A Billionaire’s Wedding That Helped the Rich Get Richer

[Image by SUJI JAISWAL / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES]

Anant Ambani is getting married, and his father Asia’s richest man, Mukesh Ambani is sparing no expense to celebrate the nuptials.

As the chair of the Fortune 500 company Reliance Industries, the elder Ambani has an estimated net worth of $111 billion, according to [Bloomberg’s Billionaires Index]. That makes him the richest person in Asia and the 11th-richest person in the world.

A lot of media coverage and digital sources claim this wedding benefits the economy of the country it is celebrated. The country in question here is India, the fifth largest economy in the world and #15 in the list of countries with the most number of millionaires. Yet it is also a nation whose average monthly wage for skilled workers is $250–350 and unskilled workers' monthly wage is $100.

Let's break into how the economy benefited :

- The hotels and caterers earned and in turn passed on some of the earnings to cooks, grocery suppliers and all the waiters.
- The event managers and venue managers earned and likewise passed on some earnings to their suppliers, workmen, gifts and invitation card suppliers.
- The lights and decor managers earned and passed on some fees to the equipment providers, flower suppliers, creative designers and workers.
- The hair and makeup providers employed for the 1000+ guests earned and passed on some of it to the local artists and helpers.

Now that we know how the economy received a temporary boost which is no rocket science based sheerly on the estimated cost of the wedding, I wanted to dig a little deeper to look at different angles of the dynamics.

India is a nation where there is no minimum wage, healthcare may not be as expensive as the US but it is not low cost either, no access to free quality education for its citizens and most importantly access to clean water is also a privilege. In other words, only people who have the finances have access to a good life.

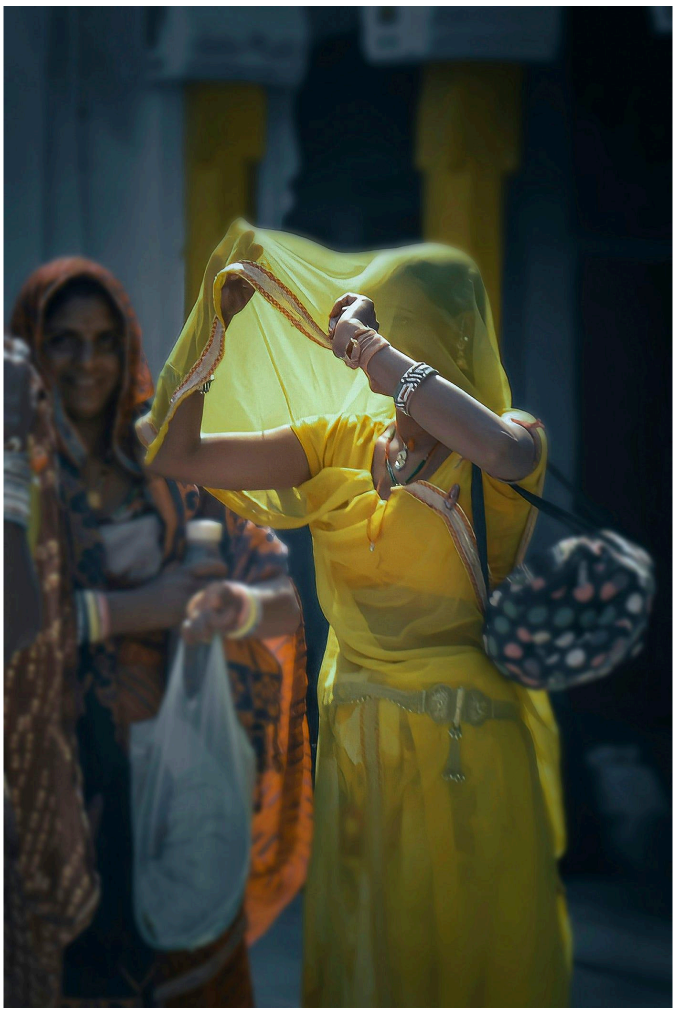


Photo by [Sonu Agvan] on [Unsplash]

Everyone is free to celebrate their wedding as they choose but why does this particular wedding irk me? It's because I believe these extravagant events that claim that they are a boon to the economy are never a what-meets-the-eye scenario.

They often have business deals and negotiations with other wealthy individuals who put money back into their businesses. The companies that manage these events are part of the same circle and pocket most of the profits while giving a significantly small portion to the actual workers. It could also be a money laundering scheme that can turn all that black money into white. They are also a way to boast about the wealth gap and these families' power.

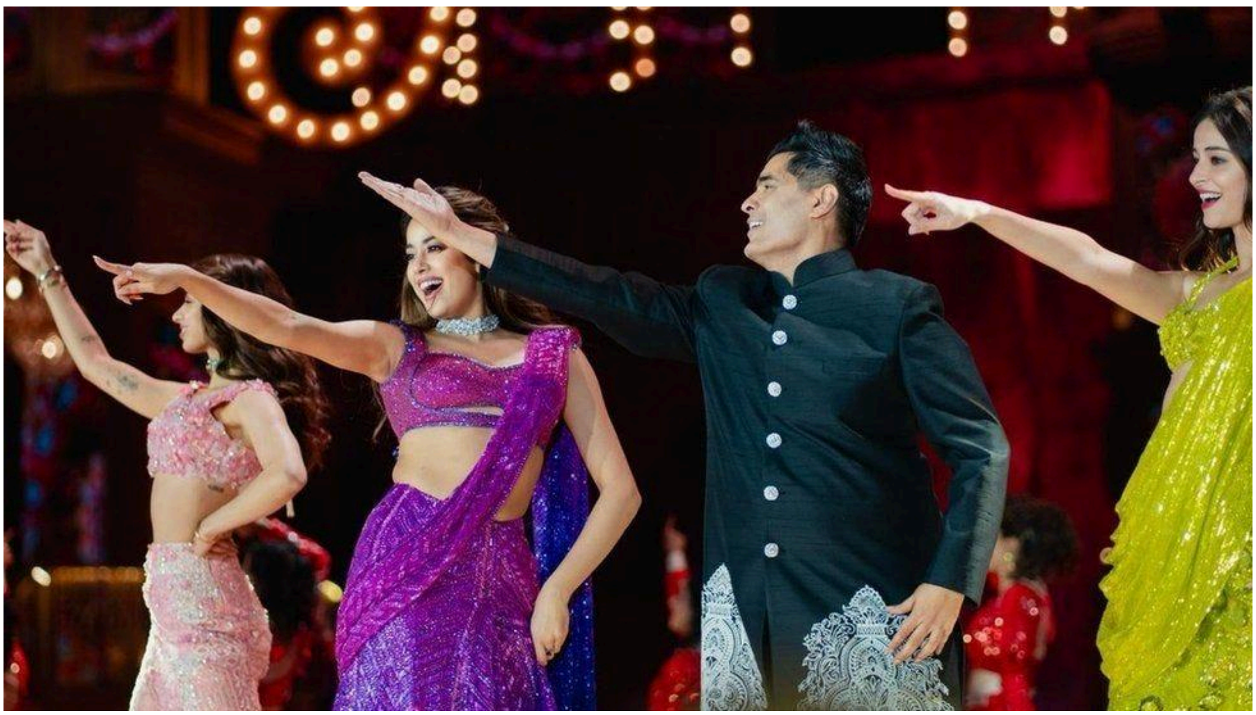
Let's get into the performances and the attendees:

Picture by Business Insider

- Rihanna, a billionaire herself performed at the wedding after a gap of 8 years, reports estimate that the singer had been paid between $6 and $9 million for her performance.
- Mark Zuckerberg and his wife were there. In 2020, Meta bought 10% of Reliance's digital assets for $5.7 billion. Bill Gates and Melinda Gates, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, and Walt Disney CEO Bob Iger and Ivanka Trump were also present.
- The guests arrived in private jets and chartered flights, 40 times more than the usual schedule, clearly not very environment friendly.

Picture by Business Insider

- The designers for the outfits of the guests and the bride and groom were global brands like Versace and Alexander McQueen and Indian designers like Sabyasachi, Manish Malhotra, duo Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla, Ashish Gupta, etc these are the usual popular designers that the top 10% of the country uses. No new or small designers were part of this ensemble.



Picture by ANI news

- The groom-to-be’s mother, Nita Ambani, wore a ring dubbed the Mirror of Paradise, which sold at auction in 2019 for $6.5 million.

[Picture by Vogue](#)

- The message of the event was ‘Go Big Or Go Home’ which creates a society that believes weddings have to be about grandeur. The average wedding cost in India is already at $18,000–30,000 which puts families in debt and causes them to focus on saving purely for a wedding rather than investments, education, improving their quality of life, etc

- Only the biggest movie stars and businessmen were invited, they were given a tour of an animal rescue and rehabilitation centre and the future plans of Reliance, all whilst being in a luxurious 750-acre property in this small town of Jamnagar.
- These individuals live in a bubble and will never see that outside of this property, the town is filled with people living in poverty with individuals struggling for the bare minimum.

Photo by [Samir Arora] on [Unsplash]

Sohini Kar, an associate professor at the London School of Economics, whose work focuses on urban India, thinks the festivities were symbolic of the troubling levels of wealth disparity in India.

According to Oxfam International, the top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth. This means these families own the economy.

My point is, that this display of wealth and power reflects that the rich are only getting richer by helping each other but we deny ourselves of the facts and focus on the small wins.