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## ***NURTURING INDIAN TOURISM FROM THE ROOTS***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indian Tourism has catapulted into the limelight in recent years for all the right reasons. From being voted the No. 1 destination in the world by Conde' Nast Traveler Readers' Survey to being the partner country at the ITB Berlin last year to its most famous monument the Taj Mahal topping the 'Seven Wonders of the World' poll, India has garnered enough attention thereby increasing its chances of featuring on the itinerary of every tourist. Leading tourism organizations including the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) have forecasts' India to be one of the most dynamically growing countries within the tourism world in

the next 10-15 years. The question now is –what is India doing to sustain and capitalize on this newly acquired attention and opportunity? With a plethora of tourism products varied enough to make the tourist experience something new everyday, attraction-wise the country is in a league of its own. But the popularity of a destination does not depend solely on the attractions it offers. A multitude of factors governs its ascent or descent on the popularity chart.

Having identified the service providers at the grass root level (unorganized sector) like the taxi drivers, railway porters, tourist guides etc., to be one of the major wheel on which Indian tourism operates, this paper discusses the need for organizing Capacity building programmes for enhancing their servicing skills. The capacity building programmes conducted by the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) as part of the main 'Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP)' Scheme of the Indian Ministry of Tourism is being discussed in detail.

**Key words:** Service Providers, Capacity building, CBSP Scheme, IITTM

## **INTRODUCTION**

From 'Where India?' a decade ago to 'Wow India!!' today, the country has undergone a great image makeover in recent years. The most profound impact of this change-in-perception is the growing popularity of India as a tourist destination. While the boom in the economic stride and information technology proficiency initiated this sea change, the mantle of sustaining this 'wow' factor till date can be attributed largely to the variety and diversified offerings that India as a destination has been able to showcase. Tourism is a very tricky business; every ingredient in the recipe has to be perfect enough to dish up a competitive unique destination. However firm the basic parameter of a developed nation be, it does not necessarily translate into a guaranteed slot in the 'popular tourist destinations' list. With every country exploring the opportunity that tourism offers, the competition level is at an all-time high and therefore, a destination should be adjustable and innovative enough to tune itself to the changing trends and taste of the market demands. India, with its plethora of tourism products, in the form of geographical, cultural and ethnic diversity has been able to enthrall the increasing foray of tourists' movement into her domain. From just 16,829 international tourists' arrivals in 1951 to playing host to over 5 million plus tourists in 2007, the journey has been quite incredible- definitely slow by world standard but nevertheless steady and still growing. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) have named Indian and Chinese tourism sectors (interestingly, the two most populous countries in the world)

as the fastest growing tourism industries for the next 10 to 15 years. Its estimates' for India over the next decade is an annual growth rate of 8.8%, the highest growth rate in the world. In recent years, Indian Tourism has been in the news periodically, that too for all the right reasons. Last year, the country topped the annual Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Survey as the most popular destination in the world while its most famous monument the Taj Mahal ranked high up in the list of the 'Seven Wonders of the World' polls. 'Incredible India' advertisement also got the much-needed global coverage courtesy being the partner country of ITB, Berlin in its last edition. The future is definitely bright but just being jubilant with the forecasts and resting with the laurels of the present status will not be progressive. India needs to consolidate on her gains and capitalize on the attention it enjoys at present.

As the Indian Tourism industry emerges as one of the most dynamic markets; the stage is set for newer, more competitive innings in the coming years, both at the home turf and in the global tourism playing field. Against this backdrop, it becomes imperative that tourism policy makers, planners and think-tanks in the country should focus primarily on prioritizing and nurturing all basic elements which keeps the wheels of Indian tourism industry in motion. A tree can endure its full weight and bear fruits only when its roots are well nourished and planted firmly in the ground.

#### **Identification of primary elements intrinsic to Indian tourism development.**

While 4A's, i.e. Accommodation, Accessibility, Attraction and Amenities are often considered primary components inherent for the development of a tourist destination; a less emphasized area yet equally important element (in fact more important if we consider the service oriented angle of the tourism industry) is the availability of quality human resources or service providers. However, more emphasis is being stressed on upgrading the physical aspect (hard powers) rather than on developing these 'soft powers' of tourism development. Soft powers encompass a wide range of elements, from service providers and their way of operations, mannerism and behaviour to the various ethical considerations that the tourism business entertains. Even within the realm of these soft powers, the limelight is focused on the principal suppliers like airlines and hotels and on service providers in the organized (and recognized) sector like the travel agents and tour operators. Relegated into the background or sidelined are the service providers at the grass root levels (unorganized sector) like the taxi

drivers, the porters at the railway platforms, the policemen on traffic management duty, the lady at the immigration window, the bellboy who secretly guess the amount of tips he is likely to get, the salesman at the souvenir shop or the tour guides taking the tourists on a revelation journey. They are the ones who constitute the first line of direct interactions with the tourists themselves and yet ironically the ones, most underestimated. It is often said, 'the first impression is the last impression' and in the field of tourism where the concerned-look on the face of a receptionist at the check-in counter can be interpreted/misinterpreted in a dozen odd ways, creating the right impression at the first encounter is often half the battle won.

**Identification of service providers on the basis of maximum/minimum interaction level with the tourists is an important step for planning training programmes that will benefit them and enhance their personality.**

The manner in which the primary service providers interact with the tourists is an important decisive factor that enriches or mar the overall experience of the tourist's for the entire tour programme. Human emotions are subject to rapid fluctuations depending on how it react or respond to a particular display of behaviour. The anticipation of an experience of a lifetime at the Taj Mahal can turn into an uneventful episode if the expectant mood of the tourist is disturbed. The cause of disturbance can be anything-an irritating driver, the indifferent bossy attitude of the person at the ticket counter, the endless number of touts pestering you to buy their ware (thus making your movement uncomfortable) and so on. On the other hand, a customary half-hearted visit to the Taj Mahal can turn out to be memorable one if the tourist experiences pleasant interactions. A smiling appreciative comment about one's country made by the person issuing the entrance ticket can really make a difference and at times, though unrelated it can magnify the value and the beauty of the Taj innumerable times.

<b>PRIMARY SERVICE PROVIDERS</b> <b>(Interaction level with the tourists)</b>	
<b>Direct interaction</b>	<b>Indirect/Optional/Minimum/N</b>

	o interaction
<p><b>Staff/Management of Transportation companies. E.g. Personnel manning the check-in counters, airhostess, Coach drivers, Railway Ticket Examiner, Bus Conductors etc</b></p> <p>[If having access to personal transportation means. For Example tourists traveling by own car]</p>	→
<p><b>Taxi drivers/ *Auto rickshaw drivers/ **Rickshaw drivers etc</b></p> <p>[Private transportation arrangement]</p>	→
<p><b>Staff /Management of Accommodation Units</b></p> <p>[Stay with friends or relatives]</p>	→
<p><b>Travel Agents and Tour Operators</b></p> <p>[Free Individual Traveler (FIT)/ own travel and tour arrangement]</p>	→
<p><b>Tourist guides</b></p> <p>[If one does not avail their services]</p>	→
<p><b>Shopkeepers, Sovenier sellers</b></p> <p>[If no shopping is done]</p>	→
<p><b>Personnel manning the ticket counters at the entrance of monuments, museums,</b></p>	→

<p><b>etc</b></p> <p><b>[If one's tour itinerary does not include visits to such sites]</b></p>	
<p><b>Security Personnels stationed at airports/ railway stations/ sea-ports, entrance of monuments/ amusement parks/ museums etc.</b></p>	
	<p><b>Police personnel [If one approaches them for assistance]</b></p>
	<p><b>Local population [Opportunity to mingle with them]</b></p>

Fig I: Primary Service Providers intrinsic to Indian Tourism development

(The list is only illustrative and not exhaustive)

\* Three-wheeler vehicle plying on Indian roads.

\*\* A mode of human-powered transport

A satisfied tourist is a walking-talking free advertisement for a destination and ensuring that the tourist forms a positive opinion, a lot of parameters have to be identified and their functioning synchronized to produce the desired satisfaction level. One of the major contributing factor towards a higher tourists' satisfaction level is the manner in which tourists are received and treated at the most primary level of interaction with the service providers at the host destination. This calls for an urgent need to polish and upgrade the servicing skills of these service providers. Capacity Building programmes are proficient means of accomplishing the same.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Recognizing the importance of trained human resources and the need for imparting formal training and certification mechanism for service providers in tourism and hospitality related sectors, the Government of India have already established a number of training institutes. At present, there is the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel management (IITTM), 21 Institutes of Hotel Managements (IHM's) and 8 Food Crafts Institute (FCI's) all over the country, which have been entrusted with the responsibility of imparting capacity-building program with the basic aim of assisting the service providers with skills and knowledge required to service the tourists efficiently.

Capacity Building refers to assistance given to individuals for general upgradation of performance ability. There are a variety of definitions for capacity building but the most comprehensive one has been given by Ann Philbin, wherein she describes it as a "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world" (quoted in the report on 'Capacity Building Work with Social Justice Organizations: Views from the Field', which she compiled for the Ford Foundation, 1996).

The need for capacity building is being felt in almost all organizations and is increasingly being used to minimize the difference between need and supply. Its importance especially in the developing countries is illustrated by its presence as a separate budget line in the formal costing of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) presented to the 2005 UN "Millennium +5" summit in New York. The tourism and hospitality industry being service-based and infused with a host of intangible and immeasurable components and moreover operating in a dynamic environment requires capacity enhancing measures to be taken up on a regular basis.

### Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP) Scheme

Realizing the fact that the regular programmes offered by IHMs, IFCs and other institutes in the private sector cater mainly to the organized sector, the Human Resource Development (HRD) Division of the Indian Ministry of Tourism embarked upon formulating and implementing the 'Capacity Building for Service Providers' (CBSP) Scheme from the year 2002-2003 with the aim to provide basic training to the service providers in the unorganized sector (and also several other categories in the organized sector). These programmes were intended to provide certain inputs that will improve their behaviour and service levels.

The CBSP scheme was designed to include the development of a system of certification and covered the following training programmes:

1. Skill development in general for fresh candidates
2. Specialised skill development, including language courses for fresh as
3. well as existing service providers
4. Basic Skill upgradation in general for existing service providers
5. Training of Trainers programmes
6. Awareness Programmes
7. Awareness of tourism benefits/knowledge in the rural areas

A separate guideline for the scheme was prepared. Some of the important points highlighted in the 'Guidelines for the CBSP scheme' (revised version, 2006) are:

Definition of Service Providers: Persons engaged in providing services to a tourist will be termed as Service Providers.

Implementing Agencies:

- Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM),
- Institutes of Hotel Management,
- Food Craft Institutes,
- India Tourism Offices,
- National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT),
- Tourism Departments of State/ Union Territories Governments
- State Tourism Development Corporations
- India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)
- State/Centre Training/Academic Institutions

- Specialized Academic Training Institutes in the private sector engaged in giving training in the hospitality sector.

Nature of training (Area to be emphasized): Health and Personal Hygiene, Cleanliness, Basic Service Techniques, Garbage Disposal, Etiquette and Basic manners, Basic nutrition values, Energy saving and nutrition saving techniques, Basic tourism awareness, Presentation and Communication skills, Behaviour Skills, First Aid, Client Handling & Behavioural skills, Skill development in general for fresh candidates, Specialized skill development, including language courses for fresh as well as existing service providers, Awareness programmes, Developing skills in product presentation in rural tourism etc

Service providers (to be covered under the scheme): Bartender, Cooks, Stewards, Receptionists, Information Providers, Drivers, Government Staff who come in contact with tourists, Supervisors, Guides, Travel Assistants, Manager for small Hotels, Bakers and Confectioners, Catering Staff, Meal providers, Tour Escort/Assistant, Reservation and ticketing Assistant, House keeper, Event Management supervisor, Hospital House keeper, Interior Designer, Florist, Tourism Staff of Central and State departments, Tourism facility Planners and management staff, Tourism facilitator/Runner, Foreign language interpreters, Naturalists, Rural Artisans/ Craftsmen/ Entertainers etc.

[Note: Since the financial considerations and instructions for Implementing Institutions are beyond the scope of this paper, they are not mentioned here]

### **CBSP PROGRAMMES OF IITTM**

About the Institute: The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM), an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is one of the premier institutes in the country offering education, training, research and consultancy in sustainable management of tourism, travel and other allied sectors. Committed to developing quality human resources for tourism and allied services, the target groups of its educational/ training programmes extend much beyond the organized sectors of the economy. Established in the year 1983, the Institute operates from its main campus at Gwalior, three regional centers at Bhubaneshwar, New Delhi and Goa and several other Chapters scattered all over the country. Being directly under the Central Ministry of Tourism and with its vast resource pool and enormous experience in the field of tourism education, IITTM was an obvious choice to function as an implementing agency of the CBSP Scheme.

Under this Scheme, IITTM conducts training programmes by using its own infrastructure or providing training at the work place of the service providers itself (whichever is conducive). The extensive network and nationalized character of IITTM enables the institute to implement the scheme and conduct the training programmes at various locations thereby benefiting the service providers in many parts of the country. Examples can be sited of capacity building programmes conducted by IITTM at Port Blair, Jammu, Shimla, Nainital, Bhimtal, Khajuraho, Jaipur, Udaipur, Panaji, Satkosia, Sakhigopal, Nandankanan, Chilika, Gurukul etc. IITTM has also been actively implementing the UNDP project related to community and rural based tourism. Outlined below is a list of the courses conducted by IITTM between April 2006 and January 2008.

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Period</b>
01	Taxi/Hotel Staff	Nainital	40	22-23.04.2006
02	Taxi Drivers	Shimla	40	03-04.05.2006
03	Hotel Staff	Shimla	40	03-04.05.2006
04	Taxi Drivers	Jammu	33	13.05.2006
05	Railway Porter	Jammu	40	14.05.2006
06	Taxi Drivers	Gwalior	40	22.08.2006
07	Tonga Drivers	Gwalior	41	23.09.2006
08	Taxi Drivers	Orchha	115	02.10.2006
09	Hostel Staff			

10	Taxi Drivers	Khajuraho	108	03.10.2006
11	Hotel Staff			
12	Taxi Drivers	Agra	87	04.10.2006
13	Hotel Staff			
14	Taxi Drivers	Jaipur	40	05.10.2006
15	Hotel Staff	Jaipur	40	06.11.2006
16	Hotel Staff	Gwalior	40	05.11.2006
17	Tonga Drivers	Agra	25	16.12.2006
18	Taxi/Auto Driver	Agra	26	16.12.2006
19	Unemployed	Andaman & Nocobar		03-08.01.2007
20	Porters	Bhopal	25	22.03.2007
21	Auto/Coach Drivers		26	23.03.2007
22	Taxi/Coach Drivers	Khajuraho	40	13-15.05.2007
23	Taxi/Coach Drivers	Agra	60	21.05.2007
24	Hotel Staff/Dhaba	Nainital	30	11-13.06.2007
25	Hotel Staff/Dhaba		30	

26	Hotel Staff/Dhaba	Bhimtal	30	11-13.06.2007
27	Tourism Awareness programme	Stakosia Tikarapara	25	12-14.11.2006
28	Tourism Awareness programme	Hirapur	20	26.11.2007
29	Tourism Awareness programme for the Service Providers of Nandankanan Biological Park	Nandankanan	26	17.12.2006
30	Tourism Awareness for Guides of Nandankanan Biological Park	Nandankanan	23	18.12.2006
31	Sebayats of Sakhigopal Temple, Sakhigopal	Puri	30	24.12.2006
32	Tourism Awareness for Eco-Guides of Bhitarkanika National Park	Bhitarkanika	32	08-10.01.2007

33	State Level Tourist Guide Training Programme	Sponsored by Deptt. of Tourism	24	22-24.10.2007
34	Artisans of Konark	Konark	30	01.05.07 to 27.07.07
35	Orientation for Eco-Guides of Gahimatha Marine Sanctuary	Sponsored by DFO, Rajnagar	20	06.01.08 to 10.01.08

Fig II: Details of CBSP Programmes conducted by IITM between April 2006 and January 2008.

The duration of each course ranges from 1 to 3 days and a token stipend (monetary benefit) as per the norms of Ministry of Tourism, is being given to the participants to ensure and encourage maximum participation.

While formulating the Capacity building programmes for service providers in the unrecognized sector, staffs of the 'CBSP Implementation Cell' at IITM had to first answer a number of questions to ensure that the objectives of the training programmes were met. Some of the questions and problematic area and their solutions are reproduced here, in the chart below.

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>PROBLEM AREA</b>	<b>SOLUTIONS</b>
WHY WOULD THEY ATTEND THE TRAINING PROGRAMME?	They will be losing 2-3 hours of their working time. [This problem is more prominent in cases of daily wage earners]	Stipend for the participants
WHERE WOULD THE TRAINING PROGRAMME BE	Sometime 'Time and transportation' costs that will be incurred in bringing	In such cases, Training programmes taken to the participants. Conducted at

HELD?	the participants to the Institute campus not practical	their work-site.
WHO WOULD BE THE TRAINERS?	When training programmes are conducted at places where IITTM does not have its direct Network resource	Teaching Staff of the Tourism/ Management department of Colleges /University in the area where the programme is being conducted or local experts in related field.

Getting the service providers to agree to attend the programme was a major hurdle. It was something new to them and their skepticism were justified. Making them first aware about the purpose of the programme and how it will benefit them was a challenging task. It was challenging, not because it was hard to convince them but challenging, because it was hard to get the opportunity to talk to them in an organized grouping. The Management/Office-bearers or influential members of the Association or Grouping of the ‘target’ service providers are first contacted and convinced about the usefulness of organizing such a training programme for its members. Once this hurdle is crossed, the rest of the plan runs smoothly. In all the cases, the key members were found to be cooperative, often volunteering for any assistance in implementing the programme.

The mode of operation of conducting a CBSP programme is being illustrated with the help of a specific example.

Example: Railway Porter’s training programme

Venue: Platform No.1, First class travelers’ Waiting Room, Habibganj Railway Station, Bhopal, India

Number of Participants: 25

Procedure

Step 1. IITTM, as the nodal agency for implementing the CBSP Scheme (of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India) approaches the Madhya Pradesh Tourism

Development Corporation (MPTDC) with the proposal to jointly conduct a training programme for the railway porters.

Step 2. Chief Coordinator of the CBSP Scheme, IITTM and the General Manager of MPTDC in consultation with the Station Manager of Habibganj Railway Station chalk out a schedule for the proposed training session. The opinion of the Head of the Porter's Association, referred to as the 'Mukaddam' (in local parlance) is taken into account. This is an important aspect considering the fact that the Mukaddam commands great respect and influence among the Association members, a crucial criterion for convincing the members to take part in the training programme.

Date and timing: The Training was scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2007 for two hours from 10 am to 12 noon (local time). Certain factors were kept in mind while deciding the timing of the programme, such as the frequency of trains arrival and departure (in general and maximum tourist-boarding trains in particular) so that disturbance/break in the working hours of the porters are kept to the minimum. On an average, 300 odd trains pass through this particular station per day. Just imagine the volume of business they will be losing if they spend the 2-3 hours attending the training programme? The timetable of these trains was studied and the peak and lean arrival-departure times and correspondingly the peak and lean business hours of the porters were identified. Based on this, 10 am to 12 noon was found to be a lean slot and therefore the most appropriate time for the training programme to be conducted.

Training Programme: The trainers were seated on chairs arranged in a single file

while the porters sat on the carpeted area. Writing materials to note down points were distributed followed by a short Introduction session. It is human nature to be curious about one's benefit and opportunity. The trainers started the programme by emphasizing on the benefits of the trainees (porters) and the role they play in the overall tourism development of the destination. Addressing this core issues at the outset caught their immediate attention and the rest of the programme were all taken in the right spirit. Issues deliberated upon in the programme includes

- Basic tourism awareness concepts
- Personal hygiene
- Mannerism and right etiquette
- Professional ethics

- First Aid
- Multiplier Effect of Tourism
- Knowledge and information of important local tourist destination etc

After the training concluded, the participants were given certificates and stickers and a stipend of Rs. 100. Tea and snacks were also provided during a 20-minute break, which was planned and timed to coincide with the arrival of an important tourist train (Shatabdi Express) arriving at that platform.



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**MINISTRY OF TOURISM LAUNCHES  
EARN WHILE YOU LEARN**  
Sensitizing Youth to Tourism  
Commencing December 24, 2007

To create awareness and to inculcate some basic knowledge and skills on Tourism and to work as student volunteers, on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management invites applications from interested students to apply for this 21 days training program.

**Eligibility:** Students pursuing graduation/post graduation between 18 and 25 years of age.  
NOC from the college/university is required for joining this program.

**Stipend:** Rs.1000/- will be paid to successful candidates for the whole duration of the course.

**Selection:** Candidates will be selected through a written examination.

**Application Fee:** Rs.100/- in cash or DD in favour of IITM, payable at Delhi to be enclosed along with the application.

**Last date of Application:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007 **Entrance Exam:** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007

**For details, please visit [www.iitm.org](http://www.iitm.org)**

B PANKAJ

Another important programme which the Ministry of Tourism has conceptualized is the “Earn While You Learn-Sensitizing Youth to Tourism- A Training Programme”. This is a unique sub-scheme under the main CBSP Scheme, which IITM have been entrusted with, to organize five programmes (full time) in a year, each of 21 days duration. As the name suggest, this is a programme for the students (college-going) and the first of its

kind being introduced in the country. This programme was designed keeping in mind the number of trained personals that will be required for the numerous events that India is likely to host in the coming years, especially the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in 2010.

Objective of the Programme: To inculcate appropriate tourism traits and knowledge amongst the trainees, which will enable them to act/work as student volunteers.

Course contents: Emphasis on three aspects,

- i) Indian Society and Culture,
- ii) An overview of Tourism Travel and Hospitality Industry,
- iii) Managerial and Behavioral skills

Who can apply?

A college-going student who is pursuing a graduation course or is a graduate and who has attained an age of 18 years but is not more than age of 25 years.

To test its feasibility and the response level, IITTM organized the first programme on a pilot basis at its Delhi center. An advertisement format for the said programme is shown here.

A written entrance examination was conducted and a total of 62 candidates were selected and provided the training. The trainees were made to appear in an end-of-the-programme test, which also included a 10-minute presentation on any of the monument located in the country. Each successful candidate was given a certificate and a sum of Rs.1000 as honorarium and their names put up on the Institute and also on the Ministry of Tourism website. While on a professional engagement, they will be assigned the designation, 'Student Volunteer'.

## **CONCLUSION**

Tourists come in contact with various service providers and the experience of their interaction with them governs their perception of India as a tourist destination. In India, the often-neglected service providers in the unorganized sector (those at the grass root level) are usually the ones who have maximum direct interactions with the tourists. It is

therefore their style of servicing upon which the opinion of the tourist about the country will be based. Realizing that strengthening the work force at the grass root level is often the best possible strategy for the further development and branching out of Indian Tourism industry, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India initiated the Capacity for Service Providers (CBSP)' Scheme. Any attempt to establish rapport between the tourist and the environs of the host destination adds to the credibility of the destination and the CBSP scheme is one such sincere attempt.

Whether the scheme has made certain positive impact upon the servicing skills of these service providers can be evaluated by analyzing the feedbacks of the participants collected by the training institutes (IITTM, in this case) from time to time. Though an important area to judge the practicability and the usefulness of the said scheme, exploring this aspect in this paper will not be justified. It is an area, which calls for more in-depth discussion.

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