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## Psychology of colours

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### Abstract

The most striking aspect of clothes is their colour. It is one of the prominent factor that makes one instantly like or dislike a garment. Appreciation of fabric, style, trimmings etc. stand secondary. Colour is a powerful communication tool which has psychological and physiological effect on our bodies. It can change mood, cause excitement and even influence the decisions people make. It can sway thoughts, change actions and cause reactions. It can irritate one's eyes, raise one's blood pressure or even suppress one's appetite, if not appropriately used. When used in right way, colours can create magic and even save energy consumption.

Colours always play tricks because they differ in weight, warmth, distance and intensity or acidity. Hence, it is necessary to understand the harmony of colours knowing which colours to be used, in what order and proportion to create a desired effect. The language of colour is equally important to graphic designers, interior designers, architects, advertisers for selling of products, artists and crafts people for achieving satisfactory results to create beauty, balance and harmony in their products/works. Right choice of colours and blend plays a very important role in almost all the fields of visual and performing arts.

Most importantly, colours remove dullness in life, add spice and enhance the beauty of the objects around us.

**Keywords:** Hue, value, intensity, tints, shades, tone

### Introduction

Colour is the strongest element of design which is perhaps noticed by the on looker to the maximum. It is the first thing to be noticed even from a distance. It provides expressions to oneself. A good selection of colour help to bring balance to both inner as well as outer self. Appreciation of colour is largely an emotional process.

If we move scientifically, it is the sensation that arises when rays of lights relate to the eye. Colour removes the dullness of life and enhances the beauty of the objects. There are some evidences that certain colours have greater appeal than others, some appeal more to men, others to women and still others to children.

Colours always play tricks. They differ in weight, warmth, distance and acidity. They can be exciting or relaxing. Many experiments have been done in this regard that colours have a definite effect on our moods. Because of their emotional effects, the colours are often associated with the following feelings.

### Red

Red is the colour of fire & danger. It gives warmth and is a symbol of love, passion and aggressiveness, perhaps, for the reason selected for the Indian brides. It is attention grabber, energetic, stimulating and courageous (female apply red on forehead, lips & nails). It is the colour of blood, so associated with splendor & courage. It is cheerful but not restful so must be combined with some other colour to have a restful effect.

### Yellow

Associated with Sun, so it is a warm colour, it allows in the light so shows open – mindedness of a person. It is bright, cheerful and indicates authority & control. It has minimum wave length so it can be seen from a very large distance (In America, all taxies are coloured yellow). It provides light, so various shades of yellow like Ivory, Banana yellow, Cream & Beige are used for the interiors of homes.

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**Blue**

It is the colour of intellect and stability. It provides a soothing and calm effect. Nature uses it lavishly in the Sky and the Sea. It is the coolest of the colours but still energetic hence used in the interiors of the gyms. It signifies truth & wisdom. It is also believed to soothe illness and treat pain.

**Green**

Green is considered to be a cool colour because it has shorter wavelengths. People who are calm and seldom require anybody's attention often select green colour. It gives us a feeling of calmness, freshness and restfulness so this colour is used in Hospitals. Nature has also abundance of green in the form of plants and trees.

**Oreng**

It is warm, joyous, cheering and lively colour. The person wearing orange has a tendency to make others smile. It is also associated with sacrifice, courage, enthusiasm and zeal in action. Many sports teams use orange in their uniforms, mascots and branding. It also suggests sociability.

**Purple**

Purple indicates dignity, self-respect, self-worth and is generally associated with wealth and royal, people often perceive it as being a very regal colour. The natural dye used in ancient times for this colour was very rare & extremely expensive hence only royal and wealthy people could afford this colour.

**Pink**

Pink is a light red hue and is typically associated with love and romance. People associate this colour with qualities that are often thought of as feminine, such as kindness, nurtured and compassion. It gives a very Creative and Artistic vibe. Being a Soft colour, it could be used be in larger areas.

**Brown**

Associated with Mother Earth and hence indicates stability, dedication commitment and practicability in life and hence liked by Males. Also considered as uniform colour code in some professions. People preferring browns are more dedicated towards their family & friends. Monochromatic colour scheme in brown suites on middle aged males.

**Black**

It suggests mystery and wisdom. Generally, it is associated with death and grief. These days it is being a very popular colour for formal occasions (Western Award Functions) because it reflects power and authority, attractiveness and elegance. It absorbs the light and hides the body contours and is often worn by hefty people. It is a forceful colour and brings focus to the wearer and creates magical contrasts with other colours.

**White**

White is aristocratic & refined. It reflects purity and innocence (Western bridal dress). It omits divine power and light. It radiates coolness, cleanliness and simplicity symbolizing a new beginning or a fresh start. It also holds the first position preference wise for the wall colours of the interiors. In Indian culture it is associated with grief and sorrow.

**Characters of colours****1. Colours have warmth & coolness**

They can make a person feel warm or cool. Yellow, red & orange are warm whereas blue, green & violet are cool colours. Blue is coolest and orange is hottest. Tints (mixed with white) are cooler than their original colours such as pink is cooler than red.

These qualities are helpful in designing garments for summers and winters. Appropriate colour scheme makes the garment suitable according to the time of season. Warm colours give a feeling of gaiety & cheerfulness but overdone may create nervous tension. Cool colours appear dignified but too much use can make a person feel depressed so should be complemented with warm colours.

**2. Colours advance & recede**

Warm colours seem to come forward while cool colours seem to recede. However, a bright blue could advance than a dull dark yellow. White / dull colours are more advancing than black or dull colours because dark colours have defined outlines than light colours so light colours seem larger.

These illusions can be used in dresses. Persons with large built should avoid advancing colours because they emphasize the size of the wearer. Receding colours of medium or dark tones are better selection for them whereas short & small figures can successfully use warm colours.

**3. First impression**

It is certainly the colour of the dress that is usually noticed when one meets the other for a very little time without communicating with each other. Person is considered Feminine wearing pastel colours, dainty fabrics, laces & so on whereas the one wearing dark bright colours in rough textures & striking lines is considered as Masculine.

**4. Emotional force – mood**

Sometimes we feel happy and cheerful and at others, depressed & serious without knowing that mood is being influenced by the colour of the dress. Women always have emotional appeal and the impact of colour on their emotions must be taken into consideration when choosing cloths. Dull colours are depressing while bright tones are gay & sparkling.

**5. Colours produce after image**

If we stare at red colour circle for a continuous period of time and then close the eyes, we find a green circle in the image for the reason that our eye reacts to two complementary colours (opposite on colour wheel) at the same time. So complements should not be used in a solid from in clothes because they are restless and are tiring for the eyes and at the same time can make the skin of the face look tired.

**Colour relations****1. Colour and age**

Colours, if selected according to age look appropriate. Children are usually dressed in primary colours whereas young persons can successfully wear any colour depending upon its suitability to their personality. With growing age and greying hair, it is important to consider the suitability of the colour with it. Sometimes absolute complementary colours also look attractive provided the person is able to

carry them and they do not look out of place. (Harmonious colour scheme look better in old age.)

## 2. Colour and texture

Colour plays tricks with textures. Lighter shades suit thin textures better than darker shades. Darker shades suit better in thick materials. Durable fabrics should not be taken in very dark colours so that repeated washings may not fade them.

## 3. Colour and complexion

A person with healthy complexion can wear any colour, from light to dark. A dark-skinned person should avoid deep shapes & hues. A person with yellowish complexion will not look well in grey yellow, yellow green and pale yellow. Dark skin tones look good in coral, beige, orange, lemon yellow, beige khaki, baby blue, pistachio green & emerald green.

Blue eyes seem too intense if coupled with same shade dress. Deep blue clothing suits them best. Similarly blue eye make-up on blue eyes looks too intensified. Variety of colours make dark eyes appear darker and light ones lighter.

## 4. Colour and size

Warm colours make one look larger. The dull hues of same colour would make one look smaller. White makes one look larger than black because black overpowers.

Lighter values are more noticeable than dark values. A stout person should avoid warm and intense colours because they attract attention to her/his figure. A female with proportionate normal figure can wear almost all colours. However, clothing of related colour harmonies is suitable for use by quieter and older persons.

## 5. Colour and Light

The garments to be worn in the day light should be some what lighter than to be worn at night and they should be selected in the day light whereas for evening wear the selection should be done under artificial light because electric light plays tricks with colours.

## 6. Colour and occasion

The time, place and occasion also influence the choice of colour in dress. Bright, gay & cheerful colours befit festive occasions, parties or celebrations while golden, silver and yellow are most suitable for weddings, red generally for the bride. Men use dark blues & blacks for formal occasions. Magenta, purple, orange, royal blue are eye filling colours and look good during festivities and happy events.

## 7. Colour and season

Cool colours such as white, blue, lavender are suitable for summers as they absorb less heat from the atmosphere while warm colours like red, orange, pink & yellow are suitable for winters & provide warmth.

## Conclusion

Colour attracts immediate attention, creates an emotional connection and leads the buyer to the product straightway. It has the power to evoke every type of feeling, from femininity and masculinity to emotions and cravings. It is found that colour of one's clothes are capable of communicating one's status and level of intelligence to others. Thus, colour plays a vital role in the world we live. It

can sway thinking, convey information, change moods & actions and even influence the decision making. The appropriate colour choice gives the wearer an individuality and self-confidence.

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