GLASS CEILING

"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech"

THE SINKING ECONOMY

By: Navomi

The Indian economy sank by a staggering (minus) 23.9 percent year-on-year (YoY) in terms of its growth rate in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter of its current fiscal year of 2020-21, which implies that the GDP of India, or in other words, the total value of final goods and services produced in India in the first quarter consisting of the months April, May, and June of this fiscal year is approximately 24 percent less than the total value of final goods and services produced in the country in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. When compared to the GDP of the preceding January-to-March quarter (i.e. the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal year of 2019-20 or FY Q4 2019), which saw a positive growth rate of 3.1 percent, the GDP growth rate of the first quarter (i.e. FY Q1 2020) comes out to be (minus) 25.2 percent quarter-on-quarter basis (QoQ), which is even less than the annualized figure of (minus) 23.9 percent.

Also, the GDP growth rate of India dropped even much worse than the 18.3 percent figure by which it was earlier expected to drop. Moreover, the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI) that reveals these figures is said to underestimate the decline in GDP growth rate because of the suboptimal quality of data used given the situation of the coronavirus pandemic that made the process of data collection difficult, which implies that the numbers are going to worsen in the coming times.

Among the economies of the G20 nations, the economy of India sank to the deepest level in terms of GDP growth rate. This has also been the first time India ever recorded a negative growth rate in its GDP since 1996 when quarterly growth estimates began to be released by the government.

Considering the present state of the Indian economy as revealed by these figures, it becomes important to address the question whether there is any scope for economic recovery in the future. While the gradual easing of lockdown measures over the months have clearly led to improved economic activity in several sectors, at the same time, the levels of growth so recorded still remain well below the levels before the pandemic hit the country.

Furthermore, the possibility of a quick recovery of the economy seems unlikely, especially in the near term. Instead, it is being expected that now it would take years for India to reach back to its pre-COVID levels of GDP growth rate, and without any more fiscal support from the government the economy will take even a longer time to recover. As of now, the future of economic recovery for India appears to be bleak given the current pandemic situation, and as well as other factors.

NO DATA=NO SCAM

by Shruti Anand

In the age of technology and innovation, data is the new oil , as said by our Finance Minister , Nirmala Sitharaman. However our own Central Government doesn't have data about various issues which have emerged during the coronavirus pandemic. Take for instance the journey of the migrant workers who started going home ever since the lockdown was announced in the month of March. In the journey, it has been estimated by different activists and academicians that over 900 migrants had died, yet the government says it has no data on migrant deaths. The Union labour ministry told Parliament that more than 1 crore migrant workers and members of their families had returned to their home states from cities and town across India. But it said that it did not have data about the number of migrants who had died during their journeys in the 68-day lockdown enforced on March 25 to curb the spread of the COVID-19, so the "question does not arise" of compensation for them. This is especially callous of the government , when more than 90 people have died on the Shramik Special Trains ,which were announced to ferry migrant labourers home.

The government also claims that it has no country-wide data on the number of health workers who have contracted Covid 19, recovered from it or died of it. An RTI query was sent to the Union Ministry of health and Family welfare(MoHFW) , Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and National Centre for Disease Control(NCDC), which replied that "the desired information is not available with this office." Health workers , who have been given the status of Corona Warriors, have been working at the frontline and have contributed immensely for the alleviating the Pandemic, even at great personal risk. Yet our Government has failed to maintain centralized data about infections among them.

In the issue of farmer suicides also, the government says that it has no data as many states do not submit figures to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB). As informed by NCRB, many states and union territories had reported 'Nil' data on suicides by farmers, cultivators and agricultural laborers after several validations even while reporting suicides in other professions. According to the latest data, 10,281 farmers committed suicide in 2019 while this figure was 10,357 in 2018.

In fact the government doesn't even have data on the number of plasma banks in the country. The Minister of State for Health, stated that states have taken the initiative to establish such banks, but had not maintained a central database of such banks.

Not having data on such issues will have grave consequences for our country and its citizens. We have to know the severity of the problem to properly solve the problem. Citizens need data to become aware of all the happenings in our country. We need to know to take a stand for these issues. In absence of such data, the government is unable to provide compensation or assistance to the needy. It is high time that we are not kept in the dark about these pertinent issues and the government exhibits transparency and accountability towards them.

Media refers to the tools of mass communication. Today, our life will remain incomplete without it. Media consists of television, Internet, cinema, newspapers, radio, magazines, direct mail, fax, and the telephone. Viewers can see some form media through certain types of broadcasting and advertising. Media influences the modern world greatly in both positive and negative aspects. These influences have caused a lot of controversy to arise. One side believes that the media has negatively impacted society and that it degrade society. On the contrary, the other side believes it has had a positive effect, creating social integration that might not have occurred before mass media and is an overall up-gradation.

Modern media can be perceived as an up-gradation to society because individuals have access to every bit of informationfrom all over the world.With the help of television, radio and the Internet, media enhance our knowledge. It also provides entertainment. Another positive impact of mass media on society is that today's generation is much more educated and aware of their rights and that helps them gain various personal and professional benefits. Furthermore, Media gives an easy means of communication where people are able to contact with their friends and family and even strangers from any side of the world.People are able to help others in situations of natural disasters, violent attacks and emergencies. This encourages humanity and empathy in children and adults, so more acts of kindness come forward to help the needy ones.

MEDIA UPGRADED OR DEGRADED?

By: Ayushi Gayatri Kujur

Second, it can change the perception or seriousness of injuries or situations. Third, it can decrease the sympathy of an individual towards victims. Lastly, it can awaken inhumane and violent behaviour in society.Mass media is also seen to contribute to the prevention of rational thinking and devaluation of information and important issues. The news media turn into mere amusement, while they fail to stimulate rational and critical thinking of the audience. Mass media, in some cases has become a mere entertainment for the audience. More recently, it intentionally focus on the entertainment content to accelerate the degradation of critical thinking in its audience. People grow accustomed to mass media as entertainment and they just grow accustomed to perceive it as entertainment. As a result, people may have difficulties to take what they learn from mass media seriously.

Thus, taking into account all above mentioned,it is possible to conclude that media is an up-gradation just as much as it is a degradation to society with its consistent changes in the role of media and its impact on society. Individuals often feel overwhelmed with the overflow of information but it is important to critically think about how the individual, as a part of society, use modern mediaand make the most of it.

Looking upon one of the negative aspects of media,research by psychologists L. Rowell Huesmann, Leonard Eron and others starting in the 1980s found that children who watch hours of violence onthat children who watched many hours of violence on television when they were in elementary school tended to show higher levels of aggressive behaviour when they became teenagers. By observing these participants into adulthood, Huesmann and Eron found that the ones who'd watched a lot of TV violence when they were 8 years old were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults. Modern media unintentionally teaches individuals and children violent tendencies or desensitizes them to these actions. Movies and shows like Saw, Baaghi, Criminal Minds and Mirzapur, portray violence and certain erratic behaviour to be quite normal. Desensitization can result in four effects when it comes to real life violence. First it can hinder the ability of an individual to recognize an emergency when it occurs.

Dillusioned Cindrella Beauty

By Shreya Chandola

The more troubling depictions of women is the way in which young girls are taught that their "most valuable asset is their beauty" This is known as the feminine beauty ideal and is prevalent throughout the princess movies. Most likely unintentionally, Disney has objectified and denigrated women and body types since their first film in 1937. Through a statistical analysis of the movies, this criticism is quite evident. 94% of the fairy tale and princess movies mention physical appearance. Within each movie, this discussion occurs on average 13.6 times, with a range from 0 to 114 times for female physical appearance and a range from 0 to 35 times for male physical appearance. The sheer difference in number of times physical attraction is discussed based on gender is an explicit representation of the polarity and inequality represented in these films.

It is also important to understand the relation of physical beauty to character and other qualities within these stories. In 31% of the stories, beauty and goodness are associated with one another — most often referring to the princess as being chaste and innocent. Similarly, ugliness and evil are related in 17% of the princess stories. For example, Snow White's stepmother is seen as evil, unfaithful and all negative adjectives re used for her. However in reality she is smart and a women who knows what she wants and also good decision maker and if we go for snow white she is labelled as someone who is very pure and has a good heart but in reality she is just a amenable and naïve .While any form of physical appearance and personality association is detrimental to a girl's self-esteem, this stark separation between beauty and ugliness, goodness and evil is extremely harmful.

Throughout the majority of the films, the antagonist is depicted as less attractive than the protagonist, representing her as the old, ugly witch. This is exhibited repeatedly, from Cinderella, to Snow White to The Little Mermaid. Bestowing these positive personality attributes, such as intelligence and independence, onto the unattractive, antagonistic character leads young girls to want to associate with the personality attributes of the beautiful princess.

The most upsetting issue surrounding the depiction of these women and their physical appearance is the unrealistic portrayal of body image within the fairy tales. Buzz feed wrote an article in which members of the team dressed up in costume as a Disney Princess and had their bodies digitally altered to fit the frame that is represented in the animations. They clearly are able to reveal the unrealistic, and harmful, alterations that Walt Disney has created. Similarly, another website,found that in 6 out of the 11 Disney Princesses, their eyes were larger than their waists. This displays the lack of credible anatomical basis within the creation of these characters. While the actual relation between the size of their waists and breasts is physically impossible, their innocent yet sexualized facial features suggest a storyline beyond a pure, childlike storyline as well. These implausible bodies are representations of the "ideal feminine body-subject" in which women are taught to be "smaller than a man, demure, and take up little space". This is clearly illustrated in these movies both in the body type of the women and the large, masculine bodies of the princes.

Even though the design of women and men are offensive and unrealistic but this whole princess story ideas were emerged when there were high gender inequality or gap between women and men, this period was around the ww-2. Also at that time these conventional gender roles were highly appreciated but this doesn't give them any right or excuse the artists to continue this tradition and give children an unrealistic and unhealthy obsession. The promotion of false idea should be stopped before it degrades the today's generation.

STORY SNIPPETS:

The Usual Indian Lecture! by Anshuman

"You just wait, I'll make it so good that you are gonna bless me. IT IS MAGGIE TIME!!" Muskan said to me.
She was very excited today. Not anything great happening just that everyone had asked her to make Maggie. Everyone was waiting on the bed playing cards, with mom continuously asking Muskan if she needed help.
Mom cannot sit down quietly and dad cannot see her tensed.
"Your turn Sujata." Dad said to mom throwing the cards on the bed. We were playing a game called bluff. Mom ignored him.
"She is just making Maggie not a bomb." Dad exclaimed, patting mom's back.
"She is cutting vegetables and using the kadai for the 12th time only. She'll either cut herself or burn the dish." Mom replied frowning.
"Feels more of doubting than care. Look she is cooking the simplest dish there is. When she will step in the world what will you do. You cannot keep herself in your boundaries providing privileges." Dad said beginning the endless, repetitive and the boring lecture.
"She has to learn from her mistakes. If by chance she burns the dish, we will just order something."
"Oh, 'We will order something' Now who is giving privilege?"
Isn't it amazing, we don't care about 5 packs of Maggie burning. We know that we can just order food from nearby to satisfy our hunger and the maid will clean the kadai, so we don't care about it getting damaged either. Can these be called privileges? Do you have privileges? What are privileges?

TO BE CONTINUED...