms of division of labour, studies have indicated that women have been contributing more time in agricultural cycle than men, (Arora, 2014).

In the north, religion plays an important role in the division of labour. Among Muslim Hausa-Fulanis seclusion norms dictate that women are less involved in outside the compound farming tasks (other than harvesting of certain crops by widows or women who have reached menopause). Generally, rural women are actively involved in post-harvest processing as well as in raising poultry and small animals (sheep and goat), even when in *purdah*. They do this as a way to store wealth, which serves as a “living savings account” (Mohammed and Abdulkadir, 2012).

The Problem

Over the years, Nigeria has been involved in several agricultural programmes which include Operation Feed the Nation 1976-1980, Green Revolution 1981-1983, River basin development authority, 1976.

Back-to-land programme 1983-1985 e. t. c. Most of these programmes have not had a lasting impact and therefore vanished without achieving most of their objectives. Women – in-agriculture unit was created from the existing ADPs in 1989 in order to extend “extensionists” services to women farmers. Since the World Bank stopped funding the programme, different states have tried to implement the programme under varying policies and adopting varieties of strategies to sustain the programme. The Women –In – agriculture unit of the ADPs was created in recognition of women’s contribution to agriculture. This was as a result of a research sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1987,

which revealed that agricultural extension services had not targeted women as important clienteles, in spite of the indispensable role played by women in agriculture. The research also revealed that most of the messages from the extension agents emphasized their domestic roles with topics on child care and family nutrition. . The widespread assumption that men and not women make key farm management decision is a misconception and the idea that women in the northern parts of the country were not involved in active agriculture was finally laid to rest (Nnoyelu, 1996).

In many parts of the world and especially in developing countries females are the main farmers or producers who are actively involved in agriculture (FAO, 2011, 2007), According to FAO (2011), females comprise, on average, 43 percent of the agricultural force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The same report argues that reducing gender inequalities in access to productive resources and services could produce an increase in yield on female's farms of between 20 percent and 30 percent, which could raise agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 percent to 4 percent. Realizing these gains require male and female farmers to have access to information and assistance. But despite the key roles woman farmers played in agriculture they have been virtually ignored by agriculture intervention programmes (World Bank 2010).

In Nigeria women are saddled with most of the task in agricultural production "supposedly" meant for the men but the benefits gained by them are not commensurate to the man- hours they spend on the task (Mijindadi, 1993). He added that despite the dominant and important role women play in agricultural production in the country they are hardly given any attention in the area of training. Women in particular are responsible for half of the world's food

production and produce between 50 and 60 percent of the food in most developing countries, yet despite their contribution to global food security, women farmers are frequently underestimated and over looked in developing strategies (Onguono 2009). Patriarchal structures and authority gave more resources to men resulting in women having less access to productive resources in agriculture. Also social, cultural and religious constraints hinder women access to productive resources such as credit, improved technologies on seeds, fertilizer etc (Akinsanmi, 2005)

In Gusau metropolis socio cultural and religious factors have played a significant role in hindering women participation in agriculture, there by denying them access to productive resources and invariably denying them access to power. It is against this background that this study aims at looking at the nature of gender division of labour in agriculture in Gusau metropolis.

Aim and Objectives

The main of this study is to examine gender division of labour in agriculture, while the objectives are to:

- (1) Examine the performance of task by gender in agriculture.
- (2) Ascertain the consequence of gender division of labour in agriculture.
- (3) Identify the constraints militating against women participation in Agricultural production.

Review of Literature

Division of labour is the specialization of cooperative labour in specific circumscribed task and roles. Historically, an increasing complex division of labour is closely associated with the growth of total output and trade, the rise of capitalism, and of the complexity of industrialization process. It is widely accepted that the division of labour is to a greater

extant inevitable, simply because no one can do all task alone. Labour hierarchy is a very common feature of the modern workplace structure, but of course the way these hierarchies are structured can be influence by a variety of different factors (Akinsanmi, 2005). Division of labour creates general roles, which in turn lead to gender social behaviour (Fabiyyi, et al. 2007). Olawoye, et al (1994) defined Gender as a social construct that identifies the socially expected rights, responsibilities, privileges and obligations of males and females. According to her, each society or group decides which tasks, as well as which opportunities should be assigned to males and females, young and old.

Gender roles refer to sets of behavioural norms that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in the context of a culture, which differ widely between cultures and time. Gender role theory proposes that boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviour and attitudes from the family and the overall culture they grow up with. Social role theory proposes that the social structure is the underlying force for the gender difference; proposing that sex differentiated behaviour is driven by the division of labour between sexes within a society. In many societies, men have certain roles and responsibilities while women have other roles and responsibilities and often, the biological differences between men and women are used to explain these different roles. In Ghana, for example, men have traditionally been involved in cloth weaving. In India, women are labourers in the construction company. So biological differences do not necessarily determine what men and women can or should do (Olawoye,2005). The roles are often socially defined by the traditions and beliefs of a particular culture. The gender roles are considerably rigid in rural societies, thus, hinder the idea of substitution of activities

between men and women. Due to strict cultural constructs and poor bargaining power, women continue to bear the work burden. When faced with time constraints women respond by multi-tasking or making trade-offs between direct/indirect care work and farm production/income generating activities. Besides direct physical effects on women's health, the excessive work burden and the resulting competing claims on women's time can have important economic ramifications. Women play a critical role in food security by fulfilling their roles as food providers. Men and women jointly cultivate staple foods; men are responsible for food production, while women specialize in food processing. This variant is mainly encountered where Islamic practice of female seclusion prevents women from engaging in farm work. In many places in Africa gender division of labour in agriculture is based on types of crops, types of task or both. Studies have shown that men are involved in most physical demanding activities such as ploughing, bush clearing, bush burning, while other activities along the food chain are left to women. Women are involved in planting, harvesting, weeding, marketing of crops and in post-harvest processing of food crops such as threshing, winnowing, and milling (UNICEF 2006). With regard to types of crops women are regarded to be more involved in food crops while men are involved in cash crops whether food or non-food crops. An explanation of this is that women are responsible for feeding the family, thus prefer to grow subsistence crops and men are responsible for providing cash income and thus prefer to grow cash or export crops (Menhra and Rojas, 2008). In regions, where women and men work on separate plots growing different crops, women usually engage in subsistence farming to provide food to fulfil the needs of the members of the household while men are engage in production of cash or export crops. Women's

role is not limited to food production; they are also required to process and prepare the food they grow, perform child care work in the household and also help men in their cash crop production (Mohammed and Abdulkadir, 2012).

According to Damisa, and Yohana (2007) Nigerian women have worked side by side with men in agriculture with some marked division of labour between them; the men perform the tedious tasks while the women were involve in less tedious task. However, gradually, the distinction between men's and women's task is becoming quite blurred. There are very few tasks that are done exclusively by men like clearing of field. Women performed all the tasks on their plots, from sowing, weeding to harvesting. They may get some assistance from men in clearing and preparing the land for cultivation.

There has been a growing recognition of the importance of gender to some specific development sectors in recent times. It has also become a cross-cutting issue in agriculture, health and, infrastructural development. This is because, there has been significant gender related changes. In the past decades, women have been known to play an important role in agricultural activities in the rural areas. Despite their roles in agricultural activities, their contributions were not recognized and so, they were left out in development programs. This has led to decrease in agricultural productivity (Odebode, 2008).

In Nigeria, the introduction of *Sharia* laws prohibiting males and females travelling together has put additional strain on women in the affected states. Women therefore spend more time moving from place to place within the village vicinity. Gusau is one of such cities where sharia law is practiced.

Kabane (2010) argues that constraints which are face by women famers differ from country to country and culture to culture. In

Nigeria, Afghanistan and other patriarchal societies for instance, women lack independent rights to land. Land right are only allocated through men, either son or husbands. According to Wanyeki, (2003) in Africa, customary or traditionally men manage land, women only come to fore in exceptional cases, depending not on custom or tradition, but on individual families who try to be reasonable in granting lands to their sisters or mothers.

In addition to limited access to land, women face problems of access to their inputs, including credit (Capital/ money). This is because many credit associations and export crop market cooperatives limit membership to household heads in many African countries, there by excluding married and single women (Manuh 1998). Women face greater difficulties than men, particularly with regard to participation in rural corporations and access to credit, training and agriculture extension.

Education is one of the significant factors affecting the participation of women in agricultural development (Manuh 1989). She further argued that lack of education and training has been identified as the barrier to women's advancement in the society. She argues that in Africa, female illiteracy rates were over 60 percent in 1996 compared to 41 percent of men.

Illiteracy is a major constraint facing women in development. Women are unable to understand and utilize technical information because they lack basic formal education. Therefore, the education of women is important for their progressive participation in sustainable development.

Many studies have shown that women play a predominant role in household food security through participating in agricultural and food production. They account for between 60 and 80% of household food production in Sub Sahara-Africa FAO (2009). In

south Asia, women provide 90 percent of the labour for cultivating rice. They ensure household food security and nutrition through their roles as food producers, processors and income earners but despite their key role in food production they have less access to land, resources, credit, training extension services agricultural inputs and technology. (Menhara and Rogers (2008). They are also trapped in poverty and illiteracy and unwanted high fertility. And this affects production and food security.

Damisa and Yohanna (2007) using Zaria in Kaduna State as their study area examined the level of participation of rural women in the decision making in different areas of agriculture and factors influencing their participation in the decision making process on farm management. They found that women participation in decision making was quite minimal. In each farm operation, less than 20% of the women were consulted. About 13% or less of the women had their opinion considered, while only 10% took final decision in all farm operations, which in most case denied them access to resources, and product of their labour.

According to Damisa and Yohanna (2007) women are inhibited from practicing the activities they desire and their rights are denied by social norms and customs of their societies. They further, noted that systemic gender based biases are one of the major issues limiting women in engaging and accessing agriculture related resources. Many studies, (Kongolo and Bamgose; 2002 and Songelwa; 2009) have provided evidence showing that rural women specifically, contribute significantly to the economy of developing countries but they often find themselves lacking certain resources when it comes to contributing effectively to the economic output of their countries (Garba et al. 2013). While female farmers in the country are among the voiceless, especially with

respect to influencing agricultural policies, such policies which are aimed at increasing food security and production, tend to either under estimate or totally ignore women's role in both production and the general decision making process within the household (Enete et, al.2012).

Methods

The research is a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey is a procedure for organizing and summarizing data in order to communicate and describe important characteristics of the data. It determines and reports the way things are (Gay 1996). For the purpose of this study, multi stage cluster sampling technique was use. Fowler (2001) argued that when there is no adequate list of the individuals in a population and no way to get the population directly, multi stage sampling provides a useful approach. Therefore this research employed multi stage cluster sampling technique. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) household were selected as follows, for the study. Five wards were selected out of the 11 wards in Gusau metropolis using table of random numbers. Each ward was divided into five districts, giving a total of 25 districts. With a table of random figures, 5 district were selected. All the households in the selected five districts were enumerated. A total of five hundred and seventy households were enumerated. Using a table of random numbers, one hundred and fifty(150) households were selected for the study. A structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondent. The choice of this method was based on its benefits of allowing each participant to respond to the same set of question in a predetermined order (Salkind 1991). The questionnaire consisted of four sections A, B, C and D. Section A sought personal data from the respondent while sections B,C and D elicited information about

performance of task, effect and factors militating against women participation in agriculture among households in Gusau metropolis.

The analysis was done using SPSS to calculate the frequencies and percentages of the responses and presented as such using tables.

Study Area

Gusau is the capital of Zamfara State in Nigeria. It has an area of 3,364 km² and a population of 383,162 at the 2006 census. It is projected that the population may have reached 500,000, by 2016, given a population growth of 3.5% per year.(National Population

Commission) Gusau, sits just north of a line drawn from Kebbe to Kano, and the town is located on the main railway between Kaura Namoda and Zaria, and it is on a secondary highway between Talata Marfara and Funtua. Gusau, is located on the Sokoto river in the Savanna region of Nigeria. The river provides access to water supplies during the dry season. The city is part of the Hausa-Fulani cultural region of northern Nigeria. It is predominantly a Muslim population. The people of Gusau also rear cattle, sheep, donkeys, and camels. Their major farm products are cotton, millet, sorghum, rice, cowpeas, beans, and vegetables among others.

Results

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

VARIABLE	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SEX	Male	90	60%
	Female	60	40%
	Total	150	100%
AGE	15-20	10	06.7%
	20-25	25	16.7%
	25-30	10	6.7%
	30-35	40	26.7%
	35-above	65	43.3%
	Total	150	100%
MARITAL STATUS	Single	41	27.3%
	Married	100	66.7%
	Separated	05	03.3%
	Divorce	02	01.3%
	Widow	02	01.3%
	Total	150	100%
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Islamic	90	60.0%
	Primary	30	20.0%
	Secondary	20	13.3%
	Tertiary	10	06.7%
	Total	150	100%
TRIBE	Hausa	130	86.7%
	Yoruba	11	07.3%
	Igbo	05	03.3%

	Others	04	02.7%
	Total	150	100%

Source: Field work 2015

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. The data shows that 90 (60%) respondents were males and 60 (40%) were females. On the age distribution of respondents majority of them were in the age bracket of 30 years and above. Majority of them were also married 100(66.7%). On the level of education of respondents, 90

respondents (60%) attended Islamic education, 30 (20%) attended primary schools, 20 others (13.3%) attended secondary school and 10 respondents (6.7%) attended tertiary institution. The table also shows that 130 respondents (86.7%) were Hausa by tribe, 11 respondents (7.3%) were Yoruba, 5 respondents (3.3%) were Igbo and 4 others (2.7%) indicated other languages.

Table 2 Performance of task by gender in Agriculture

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Is there a rigid division of labour in agriculture in your locality?	Yes	120	80%
	No	30	20%
	Total	150	100%
Is there strict adherence to such division of labour?	Yes	115	76.7%
	No	35	23.3%
	Total	150	100%
Is the division of labour based on task engage?	Yes	135	90%
	No	15	10%
	Total	150	100%
Is the division of labour based on types of crops produced?	Yes	65	43.3%
	No	85	56.7%
	Total	150	100%
What type of crops are woman allowed to produce?	Cash crops	33	22.%
	Food crop	60	40%
	Both	57	38%
	Total	150	100%
What aspect of agricultural activity is exclusive to woman only?	Clearing of land	10	06.7%
	Flowing	03	02.%
	Harrowing	02	01.3%
	Harvesting	72	48%
	Marketing	28	18.7%
	Planting	14	09.3%
	Weeding	10	06.7%
	Others	11	07.3%
	Total	150	100%

What aspect of agricultural activity is restricted to men only?	Clearing of land	70	46.7%
	flowing	02	01.3%
	Harrowing	02	01.3%
	harvesting	03	02.0%
	Marketing	04	02.7%
	Planting	04	02.7%
	Weeding	61	40.7%
	Others	04	02.7%
	Total	.	.
		150	100%

Source: Field work 2015

Table 2 shows the respondents' views on gender performance of tasks and activities in agriculture. The data revealed that 120 respondents (80%) said there is a rigid division of labour by gender in Agriculture, while 30(20%) respondents said otherwise. On adherence to such division of labour 115 respondents (76.7%) indicated 'Yes' and 35 respondents (23.3%) indicated 'No'. When asked whether the division of labour was based on tasks engaged 135 respondents (90%) indicated 'Yes' and 15 respondents (10%) indicated 'No'. On whether the division of labour was based on types of crops produced. 65 respondents (43.3%) argued for

and 85 respondents (56.7%) argued against. Concerning the type of crops produced by women, 60 respondents (40%) said that women engage in food crop production and 33 (22%) said women engaged in cash crop production, while 57 (38%) said women engage in both cash and food crops. On the aspect of agricultural activities restricted to women, majority were of the opinion that women were more involved in harvesting and marketing. On the aspect of agricultural activities restricted to men 70 respondents (46.7%) argued in favour of clearing of land, 61 respondents (40.7%) argued that men engaged in weeding.

Table 3 Factors militating against women participation in agriculture

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Are there any constraints faced by women in their bid to actually participate in agriculture	Yes	98	65.3%
	No	52	34.7%
	Total	150	100%
What are the most notable constraints	Capital	50	33.3%
	Education	10	06.7%
	Gender role	70	46.7%
	Land ownership	20	13.3%
	Total	150	100%

Source: Field work 2015

Table 3 shows the various constraints faced by women in their bid to participate in agriculture. Majority of the respondents 98 respondents (65.3%) said women face constraints while 52 respondents (34.7%) said they don't. On the notable constraints, gender role came first with

70(46.7%) respondents followed by capital, 50 (33.3%). Other constraints were land ownership and education respectively.

Table 4. Consequence of gender division of labour in agriculture

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Does non participation of women in agriculture have effect on food production?	Yes	78	52.0%
	No	62	41.3%
	Undecided	10	0.6.7%
	Total	150	100%
Does non participation of women often result in lack of income and economic dependence?	Yes	128	85.3%
	No	22	14.7%
	Undecided	-	-
	Total	150	100%
Does agricultural division of labour re enforces gender bias, social norms, and cultural practices?	Yes	139	92.7%
	No	07	04.7%
	Undecided	04	02.6%
	Total	150	100%
Does low participation of women in cash cropping result to lack of capital and invariably denial of power and prestige?	Yes	128	85.3%
	No	22	14.7%
	Undecided	-	-
	Total	150	100%

Table 4, shows the respondents' views on the consequences of gender division in agriculture. 78 respondents (52%) answered 'Yes' that non participation of women in agriculture have effect on food production, while 62 responded answered 'No' ie non participation of women has no effect on food production. The rest were undecided.

On whether non participation of women results in lack of income and economic dependence, 128(85.3%) respondents answered in the affirmative while 22(14.7%) said it will not.

139(92.7%) respondents indicated that division of labour re enforces gender bias, social norms, cultural practices agreed while 7(4.7%) respondents disagreed. Others were undecided. On whether low participation of women in cash cropping often results to lack of capital and invariably denial of power and prestige; 128(85.3%) respondents said 'Yes' while 22(14.7%) said 'No'.

Discussion

This study investigated gender division of labour in agriculture in Gusau metropolis, identifying the tasks, constraints and consequences of gender division of labour in agriculture. The findings showed that the respondents were male and female household owners, mostly married within the age of 30 years and above, and most of them acquired Islamic and primary education. Most of them were Hausa by tribe.

The findings revealed that there is a rigid gender division of labour in agriculture and its adherence in Gusau metropolis. The study showed that the reason for this division of labour is gender roles into which both males and females are socialized. The findings show that the division of labour is based on tasks, and crops produced and that women mostly engage in harvesting and marketing of farm produce. The findings also show that male

farmers engage in land clearing and weeding and that both male and female farmers engage in producing food crops. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Muhammad and Abdulkadir (2012) on comparative analysis of gender involvement in agriculture. They found out that there is a rigid division of labour in agriculture and that male performed major roles in physical activities like land clearing and tilling while women major roles were in harvesting and marketing. This is also in line with a study conducted by Arora (2014) where it was argued that traditionally men cleared the forest, burnt the bush and climbed trees for collecting fruits while women were responsible for transporting and marketing of cash crops with male members of the household. However, a study conducted by Fabiyi et al.(2007) had a contrary report where women participated in almost all agricultural activities except falling of tress and spraying of chemicals.

With regard to the second objective of the study, the research found out that women face many constraints in their bid to participate in agriculture which include credit, participation in rural cooperatives, access to training and extension service, access to land, lack of education among others. The study also found that the basis of these constraints are gender role and land ownership. Sixty percent (60%) gave these reasons for the non participation of women in major agricultural activities. This result is similar to a study conducted by Kabani (2010), which reported that women lacked independent right to land and that right to land was only allocated through men, either son or husband. Another research conducted by Manuh 1989 found that women faced problems of access to such agricultural inputs as credit capital (money), as many credit association and cooperative limit membership to household heads there by

excluding single and married women. The findings also identified lack of education as a barrier to women advancement in agricultural activities.

Concerning the third objective of the study consequence of gender division in agriculture, the findings of the study show that gender division of labour re-enforced gender bias and always put women in disadvantaged position. The results show that the non participation of women both in food and cash crop production have always resulted in lack of steady income. The study also found that, the non participation of women will have a negative effect on society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Arising from this findings, it can be concluded that there is a rigid division of labour by task in Gusau metropolis and that women face a lot of constraints in their bid to participate in agriculture and lastly gender division of labour re-enforces gender bias and puts women in disadvantaged position in terms of income and decision making process in agriculture; thus limit the contribution of women to the national development.

Recommendations

Based on findings of the research the following recommendations were offered:

- i. There should not be gender disparity or gender bias in agricultural policies and programme.
- ii. For food security, gender division of labour according to task should be discarded and there should be equity in every aspect of agricultural activities.
- iii. Support systems for farmer within a holistic gender sensitive framework are urgently needed to form a policy development agenda.

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