

## **“Impact of Domestic Violence on Women Empowerment in Forest Villages: A Study of Betul District of M.P.”**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is an outcome of NAEB, GoI, New Delhi sponsored Project “Women Empowerment through Forest Development Activities for Sustainable Livelihood in Tribal Districts of M. P.”. This study is based on primary data collected from four tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh. The in-depth study was carried out in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh. The primary data was collected through organizing, group discussion and structured questionnaire. The detailed house hold interviews of 200 women were conducted in the presence of Forest department officials to understand the insights of the problem. From Betul district five villages were selected namely Kolhudhana, Karanjidol, Sihari, Dharakhoh and Bansbodi, to assess the impact of the problem on various dimensions of Women Empowerment in Forest villages. During scanning of literature the first author has not found any adequate literature which can focus on the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment and how the different intensities of domestic violence different levels of women empowerment. Thus, this affects study is undertaken to assess the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment. The basic objective of this study is to assess the impact of domestic violence on Women Empowerment from different dimensions related to agricultural resource management, livestock resource management, livelihood, forest resource management. Secondly, this paper examines the impact of different intensities of domestic violence categorized as high, medium and low on above resources. The third objective of this paper is to assess how women empowerment can be*

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*weaken and how women empowerment could be strengthened. The association of correlation between impact of domestic violence and women empowerment has been found closely associated. At last, the paper reveals that there is a significant impact of domestic violence and its different intensities on women empowerment in forest villages which affects the natural Resource Management. It is highly recommended that a separate study need to be sponsored by Planning Commission for assessing the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment in rural areas, where the natural resources are the main source of livelihood.*

**Key words:** *Domestic violence, intensity of domestic violence, women empowerment, livelihood.*

## **Introduction**

Domestic violence is considered as a stigma in societal and economic development of our country. It is treated as a pollutant of the social ecology in which we are living. There are many factors which help in fostering the growth of our country directly or indirectly interwoven with the socio-economic-cultural and psychological values of our community. (Singh and Biswas 2009).

Many studies show that the causes of the domestic violence against women are related with the awareness level, education level, vicious circle of poverty, economic un-sustainability etc. The domestic violence against women is a wide spread problem. However, its actual extent is difficult to measure. It may be very much higher than that the reports indicate because many instances of domestic violence against women are not reported. The research studies or surveys conducted by individuals generally produce higher estimates of violence than that of the official records. However, they are also assumed to underestimate the actual extent of domestic violence against women. For a variety of reasons, women may fail to report violence that takes place in the family. Most of the victims of the domestic violence are women belonging to lower socio economic strata. The-domestic violence may cause the deterioration in mental and physical health since domestic violence is mainly categorized into mental and physical violence and abuse. The growing incidence of crimes against women and domestic violence is a serious concern to the policy makers and administrators. It is also against the principle of women empowerment and violates human rights of women. Government of India has recently enacted Protection of Women against Domestic violence Act 2006. It is high time to

examine the implementation of the Act and its related problems in order to meet desired objectives of the Act. (Singh, 2008)

Gender equality is the centre for realizing Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality will not only empower women to overcome poverty but also their children, families, communities and countries. Thus, gender equality produces a double dividend benefits to both women and children. However, eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will be required for enhancing women's influence in the key decisions that save their lives. Women themselves are the most important catalyst for change. (Singh, et.al. 2010).

However, changing attitudes towards women at work requires a multifaceted approach. Gender equality, leads to increased work opportunities, enhances capacities for livelihood, strong thus rights of women, enhances social protection. And all these can enable women to participate equally in productive employment, contributing to women's development leading to economic growth of the nation. Gender equality, linked with women's empowerment, is thus seen as key aspect of economic growth. (Singh, 2008).

The concept of empowerment has been the subject of much intellectual discourse and analysis. Empowerment is defined as the processes by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. Thus, it is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied. The core elements of empowerment have been defined as the ability to define one's goals and act upon them, awareness of gendered power structures, self-esteem and self-confidence (Kabeer 2001). Empowerment can take place at a hierarchy of different levels – individual, household, community and societal or in other words home, village, state and nation it is facilitated by providing encouraging factors like exposure to new activities which can build capacities by removing inhibiting factors such as lack of resources, skills etc.

### **Definition of domestic violence**

The term 'domestic violence', for the purposes of this Act, any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent in case it-

(a) Harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends

to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or

(b) Harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or

(c) Has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b) ; or (d) otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.

During scanning of literature the first author has not found any adequate literature which focuses on the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment and how the different intensities of domestic violence effects different levels of women empowerment. Thus, this study is undertaken to assess the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment. (Singh, 2012)

### **Objectives of the study**

- To assess the impact of domestic violence on Women Empowerment from different dimensions.
- To assess the impact on women empowerment through agricultural resource management, livestock resource management, livelihood, and forest resource management.
- To examine the, impact of different intensities of domestic violence categories as high, medium and low on above resources.
- To could be strengthened.
- To prove empirically how the association of correlation between impact of domestic violence and women empowerment is closely associated.
- To suggest measures for improvement on the basis of fact and findings.

### **Methodology**

The present study is based on an intensive field work / survey carried out in the selected areas of the Betul District of Madhya Pradesh. From Betul Forest division, five VFCs were selected based on the discussion with DFO and forest officials, to have the macro view of the nature and extent of the problem.

Both primary and secondary data were used in this paper.

The primary data has been obtained through structured schedule and also through

1. General discussions / Focus group discussion with the people of different sections and their responses was organized in each village with forest depart.
2. Interview of 10 households per village and Interview of 100 households from the selected VFCs/FPC members with the help of structured schedules by using random sample techniques.
3. The survey work carried out in two different projects during 2011 and 2012.
4. Selecting five villages of Betul Division namely *Kolhudhana, Karanjidol, Sihari, Dharakhoh and Bansbodi*, for the in-depth study.

The information collected during the survey work has been classified into the qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative information is transferred to the data entry sheets for computer tabulation and statistical analysis.

### Profile of the study area

**Table 1: District Profile of Betul**

Attributes	Description
Name of District	Betul
Location - Longitude and Latitude	20-22 & 22-24 D North Latitude and between 77-10 & 78-33 D East Longitude
Total Geographical Area	10043.00 sq. km
Forest Area	4056.397 sq. km
Important Forest Species Teak.	Haldu, Saja, Tendu leaves, Chironji, Harra, Amla
Forest Ranges	Territorial = 16 Production = 9 Research & Ext. = 5 Total Forest Ranges = 30

Name of forest ranges	Betul, Rampur, Cherni, Shahpur, Dhorah, Tapti, Aaamla, Multae, Atherner Morsi, Bejdahi, Shadolminda, Chicholi, Savalgrah, Mohdha, Tawdhi, Gawsen Purma
Tendu patta collection in ranges / district	-
Population	Total = 1,395,175 Male = 709,956
Rural= Urban=	1,136,056 259,119
Important Railway	Betul 2 km, Maramgihiri 4 km, Malkapur 5 km, Dharakhoh 14 km
Road connectivity	National Highway No. 69 & 59
Basic infrastructure	Hospital = 3, college =3, school =4, Collectorate office = 1

*Source: Census Report - 2011*

### **Village Profile of Kolhudhana**

Kolhudhana is one of the VFC of Tapti range of Betul District, which is 32 km far from district head office and 32 km Range office from Tapti. The village is placed under 1 km plan area and is distributed in two parts. The village approach road is unmetalled and is extended up to 5 km. The village consists of 55 houses which are made of mud only and are electrified by one bulb connection. Wells and tube wells are the only sources of irrigation for Kolhudhana. VFC Kolhudhana has been given an area of 530.00 ha by Forest Department, which comes under the compartment no. of 851 and 853 respectively. The population of the village is 644. Comprising male 168, female 154 and rest 322 are Children. The plantation area is 2 km away from the village. The main occupation in the village is agriculture, agriculture labouring collection of forest products. The principal crops of the village are Maize, Wheat, including Rice, Soyabeen Lal Tuar etc.

### **Village Profile of Karanjidol**

Karanjido is one of the VFC's of Tapti range of Betul Districts, which is 18 km away from range office Tapti. The village approach road is fully metalled. The village consists of 117 houses out of which only 5 are pucca and rest of the houses are made of mud only they are electrified by one bulb connection. Wells and tube wells are the only

sources of irrigation for Karanjidol. VFC Karanjidol has been allotted an area of 405 ha by Forest Department, which comes under the compartment no. of 841 and 842 respectively. The population of the village is 607. Fuel wood is highly used by villagers to operate Chula. The plantation area is 5 km far from the village. The main occupation of the villager is agriculture and collecting forest products. Mahua, Chironji, Amla and Tendu leaves. The principal crops are Maize, Wheat, Rice, Tuar Soyabean etc.

### **Village Profile of Sihari**

Sihari is the another VFC of Betul range of Betul District, which is 22 km far from range office of Betul. The village approach road is metalled and is extended up to 5 km. The village consists 20 houses out of which only 1 is pucca and rest of the houses are made up of mud which are electrified by one bulb connection. Local Nalla, Wells and tube wells are the main sources of irrigation for Sihari. VFC Sihari has been given an area of 552.396 ha by Forest Department, which comes under the compartment no. of RF-273. The population of the village is 168. Comprising male 45, female 41 and rest 82 are Children of both male and female sex. Fire wood is mainly used by villagers to operate Chula. The plantation area is 01 km away from the village. The main occupation of the people of the village is agriculture and collection of forest products. The principal crops are Maize, Wheat, Rice, Tuar etc.

### **Village Profile of Dharakhoh**

Dharakhoh is also one of the VFC's of Dharakhoh range of Betul District, which is at a distance of 18 km from Range office Dharakhoh. The village approach road is metalled and is extended up to 2 km. The village consists of houses which are made of mud and are electrified by one bulb connection. Wells are the only sources of irrigation for Dharakhoh VFC Dharakhoh has been given an area of 493.800 ha by Forest Department, which comes under the compartment no. of RF-271 and 268 respectively. The population of the village is 885. Comprising male 223, female 322 and rest 340 are Children of both male and female sex. The plantation area is 1 km far from the village and there is no Fuel wood trade in the village. The main occupation of the villager is agriculture and collecting forest products. Main crops of the village are Wheat, Maize, Rise, Soya been, Lal tuar and Paddy.

## Village Profile of Bansbodi

Bansbodi is the VFC of Bansbodi range of betul District, which is 28 km far from Range office Betul. The village approach road is fully metalled. The village consists 78 houses out of which only 1 to 5 are pucca and rest of the houses are made of mud and are electrified by one bulb connection. River, Wells and tube wells are the only sources of irrigation for Bansbodi VFC. Bansbodi has been given an area of 710.12 ha by Forest Department, which comes under the compartment no. of RF-256 and RF-257 respectively. The population of the village is 274. The plantation area is 1 to 3 km away from the village and there is no Fire wood trade in the village. The main occupation in the village is agriculture and collecting forest products. Main crops of the village are Wheat, Maize, Rice, Soya bean, Lal tuar and Paddy.

## Results and discussion

Table 2 shows the age group of the women respondents in the studygroup. It is evident from the Table that maximum number of the women were interviewed in the age group of 40-45 with 28 percent followed by 20 percent in 30-35 and 35-40 respectively.

**Table 2: Age Group of the Respondents**

Age group of Respondents (Years)	Betul
18-25	-
25-30	4
30-35	10
35-40	10
40-45	14
45-50	7
50 and above	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2012*

The survey 2012, also revealed that 84 percent of the population consists of tribal population, where as the 90 percent of the households were living in the Kaccha Houses.



**Table 3: Size of Family Members**

Size of Family Members	Betul	
	M	F
0-5 years	18	17
10-15 Years	32	22
15-20 Years	14	7
20-25 Years	13	12
25-30 Years	10	9
30-35 Years	10	8
35-40 Years	8	13
40-45 Years	15	12
45-50 Years	10	7
50-55 Years	4	3
55 and above	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>114</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2012*

Table 3 shows the size of family members. It is clear from the table that male population was recorded higher than female population. The highest male population 23.3percent and female population 19.29 percent was found respectively in the age group of 10-15 years while the percent of workforce population in male was recorded 51.2 percent and 59.6 percent female was recorded in the age group of 20 to 50 years.

This table is not only important from the point of view of domestic violence but also from the point of view of women empowerment?

From the survey in the five villages it is clear that rural population is engaged in three different types of occupations viz., agriculture with 90 percent, labour 95 percent and agri-labour with 96 percent. While 98 percent of the people are dependent on the forest produce and collection of NTFPs and Fire wood.

**Table 4: Assets held by the Households**

It is evident from the Table 4 that land resource, irrigation resource and livestock resource are the important assets holdings in the order of ranking and also are very important from the point of view of sustainable livelihood, women empowerment and may give fillip to domestic violences.

Table 5 shows the average distance travelled by the people to access basic amenities. Access to basic amenities in the rural area is another cause which has impact on women empowerment and domestic violences.

**Table 5: Average Distance Travelled by the Family Members.**



The outcome of the group discussion in the five selected villages has been presented in Table 6 which shows the type of violence prevailing as the study area of Betul district of M.P.

As the distance from the village to police station increases there is a high probability that domestic violence with low or medium intensity or even the high intensity of violence may not be recordable.

**Table 6: Domestic violence prevailing in the study area.**

**Note:** High Level Domestic Violence prevailing in the villages: aaaaa  
Medium Level Domestic Violence : bbbb  
Low level Domestic Violence: ccc

The above Table 6 furnishes the information pertaining to the types of domestic violence prevailing in the study area. It is evident from the Table that, Sl. No. A and E shows the high level of prevalence of domestic violence while D F and J shows the medium level of Intensity of Domestic violence. The low Intensity of domestic violence was recorded BCGH and I category of Cruelty. The following Table 7, furnishes the information pertaining to Domestic Violence Act 2006 as observed in the study area.

**Table 7: Types of Domestic Violence as described in the Act 2006**

Table 6 and 7 Furnishes the Impact of Domestic violence at the time of Normal low and high intensity in the rural area of Betul district of Madhya Pradesh. It could be clearly seen that the gender participation and women empowerment were high in the normal and low level intensity condition of violence, and the collection of NTFPS, MAPs was recorded very good. Whereas the gender participation, women empowerment and collection of NTFPS and MAPs have declined by more than 50 percent in the acute domestic violence condition when it was very high or intense. This decline in the collection and gender participation also indicates that a woman empowerment has weakened as a result of domestic violence.

**Impact of intensity of domestic violence on women Empowerment through agricultural resources.**

It could be concluded from the Table 8, that with regard to low intensity type of domestic violence the participation level and women empowerment have remained unchanged. In case of medium level intensity of domestic violence the participation level has declined by 29.4 percent in case of males and 19.75 percent in case of females. It is very clear from the Table that in the case of males regarding high level intensity of domestic violence thus participation has declined by 44.75 percent and in case of females it is 51.2 percent as far as the participation and empowerment were concerned.

**Table 8: Violence and gender participation and level of women empowerment through agricultural resources.**

It is also clear from the Table 8 that the women have higher tolerance as compared to males in rural areas, due to their participation in agricultural resource management.

**Impact of intensity of domestic violence, on women Empowerment through Livestock resource management.**

Table 9 shows the livestock possessed by the people in the study area. Under the category of Bovine animals the highest number cows were recorded with 220 number followed by 46 buffaloes and 11 male buffaloes. Under the category of non-bovine animals the highest number of 192 goats was recorded followed by 28 numbers of dogs. Hen and roaster were recorded 424 in number. For livestock resources management the gender participation and contribution of women is higher as compared to males.

**Table 9: Livestock population in the study area**

It is evident from Table 10 that under the different categories of livestock resource management each activity has suffered from the intensity of domestic violence. In low level of intensity of domestic violence the average gender participation was recorded at 22 percent males and 47.5 percent for females in all activities. While during the medium level intensity of domestic violence the male and female

participation in all activities has decreased by 8.6 percent in case of males and females by 18.7 percent. Even at the time of high intensity of domestic violence was reduced to 4.8 and declined by 78.8 percent in male case while in female case it was recorded with a decline by 57.4 percent. It could be concluded from the table that the gender participation and women empowerment has declined by 57.4 percent as compared with low intensity of domestic violence. It could also be concluded that there is an impact of different intensities of domestic violence on the women empowerment which affects their level of participation. A close correlation was found in between different intensities of domestic violence and women empowerment. The livestock resource management has a tendency to be affected by level of intensity in rural areas.

### **Table 10: Impact on Livestock related activities**

### **Sustainable livelihood and forest resource management**

Table 11 shows the details of activities carried out by the people for sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihood. It could be concluded from Table 11 that even the forest resource management is also affected by the different intensities of domestic violence. As compared with the low intensities of domestic violence with medium and high level of intensity of domestic violence's the



average participation has declined in male by 51.2 percent and female by 36.7 percent. It could also be concluded that the during low intensity of domestic violence the participation level and women empowerment were documented high and as the intensity increases to medium to high level intensity of domestic violence the level of participation and women empowerment declines sharply, which in turn hampers the livelihood options of the people in the study area of Betul district of M.P.

**Table 11: Forest Resource Management**

**Table 12: Gender participation in collection of NTFPs, and other forest products**

It could be concluded from the Table 12 that the gender participation and level of women empowerment were recorded high at the time of Low intensity of domestic violence related to collection of different NTFPs and fuel wood in the study area. The gender participation and the level of women empowerment have declined by 58 percent at the prevalence of high intensity of domestic violence so far the NTFP collection is concerned which the basic sustenance for livelihood of the people. Thus, the collection of NTFPs and fuel wood affects the income generation from the forest resources if valued at market price.

### **Valuation of NTFPs and other Forest Products.**

Table 13, shows the estimated income from the collection of NTFPs and other forest products from forest in the study area. The debate on valuation of nature and the environment, green national accounting and economic growth are the classic and important topic in environmental economics. (Ekko, et al. 2001) Discussion on the definition and meaning of national income began at the beginning of the twentieth century with the work of (King, 1919) and Pigou famous. The Economics of Welfare (Pigou, 1920). (Fabricant, 1947) argued about the depletion of natural resources should be taken into account as a cost component in the system. The debate renewed at the end of the 1960s when serious concerns grew about pollution and the exhaustibility of resources, especially Mishan's classic contribution, the cost of Economic Growth (Mishan, 1967) induced a lot of discussion. He also challenges the traditional way to measure welfare or utility through the concept of national income because its failure to include the deterioration of the environment. The question is - how to make the correction in national income? In this regards (Hueting, 1991) argue that the valuation exercises should explicitly account for future generations and their rights on particular environmental services. This suggests that the concept of a sustainable or green national income is also appropriate from a green national product. (Singh, 2006, 2008 and 2009).

The valuation method is based on the price in the local market of Betul.

**Table 13: Pricing of NTFPs other forest products.**

It is evident from the Table that the highest price per quintal was recorded for Chronjee with Rs. 10000 per quintal followed by Mahua seed with Rs. 900 per quintal.

**Table 14: Estimation of Loss from NTFPS and other forest Products due to domestic violence**

It could be concluded from the Table 14 that at the time of low intensity of domestic violence or before violence the collection was higher as compared with the collection of forest product done by the people at the time of high intensity of domestic violence. The highest decline of -2.52 quintals was recorded in case of fuel wood collection at the time of high intensity of domestic violence, followed by -2.29 quintals decline in collection of Mahua flowers.

**Table 15: Valuation of Loss in Rs. due to High intensity of domestic violence during the collection period**



It could be concluded from the Table 15 that at the time of low intensity or before violence the valuation of loss recorded was less as compared with the high intensity of domestic violence. The overall loss in monetary value was recorded Rs. 12077.5. It could also be concluded from the Table that the different intensities of domestic violence have direct impact on income generation through collection of forest resources they also offers not only the sustainable livelihood of the people and the gender participation, but also the women empowerment, specially in case of economic empowerment by different intensities of domestic violence.

Based on the above discussion and study the following recommendation conclude offered.

### **Conclusion**

- Table 5 shows the average distance ranging from 400 mtrs for drinking water to 20 kms to high school education travelled by the people to access basic amenities. Our access basic amenities in the rural area affect the tendency of women empowerment and nature of domestic violences.
- It could be concluded from the Table 8, that during low intensity type of domestic violence the participation level and women empowerment in the study remain unchanged. While in case of medium level intensity of domestic violence the participation level was declined by 29.4 percent in case of males and 19.75 percent in case of females. It is very clear from the Table that in the case during high level intensity of domestic violence the male participation was declined by 44.75 percent and 51.2 percent in

case of female participation and their empowerment. It is also clear from the Table that the rural women have higher tolerance as compared to males in rural areas, due to their participation in agricultural resource management.

- It is evident from Table 10 that under the different categories of livestock resource management each activity has suffered from the intensity of domestic violence. In low level of intensity of domestic violence the average gender participation was recorded 22 percent males and 47.5 percent for females in all activities. While during the medium level intensity of domestic violence the male and female participation in all activities has decreased by 8.6 percent in case of males and females by 18.7 percent. Even at the time of high intensity of domestic violence the participation was reduced to 4.8 percent and the decline is by 78.8 percent in the case of male while in the case of female it was a decline by 57.4 percent. It could be concluded from the table that the gender participation and women empowerment has declined by 57.4 percent when compared with low intensity of domestic violence. It could also be concluded that there is an impact of different intensities of domestic violence on the women empowerment and their level of participation. A close correlation was found between different intensities of domestic violence and women empowerment. The livestock resource management has a tendency to be affected by level of intensity of domestic violence in rural areas.
- It could be concluded from Table 11 that even the forest resource management is also affected by the different intensities of domestic violence. As compared with the low intensities of domestic violence with medium and high level of intensity of domestic violence's the average participation has declined in male category by 51.2 percent and female by 36.7 percent respectively. It could also be concluded that during low intensity of domestic violence the participation level and women empowerment were documented high and as the intensity of domestic violence increases to medium to high level the level of participation and women empowerment decline sharply, which in turn hampers the livelihood options of the people in the study area of Betul district of M.P.
- It could be concluded from the Table 12 that the gender participation and level of women empowerment were recorded high at the time of Low intensity of domestic violence related to collection of different NTFPs and fuel wood in the study area. The

gender participation and the level of women empowerment have declined by 58 percent at the prevalence of high intensity of domestic violence so far the NTFP collection is concerned which the basic sustenance for livelihood of the people. Thus, the collection of NTFPs and fuel wood affect the income generation from the forest resources if valued at market price.

- It could be concluded from the Table 14 that at the time of low intensity of domestic violence or before violence the collection was higher as compared with the collection of forest product by the people at the time of high intensity of domestic violence. The highest decline of – 2.52 quintals was recorded in case of fuel wood collection at the time of high intensity of domestic violence, followed by – 2.29 quintals decline in collection of Mahua flowers.
- It could be concluded from the Table 15 that at the time of low intensity of or before violence the valuation of loss was recorded less as compared with the high intensity of domestic violence. The overall loss in monetary value was recorded at Rs. 12077.5. It could also be concluded from the Table that the different intensities of domestic violence have direct impact on income generation through collection of forest resources and affects the sustainable livelihood of the people. Not only the gender participation, but also the women empowerment specially in case of economic empowerment going to be affected by the different intensities of domestic violence.

### **Recommendation**

There is a significant impact of domestic violence and its different intensities on women empowerment in forest villages which affect the Natural Resource Management. It is recommended that to have high level women empowerment as well as development and growth of the nation, all intensities of domestic violence need to be curbed or curtailed down. It is highly recommended that a separate study need to be sponsored by Planning Commission for assessing the impact of domestic violence on women empowerment in rural areas, where the natural resources are the main source of livelihood.

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