

The Potentials of Tourist Spots in Coimbatore- Special References to Temples and Museum

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Abstract: Museum and temple reflects the cultural heritage of the past. As such, they are attraction to Art lovers, Archaeologist, Historians and commoners. Their crucial role in the potentials of tourist spots in coimbatore is a point of study. This paper attempts at projecting the role of temples and museum in the importance of tourist spot in Coimbatore district. The tourism sector has the potential to encourage other economic aspects through forward and backward integration with several allied sectors like hospitality, aviation, railways, banking, manufacturing, health and education, among others. The expenditure of tourists generates more employment and causes a multiplier effect on the economy. Hence, the growth and enhancement of the tourism sector will in turn help the country to alleviate poverty and work toward economic development. Coimbatore being the part of ancient Kongu region, it provides scope for the Archaeological Museums and historical temples. The ancient religious sites like Perur Patteeswara Temple, Temple at Marudhamalai Hills, Koniyan Temple which believe that the city Coimbatore is named after this temple and in other hand, the G.D. Naidu Industrial Exhibition which shows industrial character from ancient to modern period. The natural geography of the region is the causes for the Gass Forest Museum, a rare one in South India. Apart from these museums there are several other which speaks about the antiquity of the region like, Kasthuri Srinivasan Art Gallery and Textile Museum, Government Museum and Government College Museum.

Keywords: Museum, Tourism, Temples, Arts, Gallery, Textile.

INTRODUCTION

Museum and temple reflects the cultural heritage of the past. As such, they are attraction to Art lovers, Archaeologist, Historians and commoners. Their crucial role in the potentials of tourist spots in coimbatore is a point of study. This paper attempts at projecting the role of temples and museum in the importance of tourist spot in Coimbatore district.

The tourism sector has the potential to encourage other economic aspects through forward and backward integration with several allied sectors like hospitality, aviation, railways, banking, manufacturing, health and education, among others. The expenditure of tourists generates more employment and causes a multiplier effect on the economy. Hence, the growth and enhancement of the tourism sector will in turn help the country to alleviate poverty and work toward economic development

Coimbatore being the part of ancient Kongu region, it provides scope for the Archaeological Museums and historical temples. The ancient religious

sites like Perur Patteeswara Temple, Temple at Marudhamalai Hills, Koniyan Temple which believe that the city Coimbatore is named after this temple and in other hand, the G.D. Naidu Industrial Exhibition which shows industrial character from ancient to modern period. The natural geography of the region is the causes for the Gass Forest Museum, a rare one in South India. Apart from these museums there are several other which speaks about the antiquity of the region like, Kasthuri Srinivasan Art Gallery and Textile Museum, Government Museum and Government College Museum.

The uniqueness of the above mentioned temples and museums has been a contributing factor to increasing tourist activities in this region. The rare, valuable exhibits and the religious attraction in the above temples and museum, it attracts tourist population of different kinds, from different parts of the state.

Coimbatore has the credit of having more Hindu temples which are several centuries

Old. The sites in ancient Kongunadu is believed to have revolved around the magnificent temples built by the Chola and other empires and therefore most of the sites in the city have a lot of religious significance and contain a number of temples and shrines in and around their limits. Temple site like Perur, Marudamalai and other similar temples are thronged by visitors throughout the year.

The study examines the roles of museums and temples to sustainable tourism development in Coimbatore district with special focus on the museums and historical temples ie. Gass Forest Museum, G.D. Naidu Industrial Exhibition, Kasthuri Srinivasan Art Gallery and Textile Museum, the great pyramid of Perks school, Government museum, Coimbatore and Government arts and Science college Museum Coimbatore. The purpose of this study is to examine potentials of tourist spot with special references to temples and museums in Coimbatore and how it could be effectively utilized for sustainable tourism and to make suggestions for better utilization of the museum for tourism promotion.

Today different types of museums are to be establishing in many parts of the world, but still there are quite a few fundamental elements which make the concept very common among the international and universal level [1]. One of the well known definitions for museum is given by The International Council of Museums (ICOM). It is a consider being a key-definition for understanding of the term museum:

A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment².

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is a dedicated sub-discipline rising from major subjects like geography, economics, sociology, anthropology and archaeological despite. On the whole fine number of researches on this subject (tourism) was exclusively done in different aspects on various areas. The tourist places found in and around Coimbatore is well supportive for both the domestic and foreign people. With regards to natural geographic museum, Gass Forest Museum of Coimbatore identified with more number of the analysis of tourist movement and flows, the impact of tourism and model of tourist space. Gray 1982 sees contribution of economists to tourism research to be in areas of measurement, cost benefit analysis, resource allocation, the use of public goods in the development of tourism and the balance of payment effects of tourism. On the other hand, the

contributions of sociologists fall into four areas: the tourist, relations between tourists and the local, the structure and functioning of the tourist system and the consequences of tourism³. Anthropologists also focus on the host populations while archaeologists study the place of cultural resources in tourism development.

Although the above named disciplines discuss impacts of tourism – economic, cultural and environmental – each of them given its own perspective, emphasizes different aspects of tourism. Geography emphasizes its spatial structure, economic as its economic attributes and sociology and anthropology as its social relationships, Pearce, 1989.

CONCEPTS OF TOURISM

Tourism today signifies the progress of a large number of people from one place to another, from different strata of society from their hometowns for more than a day and for purposes other than business. By and large, it is widely admitted that tourism is one of the few segments that can bring about a real expansion to the economy without creating significant regional or economic inequality. Tourism is also predictable as the most promising industry globally, which possesses tremendous capacity for growth and revenue generation. In other hand we need much more discussion to improve the tourism relationship between Museums and the temple site to develop cooperation for the benefits of both partners.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN COIMBATORE

Among the states of Indian sub-continent, our state Tamil Nadu excels with more number of abodes of the lords of both Śaivism and Vaishnavism besides Jainism and Buddhism. As our state possesses hundreds of temples intact, some of them mutilated and few others are flimsy vestiges as a whole they represent the past tradition building and which can be taken to the next generation. So with this perspective the author has taken up the study about the temples at Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu state.

From the early period, Tamil land was divided into five major territorial divisions and these were called as Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu, Pandya Nadu, Tondai Nadu and Kongu Nadu [4]. Tolkappiyam had mentions about the three divisions of ancient Kongu Nadu as Cheetham, Panri, and Malanadu [5], and besides these, the literary work like Purananuru had given information about Kongu Nadu as a separate division [6].

The Kongu nadu had three main territorial divisions. The largest called “Kongu mandalam”. The second is the Territorial division called “nadu” consisting of a number of villages grouped together. This was the larger administrative unit. The third is the

village called "Ur". There is an interesting poem sung by Karmegha pulavar named "Kongu mandala satakam" (Hundred poems on Kongu region) which gives the boundaries of Kongu Mandalam [7], the number and names of the Nadu divisions and the number of Villages. According to this work there were 24 Territorial divisions called Nadus. Under these divisions were the Urs Villages. There were altogether 615 villages in this Mandalam Further the Kongu nadu was sub divided into 30 territorial sub divisions (Nadus) [8].

PERUR PATTEESWARA SWAMY TEMPLE

The temple is located on the banks of the river Noyyal in Perur village of Coimbatore city, and it holds 1500-year-old history of Perur Pateeswarar Temple. The temple is built by the King Karikala Cholan of the Chola dynasty as a tribute to Lord Shiva. The history of Perur dates back to the ancient Roman period, after the recovery of Roman coins from the excavation in perur area⁹. It is, however, widely believed that the temple coeval with this period.

LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURE

The temple is located around 7km from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. It is characterised by its traditional Dravidian style, with symmetrical steps, angularity, and fine carving work. The Ardha Mandapa and Maha Mandapa of the temple (sanctum) were constructed between the 11th and 13th century C.E. Inscriptions found on the walls of the temple states about the various developments and donations made to this temple.

The Kanaka Sabhai is the most important attraction in the temple structure. It is a golden hall comprise of ten decorated pillars and in the centre, a wonderful gopura houses a golden image of Nataraja, which is the dancing form of Shiva.

CONSTRUCTION

The Chola monarch who built the temple wasn't the only compassionate patron who helped with its development. In between the 14th century and the 17th centuries, rulers from the Vijayanagar, Nayak, and the Hoysala kingdoms provided their contribution for the temple's construction [10].

Madurai's Alagiri Nayak built the renowned Kanaka Sabhai in the 17th century, and Mysore's Tipu Sultan contributed to about half of the temple's profits in the 18th century. During the British rule, the East India Company was responsible for restoring the temple. They carried out renovations of the main shrine, as well as the Amman temple in the mid 1700's. A shrine for the principal 63 saints of saiva sects of Hinduism was also constructed around the same time.

Several hymns have sung about the temple and its beauty. Arunagiri Nather and Kachiappa Munivar have written of the temple in their poetry. Legendary poet Sundarar also mentions the structure in his revered text, 'Tevaram'.

MARUDAMALAI

Arulmigu Subramanyaswamy Temple at Marudhamalai Hills is situated at a height of about 500 feet in a plateau on the Western Ghats, fifteen kilometers north west of Coimbatore city, with vegetation and healthy climate¹¹. Marudhamalai Hills, is dedicated to Lord Muruga (Dandāyudhapāni) is classified under Kunruthoradal, one of the six main abodes of the god. Set against the backdrop of hazy blue hills dotted with shrubs and bushes of varied hues, the sacred shrine verily reflects the picture of Lord Muruga, magnificently mounted on his vehicle peacock, flaunting and swaying its feathers and plume in full bloom.

The Sanskrit word "achalam" denotes mountain. As the mountain here abounded in marudham trees, it came to be known as Marudhachalam. Marudhamalai is also called Marundhumalai, for it is overgrown with shrubs and bushes of medicinal properties. Hence, Marudhamalai is befittingly given the name Marudhamalai (Mountain of Medicines). This is referred to as Marudhamalvarai, Marudhavarai, Marudha Verpu, Marudha Kundru, Marudhavōngal, Kamarpirangu, Marudhachalam, Velvarai in Perur Puranam.

At a little distance from foothill, the deity Ganesha is found. According to puranas the deity is not a chiseled one but it is of a spontaneous origin (Swayambu). The 'Thanthonri Vināyagar' (self-born) is extolled in the 'Marudhamalai Thanthonri Pathigam' of Perur Puranam.

The shrine of Idumba is located in the middle of the way to main shrine. The image of the deity is carved on a huge round rock in the posture of carrying a Kaavadi. Married couples having no issues worship the deity and offer toy cradles with the firm faith of being blessed with progeny by the Grace of god.

The presiding deity, it is said, is a later installation, the original deity being that of Lord Subramanya with His two consorts, Valli and Teyvannai, enshrined nearby to the south in the outer Prakara. They are the very deities referred to in the Perur Puranam. It is here the gods persecuted by Surapadama approached Lord Subramanya and implored Him to destroy the demon. The deities are all of spontaneous origin (swayambhu).

THE MAIN SHRINE

The shrine is not a big one. The sanctum sanctorum and the Ardha Mandapam are comparatively small. The front mandapam is wide enough to accommodate a fairly large number of devotees. Sivalingam flanks the presiding deity on the left and Ambigai on the right in the outer Prakara.

KONIAMMAN TEMPLE

Koniamman Temple is dedicated to Koniamman located in town hall, Coimbatore. Koyamma, the goddess worshiped by chieftain Koyan evolved into Koniamma and the name of the city *Koyambuthur* could have been derived from *Kovaiamma* [9]. The temple dates back to 16th century A.D.

Coimbatore gets its name because of the ancient Koniamman temple located in the heart of the city near the Town Hall. The temple was built around 600 years ago by a leader of the Irula tribe called Covan. The village around the temple was named as 'Covanputhur' which later on became Coimbatore. Later, when there was a fear of an invasion by the Chera rulers, the 'Illangosar' tribe which was ruling at that time, built a new fort and the presiding deity of the fort temple was Koniamman. The temple was renovated again by the king of Mysore and Devi Koniamman was reinstalled here in the form of 'Mahisasuramardini' (slayer of the demon Mahisha who represents egoism). Offer worship at this 600 yr old shrine of Goddess Koniamman and receive her divine grace in abundance.

ARULMIGU ARANGANATHASWAMY THIRUKOIL - KARAMADAI

At karamadai, a place near mettupalayam there lived people by the name "Thottiyars". One of the thottiya had a (karai pasu) cow. All off a wudden , for a few days the cow did not give him milk. Filled with anger the thottiya followed the cow and found his cow shedding milk to a kaarai bush, thhe thottiya became very furious and with his knife banged the bush and a sound exploded from the bush and blood started gushing out of the bush, people knowing this rushed to the spot and found a Suyambu Lingam inside the bush, the same night the God appeared in the dream of thottiya and ordered the thottiya to glorify him with "Chandana Kaapu", So did the thottiya and found that it was a beautiful Ranganathar Suyambu (which is said to be growing in size every year).

ARULMIGU MASANIAMMAN THIRUKOVIL, POLLACHI

Aanamalai, a place near pollachi was earlier ruled by a king called Naanan. He had a very special mango tree in his farm on the riverside of Aaliyar, which he was so fond of. He was so particular that nobody was allowed to use neither the mangoes nor its leaves. Once, a group of girls were having their bath in

the Aaliyar river and saw a mango floating on the river which belonged to Nanans tree, on anxiety one of the girl picked the mango and ate it, even after several pleadings made by her father, the king sentenced her to death. After some time the frs in that particular area formed a female figure in lying state in remembrance of the innocent girl on the graveyard sand and started worshipping her. In due course she was worshipped by the name "Maasani". Later Kozhinkhosargal defeated king Naanan and destroyed that particular mango trees. It is believed that Lord Rama on his way in search of Seetha, was absorbed by the power of this temple, stopped here and performed his meditation adding glory to this temple.

ARULMIGU EACHANARI VINAYAGAR TEMPLE

This temple is located at 10kms from Coimbatore on Pollachi road. It is one of the oldest temple in Coimbatore and dates to 1500 A.D. The Moolavar at this temple was actually meant for Perur Patteshwarar temple and since it got stuck on its way from Madurai, Eachanari became the blessed place. The deity's height is 6 feet and the width is 3 feet and is one of the biggest in South India.

MUSEUMS IN COIMBATORE SITE MUSEUM COIMBATORE

The present textile city Coimbatore is archaeologically important as it is surrounded by historical places namely Vellalur, Boluvampatti, Perur and Vettaikaranmalai. Vettaikaranmalai is known for the ancient cave paintings, which depict hunting scenes, animals, and folk dance scenes.

Many hoards of Roman coins were unearthed at Vellalur including the gold and silver coins issued by the Roman kings of first century BCE and fourth century CE. The other interesting findings were gold ornaments with engravings of Roman figures

This department in the year 1980 conducted archaeological excavation at Boluvampatti. There were number of terracotta figurines, terracotta seal, and big sized baked bricks found in the excavation. The terracotta figurines of Yaksha, Yakshi, Maitreya and head of Buddha were found in the excavation, A noteworthy finding was the terracotta seal with ancient Tamil script which reads as Varman. A potsherd with Tamil Brahmi letters *ud; Yan Kottri*, and another potsherd with Vatteluthu character reads as *q;F ingu sabai vitri kuzhi FHp*. Two punch marked coins dated to 4th century CE were also found in the excavation.

A probability of the existence of the highway was traced from the bi-script inscription, namely Vatteluttu and Tamil, which was engraved on a boulder Karradumparai near Sundakamuttur, a small village

located about 5 km south of Perur. This inscription mentions that a high way was named after one Rajakesari, who identified with Aditya I (871-909 CE) of imperial Cholas. This is the only ancient highway identified till date. This highway connected Kerala (ancient Cheranadu) via Palghat gap after passing through Perur, Vellalur, Sulur, Kattankanni, Kodumanal (ancient Kodumanam), and reached Karur, the Chera city on the banks of river Amaravathi

Hence, the site museum was established in the year 1981, to highlight archaeology and the mercantile activity of this region

ANTIQUITIES ON DISPLAY

Sculptures, Potteries found in urn burials, inscription of Kongu kings, Hero stones, and the antiquities found in the exploration and excavations

GASS FOREST MUSEUM

The geo co-ordinates of the Gass Forest Museum, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, is 11° 0' 59.6340" N and 76° 56' 45.2940" E.

The museum which displays the incredible collections of one of the earliest conservators of forests in the Madras Presidency, Horace Arichibald Gass, who is more engrossed by western regions natural gifts like forest, wild animals and birds etc. The progression for establishing the forest museum was initiated at the middle of the 19th century, an extensive attempt was made by J. A. Gamble, the conservator of forests of Madras Presidency to establish a forest museum in this province. A few years later in 1902, J.A. Gamble's successor as Conservator of Forests, Horace Arichibald Gass, succeeded in establishing a museum for forestry [12]. It was opened to the public at 15th April 1902 by Baron Amptill, the then Governor of Madras.

The Gass forest museum building is an exponent of Gothic style of architecture, which flourished during late medieval period. The term *Gothic* was first appeared during the later part of the Renaissance and the most specialized characteristics found in it is, pointed arch, ribbed vault and the flying buttress. Gothic architecture is one of the most familiar and admirable architecture of many of the great cathedrals, abbeys and churches of Europe. It is also the architecture of many castles, palaces, town halls, guild halls and universities. The architecture in Gass forest Museum incorporates some of the above mentioned elements and additionally few characters like, arch windows and doors, red brick painted facade and freshly painted white pillars, which inspires the first time visitors as one of the most visited scientific historic museum in India.

On entering the museum, everyone is received by a full life-sized model of a menacing Indian Gaur also called as Indian Bison, which was gifted to the museum by a noted philosopher, musicologist, political thinker and philanthropist, Sir Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur (1919 – 1974), 25th and the last Maharaja of the princely State of Mysore.

The art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of birds and animals (especially vertebrates) for display museum display is called Taxidermy. The Museum is all about birds, butterflies, fossils, and bones of humans and animals which are all well stuffed by professional Taxidermy. The Gass forest Museum now brings natural history to life with interactive displays and realistically preservative activities.

The museum records rich collections in birds such as kingfishers, cormorant, egret, various types of Owls, hawks and different kinds of eagles in well preserved state. Separate chambers are allotted for each sects of specious. Moreover some of the displays show the basic activities of the birds. It was very excitement for the children's.

The Butterfly pavilion is an extraordinary exhibit which displays more than 500 kinds of well preserved butterflies. The formation of butterfly and the process of its development can be understood by viewing the butterfly pavilion. The different colored butterflies which are displayed is a rare specimen.

The museum is well known for its Timber library. A timber library is also displayed in the museum. Further, an entire range of useful non-timber forest products such as gums and resins, oils, tars, rubber and lacks are also on display.

G.D.NAIDU MUSEUM & INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION

Gopalaswamy Doraiswamy Naidu (G.D.Naidu) (1893 – 1974) was an eminent inventor and industrialist from Coimbatore, India. What's interesting about this inventor is he never studied more than the primary level. He is credited with the manufacture of the first electric motor in India. His contributions were primarily industrial but also span the fields of electrical, mechanical, agricultural (Hybrid cultivation) and automobile engineering. In fact, even at a young age, he hated the system so much that he threw mud in the face of his teachers (Twice. Back then, there were no slates but one needed to write using fingers on sand). So, naturally he was sent out of school and perhaps that should have been a very happy incident for our young G.D.Naidu! It seems he was quite mischievous during his early years and he is even believed to have lit a whole stack of hay which was kept over a cart, just for fun!

G.D. Naidu developed India's first indigenous motor in 1937 along with D. Balasundaram. It was the motor's success that resulted in the founding of Textool by Balasundaram and, later on, Lakshmi Machine Works (LMW).

Naidu's 'Rasant' razor incorporated a small motor operated by dry cells, was made at a factory in the German town called Heilbronn. Among his other inventions were super-thin shaving blades, a distance adjuster for film cameras, a fruit juice extractor, a tamper-proof vote-recording machine and a kerosene-run fan. In 1941, he announced that he had the ability to manufacture five-valve Radio sets in India at a mere Rs 70/- a set. In 1952, the two-seater petrol engine car rolled out. But production was stopped subsequently, because of the Government's refusal to grant the necessary license. His inventiveness was not confined to machinery alone. He researched and identified new varieties in Cotton, Maize and Papaya. His farm was visited by Sir C. V. Raman and Visvesvaraya. From laying foundation to completion he has built a house in just 11 hours from morning 6am to evening 5pm.

His inventions

1. Super thin shaving blades
2. A Distance adjuster for film cameras
3. A fruit juice extractor
4. A tamper
5. Proof vote
6. Recording machine
7. A kerosene run fan.

In 1941, he announced that he had the ability to manufacture five – valve Radio sets in India at a mere Rs. 70/- a set. In 1952, the two – seater petrol engine car rolled out.

But production was stopped subsequently, because of the Government's refusal to grant the necessary license. Every invention from him has been released under multiple testing.

His inventiveness was not confined to machinery alone. He is said to have grown ten feet high Cotton plants, millet plants with high yields of production and several medical injections for plants that made possible what Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman called "Botanic marvels".

Govt. Museum in Coimbatore

Established in 1990, Coimbatore Government Museum is located at VOC Park Road. The collection in the museum includes specimen related to art, archeology, anthropology, numismatics, botany, zoology and geology. The museum has been divided into 5 sections which house a large collection of

artifacts such as Mesolithic stone tools, calcimined bone remains of animals and humans, wood carvings of 18th century, bronze icons, stone sculptures, inscribed stone slabs and tribal artifacts. A separate section for old rocks, minerals and wood fossils and tribal medicinal plants is also maintained here.

The museum is opened to public on all days from 9.30a.m to 5.00pm except Fridays, second Saturdays and public holidays.

This is the stone sculpture of 'Madurai Veeran' (Brave man of Madurai), which was made sometime during the 19th Century and is housed among the other sculptures in this museum.

The museum has a collection of old coins from various countries, articles made using wood and bamboo used by the tribals, zoological specimen, and various articles made and used by people who had lived in and around Coimbatore region. It also has a section on how the characters (Script) used in Tamil Language evolved over the centuries.

These are some of the palm leaf manuscripts used by the people to record (write) important events and things, before the invention of books and printing press. The knife like instrument which you see on the extreme left hand side is used to write on them.

K. SREENIVASAN ART GALLERY & TEXTILE MUSEUM, TAMIL NADU

The K. Sreenivasan Art Gallery & Textile Museum in Tamil Nadu is a pleasure in itself. It was well-known in the year 1988 as an Art museum. The items of art that are in store of this museum are innovative paintings, sculptures and objects of modern and traditional art. There is also good reproduction of European and other in a foreign country art.

Apart from the Art Gallery, there is also a Textile museum representing the past of textile technology, model of handlooms, different methods of yarn and fabric arrangement and historical costumes of India illustrated with drawing. Situated in the city of Coimbatore, the K. Sreenivasan Art Gallery & Textile Museum in Tamil Nadu is a pride in itself. It was established in the year 1988 as an Art museum. The objects of art that are in store of this museum are original paintings, sculptures and objects of modern and traditional art. There are also good reproductions of European and other overseas art.

Apart from the Art Gallery, there is also a Textile museum representing history of textile technology (through drawings, charts and models), models of handlooms, different methods of yarn and

fabric formation and historical costumes of India (illustrated with drawing).

13. McKercher. Bob and Hilary du Cros: Cultural Tourism. Page 3.

CONCLUSION

There are several measures should be take to develop the museums and temples for the potential of tourism especially in coimbatore region.

- The infrastructures are main and important source to enrich the temples and museum popularity.
- The museum visit starts before a visitor walks into the museum. The visitor's experience starts with a "pre-visit" including social media, online museum and the temple information and online communities all building to develop tourism.
- Local community needs to be the first museum priority, then moving onto tourism, then become a destination. Part of thinking local first is becoming a local community resource.
- Religious monuments will support tourism indirectly, because there is no better income from the temple directly, but the hotels, restaurants and other transport sectors will gain profit due to this religious monuments. Museums are creating strategic partnerships to fund museum programming. Seek partnerships with for profits and non profits to drive attendance. Some museums are creating multi-museum passes to drive attendance between museums¹³. Look for other revenue streams including retail, restaurants and consulting for other organizations.

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