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Abstract

An important turning point in the revision of labour regulations in India has been reached with the introduction of the Labour Code, 2020. This in-depth study explores the salient features of the new code, as well as the opportunities and difficulties it brings and how it can affect different stakeholders. The goal of the Labour Code, 2020 is to preserve workers' rights while streamlining compliance and facilitating corporate transactions. It does this by consolidating and updating the current labour regulations. The key modifications made by the code, including those pertaining to pay, labour relations, social security, workplace safety, and health, are thoroughly examined in this research. Additionally, the research assesses the possible effects of the 2020 Labour Code on various labour market groups, companies, and the economy as a whole. It examines the possible impacts on labour practices, pay structures, industrial conflicts, and the business environment, illuminating the potential benefits and drawbacks of the new laws.

This report also looks at the implementation difficulties that companies and government organisations face, including the necessity of strong enforcement measures, capacity building, and process modifications to bring them into compliance with the new code's requirements. It also looks at the possibilities for better labour market outcomes and how technology may help with compliance and monitoring. In light of the possibilities for formalisation, improved worker welfare, and economic growth, the research concludes by discussing the wider implications of the Labour Code, 2020 in the context of India's socioeconomic environment. This thorough study offers insightful information on how the Labour Code, 2020 will be implemented and a detailed knowledge of its implications for industrial relations, labour law, and the whole economy. Policymakers, companies, scholars, and other stakeholders looking to understand India's changing labour legal landscape might use it as a resource.

Keywords: Labour code, labour rights, labour market flexibility, compliance measures

1. Introduction

A major revision intended at modernising and streamlining the nation's labour rules, the Labour Code 2020 is a turning point in the history of Indian labour laws. The goal of this comprehensive reform is to create four codes—the Code on Wages, the Industrial Relations Code, the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, and the Social Security Code—by streamlining and consolidating 29 core labour legislation. With the introduction of the Labour Code 2020, India's policies on employment, labour relations, social security, and workplace safety have undergone a significant change. This development offers possibilities and challenges to companies, employees, policymakers, and the economy as a whole [1].

This article aims to offer a thorough examination of the Labour Code 2020's implementation in India, including its main features, the effects it has on various stakeholders, the possibilities and problems it brings, and the implementation tactics that work. This essay seeks to clarify the ramifications of this historic labour law change for the Indian worker, corporations, and the wider economy by dissecting its many facets. We want to clarify the potential of the Labour Code 2020 to improve worker welfare, promote economic growth, and restructure labour relations while also addressing the issues and complications related to its implementation by a thorough analysis of the legislation.

2. Brief overview of the Labour Code 2020

With the goal of streamlining and updating the nation's labour laws, the Labour Code 2020

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¹ Mishra, S. N. (2021). Labour Code on Social Security, 2020: A Comprehensive Commentary. Eastern Book Company.

constitutes a significant overhaul of India's labour laws, combining 29 separate central labour laws into four codes. The Code on Wages, the Industrial Relations Code, the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, and the Social Security Code are the four codes that make up the Labour Code 2020. Every code deals with a different area of labour legislation, such as social security, industrial relations, pay rules, and occupational safety and health [2].

3. Background and need for labour law reform in India

India's labour laws were characterised by their complexity, fragmentation, and antiquated restrictions, which made it difficult for enterprises to comply with them and provided workers with insufficient protection. The previous regulatory structure, which consisted of several antiquated and conflicting rules, made it difficult to do business and reduced the competitiveness of Indian enterprises. Furthermore, the antiquated labour rules frequently fell short of addressing the way that work is changing, particularly with the emergence of the gig economy and non-traditional employment. Thus, a thorough overhaul of labour laws was desperately needed in order to increase worker rights and welfare, facilitate commercial dealings, and streamline regulations [3].

4. Importance of analysing the implementation of the Labour Code 2020

The Labour Code 2020 has broad consequences, thus it is critical to assess how it is being implemented in order to comprehend how it will affect different stakeholders and the economy as a whole. This analysis is essential for determining if the reform is successful in accomplishing its goals and for seeing possible obstacles and possibilities related to its application. Through a critical analysis of the Labour Code 2020's implementation, policy choices and strategic measures to facilitate a smooth transition and optimise the reform's advantages may be informed, with an emphasis on companies, workers, and the wider economy. In addition, a thorough examination of how the Labour Code 2020 is being implemented can shed light on how the reform can change labour relations, promote economic expansion, and create a business-friendly atmosphere all while protecting the interests of employees [4].

5. Impact of the Labour Code 2020 on Different Stakeholders

A. Impact on Employers

1. Simplified regulations and ease of compliance

Employers should anticipate to be significantly impacted by the adoption of the Labour Code 2020, especially in terms of the simplification of laws and improvement of compliance easy. Employers will have less work to do in terms of compliance as a result of the simplification of several labour regulations into four codes [5]. The Labour Code 2020 aims to streamline procedures concerning pay, labour relations, occupational safety and health, and social

security by offering a more logical set of rules. This will facilitate firms' compliance with legal obligations.

Businesses frequently had difficulty comprehending and adhering to the many and complicated requirements under the old fragmented labour laws, which resulted in administrative hassles, complicated legal issues, and increased compliance costs. It is anticipated that the Labour Code 2020's emphasis on simplicity and consolidation would ease these difficulties and make it easier for businesses to comprehend and abide by the law. Consequently, there is a chance that this will lower administrative costs, lessen legal risks, and make doing business in India easier all around. Furthermore. entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), which sometimes lack the resources and knowledge to handle the complexities of labour laws, may particularly benefit from the labour Code 2020's streamlined requirements and simplicity of compliance. The reform seeks to level the playing field and provide a more favourable climate for the development and survival of enterprises, particularly those who are just starting out, by offering a more clear-cut and uniform framework [6].

Employers may need to go through an initial period of adjustment as they get used to the new rules and regulations established in the Labour Code 2020, just as with any significant regulatory change. Ensuring a seamless transition for employers across diverse sectors will depend heavily on the efficient dissemination of the changes and the provision of support tools to facilitate comprehension and implementation of the new legislation.

In conclusion, it is projected that the Labour Code 2020 would benefit companies by streamlining rules, making compliance easier, and perhaps lowering administrative costs, especially for small and medium-sized businesses [7].

6. Challenges and Adjustments for Businesses

Businesses will probably need to make certain adaptations and overcome some obstacles when the new labour laws go into effect, even though the goal of the Labour Code 2020 is to streamline rules and make compliance easier.

a. Compliance Costs and Administrative Burdens

Even though the new laws are meant to simplify regulations, firms may have to bear some initial expenditures and administrative hurdles during the changeover. It may be necessary to invest in resources, training, and legal advice in order to comply with the changed laws, ensure correct documentation, and align current practices with the new standards. This is especially true for bigger businesses with complicated operating structures.

b. Understanding and Adapting to New Provisions

Businesses will need to understand and incorporate a number of new regulations and modifications into their operations as a result of the Labour Code 2020. Employers and HR departments may need to go through a learning curve as they become acquainted with the intricacies of the new laws and modify their contracts, policies, and procedures accordingly.

 $^{^2}$ Kumar, S. (2021). Industrial Relations Code, 2020: An Analytical Study. LexisNexis.

³Ibid

⁴ Sharma, R., & Gupta, A. (Eds.). (2021). Labour Law Reforms in India: All You Need to Know about the Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020. Bloomsbury Publishing India. ⁵Ibid

 $^{^{\}rm 6}$ Singh, P. (2021). The Code on Wages, 2019: A Commentary. Universal Law Publishing.

⁷Ibid

c. Balancing Flexibility with Worker Protections

Achieving a balance between utilising the increased flexibility and guaranteeing sufficient protection for workers may be necessary for businesses in relation to some sections of the Labour Code 2020, such as those concerning contract labour and fixed-term employment. Employers may find it difficult to uphold the new standards' language and spirit while still creating a positive and equitable work environment, especially in sectors with different workforce models.

d. Impact on Cost Structures and Business Models

Given the changes brought about by the Labour Code 2020, businesses may need to review their cost structures and business plans. In order to comply with the new legislative framework, this may entail reevaluating pay structures, perks, and social security payments in addition to adjusting personnel planning and contractual agreements.

e. Navigating Transitional Provisions and Legacy Issues:

Businesses may need to deal with legacy concerns and transitional measures as a result of the change from the old labour laws to the new regulations. Employers may have difficulties in ensuring a seamless transition, resolving conflicts or grievances, and bringing previous practices into compliance with the updated requirements.

f. Sector-Specific Implications

A variety of businesses and sectors could face particular difficulties and modifications in light of the 2020 Labour Code. It may be particularly difficult for industries with historically large rates of informal or unorganised labour to formalise employment agreements and guarantee that they abide by the new rules.

Businesses will need to take a proactive approach in addressing these issues and making the necessary modifications, with the help of unambiguous direction from industry groups, regulatory bodies, and legal professionals. In addition, it will be imperative to guarantee efficient communication and provide resources for training and capacity enhancement to enable enterprises to smoothly adjust to the novel regulatory environment brought about by the Labour Code 2020.

7. Changes in labor rights and working conditions

Changes in labour laws that impact workers' capacity to make a livelihood and safeguard themselves from working dangers include minimum wage laws, overtime policies, and workplace safety requirements. Changes to working circumstances, such as longer or shorter workdays, adjusted timetables, or adjustments to benefits and leave regulations, can directly affect employees' ability to manage their personal and professional lives [8].

- **a. Job insecurity:** Changes in workplace practices or labour laws may cause workers to dread losing their employment, which would increase stress and anxiety.
- **b. Decreased compensation:** The security of an employee's finances may be impacted by changes to labour laws that result in lower salary, benefits, or overtime compensation.

- **c. Health and safety risks:** Employees may be more likely to get sick or injured if workplace safety laws are weakened or if work hours are extended.
- **d. Work-life balance:** It may be more difficult for employees to manage their personal and professional life as a result of changes in their working environment, such as longer hours or erratic schedules.
- **e. Employee rights:** Modifications to labour laws may have an adverse effect on employees' rights and protections, including their capacity to organise, engage in collective bargaining, and pursue remedies for unjust treatment at work [9].

To guarantee equitable and secure working environments, legislators, employers, and other stakeholders must take into account the possible effects of changes in labour laws and working conditions on employees and resolve any issues that may arise.

8. Expected economic implications of the labor law reforms

- **a. Labor market dynamics:** Labour law reforms have the ability to impact employment levels, earnings, and the distribution of workers across various industries by influencing the supply and demand for labour.
- **b. Productivity and efficiency:** Modifications to labour regulations may have an effect on how companies employ people, which may have an effect on productivity levels and the nation's gross domestic product.
- **c. Investment and entrepreneurship:** Changes to labour laws may have an impact on the incentives for companies to make investments, develop new products, and launch new firms, which might influence the business climate and spur economic expansion.
- **d. Increased flexibility:** Labour reforms that grant greater latitude to hiring and firing practices, or that permit more flexible work schedules, can facilitate corporate adaptation to shifting market dynamics and even stimulate economic dynamism.
- **e. Enhanced competitiveness:** Modifications to labour regulations that lessen labour market tensions or cut labour expenses may increase firms' overall competitiveness, which may stimulate economic expansion and job creation.
- **f. Improved investment climate:** Reforms that improve labour market flexibility and simplify labour laws may draw both local and international investment, boosting the economy and creating jobs.

8.1 Drawbacks

a. Worker vulnerability: Changes that reduce workers' rights or weaken labour laws can result in worse working conditions, lower pay, and more job instability, which can worsen income inequality and lower consumer purchasing power.

⁹ Reddy, A., & Rao, D. (2021). "Labour Code on Industrial Relations, 2020: Key Features and Implications." Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 64(3), 413-428.

⁸Ibid

- **b. Social tensions:** Economic activity interruptions, social discontent, and possible strikes might result from changes that adversely affect workers' security of employment and well-being.
- **c. Long-term implications:** Policies that put short-term cost reductions ahead of long-term investments in workers' welfare and human capital may have detrimental effects on creativity, productivity, and long-term sustainable economic growth ^[10].

(1) The potential economic implications of labor law reforms

Reforms to labour laws may have an effect on employment levels in economies. For instance, making it simpler to recruit and fire employees may promote employment flexibility and even motivate companies to expand their workforce. Reforms that increase the cost or difficulty of hiring employees, on the other hand, can result in lower employment levels. Productivity may be affected by modifications to labour regulations. Reforms that, for example, enhance working conditions and strengthen worker safeguards may result in increased productivity since these people are probably healthier, more driven, and more dedicated to their work.

However, changes that weaken worker rights or lengthen hours without providing benefits might have a detrimental effect on output. Changes to labour laws may have an impact on pay levels and wage disparity. Reforms that fortify workers' rights to collective bargaining, for instance, may raise worker salaries, while those that undermine such rights may slow wage growth and widen the income gap. Modifications to labour regulations may impact a company's ability to compete nationally. Reforms that lessen the load of regulations on companies and provide them more flexibility in managing their workforces may make enterprises more competitive overall. However, changes that raise labour costs or add to regulatory constraints might make a business less competitive. Reforms to the labour code may have an impact on business choices and economic development.

While changes that increase labour costs or create uncertainty may have the opposite impact, those that provide firms more assurance and flexibility may stimulate investment and economic development. Within an economy, changes to labour regulations may also have an impact on how income is distributed. A more fair distribution of income might result from policies that bolster worker rights and negotiating power, while weakening such safeguards could make income disparity worse.

It's crucial to remember that the precise features of the changes and the larger economic environment in which they are implemented will determine the labour law reform's real economic effects. Furthermore, there is frequently disagreement on the overall effects of labour law reform since various stakeholders may have different expectations for the changes.

A. Challenges in implementing the Labour Code 2020

Making sure that both employers and employees are aware of the new labour code and can adhere to its rules is one of the biggest concerns. Programmes for instruction and training could be necessary to acquaint stakeholders with the modifications. It might be difficult for employers to modify their current contracts, procedures, and policies to comply with the new labour laws. This can take a lot of work, especially for companies that operate in several different jurisdictions. The new labour law may be difficult for governments to implement, especially if they lack the infrastructure or resources needed. This may result in inconsistent compliance and execution [11].

Businesses may incur more costs as a result of labour legislation changes, especially if such changes entail higher pay, perks, or other duties. In order to account for these changes, employers would need to modify their business plans and budgets. Arbitration and labour courts are two examples of conflict resolution procedures that can alter as a result of the new labour law. It can be difficult to guarantee that these systems are both functional and available to all stakeholders. Concerns over the new labour code's possible effects on employment levels may exist, especially if it adds new expenses or administrative duties for firms. Employers, labour unions, and business groups are among the stakeholders who can oppose the modifications brought about by the new labour legislation [12].

Gaining support for the new legislation and overcoming this opposition may be quite difficult. Governments may find it difficult to keep track of the new labour code's impacts and assess how it will affect the economy, enterprises, and labour force. Strong mechanisms for data collecting and processing are needed for this. Working closely together, government agencies, employers, trade unions, and other stakeholders are frequently needed to address these issues. It is imperative to offer sufficient assistance, materials, and direction to enable a seamless shift to the updated labour legislation.

(1) Administrative and procedural hurdles

- **a. Updating administrative processes:** It could be necessary to make considerable changes to the administrative procedures used by government organisations in charge of labour regulation in order to implement the Labour Code 2020. These changes might include creating new policies, documentation, and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance.
- **b.** Capacity building: It could be necessary for government organisations and agencies to increase their hiring and training capabilities in order to properly execute and uphold the new labour laws.

(2) Resistance from certain stakeholders

- **a. Employer resistance:** The new labour code may cause some businesses to oppose its revisions, especially if they feel that the changes would make it harder for them to comply with the law or increase their operating expenses.
- **b. Trade union concerns:** It's possible that certain labour unions or worker advocacy organisations may voice objections to particular parts of the new law, which might spark opposition or calls for more changes ^[13].

¹⁰Chatterjee, S. (2021). "The Code on Social Security, 2020: Challenges in Implementation." Economic and Political Weekly, 56(22), 23-29.

¹¹Ibid

¹²Ibid

¹³Ibid

B. Opportunities presented by the New Labor Codes

- 1. Streamlined regulations: The possibility to simplify and combine current labour laws and regulations under the new labour code may present itself, making it easier for enterprises to comply with the law and lessening the administrative load on both employers and employees.
- 2. Enhanced flexibility: More flexibility in labour laws might be brought about by the new labour code, encouraging entrepreneurship, allowing for creative work arrangements, and adjusting to the changing nature of work in the contemporary economy.
- 3. Investment and economic growth: A more favourable investment climate may be produced by clear and predictable labour laws, which may draw both local and international capital, spur economic growth, and generate employment possibilities.
- 4. Improved labor market efficiency: Through the removal of obsolete rules, the cutting of bureaucracy, and the encouragement of a more harmonious working relationship between employers and employees, the new labour code may help to increase the effectiveness of the labour market.
- 5. Social protection and inclusivity: Strengthening worker social protection measures, fostering inclusiveness, and addressing difficulties with informal employment and vulnerable worker groups might all be made possible by the new labour law.

It is imperative that policymakers conduct effective stakeholder consultation, offer sufficient support for capacity building and implementation, and make sure the new labour law is in line with larger objectives of social and economic development in order to take advantage of these possibilities and overcome the obstacles.

9. Key opportunities presented by the new labor codes 1. Improved labor market flexibility

Businesses may be able to manage their workforces with more freedom thanks to the new labour laws. This might involve making accommodations for simpler recruiting and firing procedures, more accommodating work schedules, and more flexibility in response to shifting market conditions. Enhanced adaptability can help companies react faster to market changes and streamline their processes, which might boost output and competitiveness.

$\begin{tabular}{lll} \bf 2. & \bf Potential & for & increased & investment & and & economic \\ \bf growth & & & \\ \end{tabular}$

The new labour laws may draw more investment into the economy by creating a more stable and business-friendly regulatory environment. Businesses may be more willing to invest in growing their operations, creating new jobs, and developing new technology when they believe that labour laws promote growth and profitability. Thus, there may be an increase in the economy, the creation of jobs, and general prosperity.

It's crucial to remember that the effects of the new labour rules will vary depending on how each code's individual provisions are applied and enforced. Furthermore, it is imperative to guarantee that labour regulations achieve equilibrium between granting firms freedom and safeguarding the welfare and rights of labourers [14].

10. Strategies to address Workers' Concerns

a. Strategies to address workers' concerns and protect their rights

- Education and communication: Organise extensive worker education and outreach initiatives to educate employees about their rights and responsibilities under the new labour laws. Workshops, training events, and the distribution of educational resources in several languages might all fall under this category.
- Strengthening enforcement: Make sure labour rules and regulations are strictly enforced in order to shield employees from discrimination, exploitation, and hazardous working conditions. In order to carry out routine inspections and investigations, this may entail giving labour inspection authorities more power and resources.
- Establishing grievance mechanisms: Provide efficient channels, such as hotlines, ombudsman offices, or online complaint portals, for employees to report infractions and seek remedies for concerns.

b. Ensuring smooth transition and compliance for employers

- Transitional support: Businesses should get direction and assistance in order to comprehend and adjust to the new labour laws. This might entail granting access to resources, conducting training courses, and providing technical support to guarantee compliance.
- Flexibility for small businesses: Acknowledge that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) may encounter difficulties adjusting to new laws. Offer specialised assistance and a staggered rollout to assist SMEs in meeting the new regulations.

c. Role of the government, regulatory authorities, and industry bodies in ensuring effective implementation:

- Clear guidance and support: Clear and easily understandable instructions on the new labour laws, including provision interpretation and compliance requirements, should be supplied by the government and regulatory bodies.
- Collaboration with industry bodies: Encourage cooperation between trade unions and industry groups to guarantee that the implementation process takes into consideration the interests of both employers and employees. Industry associations may be extremely helpful in distributing knowledge and best practices among its members.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Provide systems for continuing observation and assessment of the new labour codes' application in order to pinpoint problems and opportunities for development. Regular communication between governmental bodies, business representatives, and labour unions may be necessary for this.
- It is feasible to handle issues, defend rights, and guarantee the successful implementation of new labour laws by utilising these tactics and involving stakeholders at various levels, eventually promoting an equitable and effective work environment.

¹⁴Ibid

9. Specific Roles of the Stakeholders in ensuring Effective Implementation

1. Government

- Providing clear guidelines: Regarding the new labour rules, the government is essential in giving detailed and complete guidance. This contains thorough justifications of the modifications, implementation schedules, and any resources available to assist firms in adapting.
- Training and capacity building: Employers can be provided with seminars and training programmes by the government to make sure they are prepared to comply with the legislation and are aware of the new obligations. Additionally, offering toolkits and internet resources for reference may be part of this.
- **Support for compliance:** Governments may aid employers with the shift by providing support through online platforms, helplines, and advisory services to answer questions.

2. Regulatory Authorities

- Monitoring and enforcement: Regulators are in charge of keeping an eye on whether the new labour laws are being followed. They should carry out routine inspections to make sure companies are following the new rules, and they should take appropriate action when they find violations.
- Advisory role: Regulatory bodies may assume an advising capacity by offering explanations of the new labour laws and responding to businesses' particular inquiries. This may assist in removing any confusion and guaranteeing that the codes are understood and used consistently.

3. Industry Bodies

- **Disseminating Information:** Industry associations may be quite helpful in informing their members about the new labour laws. They may make use of their networks to make sure employers are aware of the changes and comprehend what they mean.
- Providing best practices: Industry associations may assist companies in understanding how to successfully apply the new labour rules by exchanging case studies and best practices. This may entail offering helpful advice and exchanging experiences from other companies.

4. Collaboration

Collaboration among stakeholders: Government agencies, regulatory entities, and business associations must work together to successfully implement new labour laws. Frequent communication and cooperation between various parties can help to resolve issues, offer assistance, and guarantee a uniform execution strategy.

As new labour rules are adopted, the government, regulatory organisations, and industry associations may all help to make the transition easier and enhance employer compliance by doing their parts. In order to create a knowledgeable and encouraging atmosphere where firms can adjust to the changes, teamwork is crucial.

12. Conclusion

1. Opportunities provided by the new labour codes: The new labour codes provide chances for more investment

- and economic growth as well as more flexibility in the labour market.
- 2. Resolving issues and guaranteeing successful implementation: methods for resolving worker concerns and safeguarding their rights; seamless transition and employer compliance; and the part played by the government, regulatory agencies, and trade associations in guaranteeing successful implementation.
- 3. International perspective and best practices: It's critical to compare labour law reforms in other nations and learn from their experiences. Examples of successful international labour law reforms include the flexicurity model, successful social dialogue, transitional support, proactive enforcement, and ongoing assessment and adaptation.

A. Final thoughts on the potential impact and future outlook of the Labour Code 2020

The Indian labour market might see major changes as a result of the Labour Code 2020. If successfully put into practice, it may result in higher worker rights, increased corporate flexibility, and an atmosphere that is more favourable to investment and economic expansion. The code's implementation, enforcement, and stakeholders' capacity to adjust to the new rules, however, will determine its success. The Labour Code 2020's future prospects are contingent upon its ability to effectively cater to the interests of businesses and employees, as well as its influence on the broader job market and economy [15].

B. Suggestions

- 1. In order to optimise the advantages of the labour law changes in India, it is imperative that stakeholders engage in proactive problem-solving and cooperative implementation. This comprises:
- Government and regulatory bodies provide companies clear direction, instruction, and assistance to guarantee a seamless transition and efficient defence of employees' rights.
- 3. Industry associations that help to spread knowledge, exchange best practices, and encourage cooperation among its members.

It takes ongoing monitoring and evaluation to identify issues and possible development areas as well as to make sure that the adjustments are having the desired impact. encouraging ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the government, labour unions, industry groups, and regulatory bodies in order to settle disputes and ensure the Labour Code 2020 is applied fairly and effectively. India may achieve a fair and productive work environment, realise the potential advantages of labour law changes, and contribute to general economic growth and development by implementing these steps [16].

13. Author statement

All authors contributed equally to this work.

¹⁵ Gupta, R. (2021). "Implementation Challenges of the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020." Journal of Industrial Law, 39(1), 67-82.

¹⁶Ibid

14. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

15. Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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