

## Psychological Effects of Colour

Vijaya Lakshmi V

Professor and Head, Dept. of RMCS, Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, India

### \*Corresponding author

Vijaya Lakshmi V, Professor and Head, Dept of RMCS, Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Rajendranagar mandal, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

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Colour makes an immediate visual impact and creates mood. Physicists, physiologists, psychologists and industrialists work with the visual and emotional effects of colours. Our emotional reactions to certain colours are partly due to the symbolic meanings that have association with them. In the earlier days, colours were used to convey definite ideas to the people who were unable to read. White was employed for innocence, black for evil or death, grey for penitence, red for love, blue for sincerity or hope etc. Colour because of its emotional effect upon us, is largely responsible for the atmosphere of a home. It is capable of soothing or irritating, cheering or depressing, charming or boring, welcoming or repelling. An important thing for a decorator to know is how to use colour for its emotional effect. Different colours excite different emotional responses and some persons are more sensitive and more stimulated than others.

### Yellow

It is the colour of the sun and artificial light, is associated with cheerfulness, gaiety, humor, buoyancy, optimism, exultation, sympathy, pleasant and even prosperity. It is the symbol of power for Greeks and Egyptians. The stimulus of yellow colour is emotional. The right yellow will lift our spirits and our self-esteem; it is the colour of confidence and optimism. In home decoration yellow is indispensable, because more than any other colour it gives the effect of light. The modified yellows, such as buff, cream, ivory, beige, pale lime yellow and pale banana yellow are useful wall colours because they are harmonious with each other and used in draperies, carpets and upholstery. Examples of tints and shades of yellow are Lemon yellow, gold, harvest yellow, maize yellow, mustard yellow and sunlight yellow. Yellow is also used for exterior house especially for shutters. The darker and more neutralized yellows and greenish yellows are associated with sickness, disease, indecency, cowardice, jealousy, envy, deceit and treachery. Dangerous and flammable materials like fuel oil, gasoline, kerosene etc. are indicated by yellow colour.

### Blue

It is the coolest of the cool colours. It suggests rest, repose, calm, dignity, serenity, passiveness and tranquility. It also signifies sincerity and hope. It is the colour of clear skies and deep water, so, it is associated with coolness. Blue objects do not appear to be as close to us as red ones. It expresses distance, spaciousness, loftiness, formality, restraint, happiness, truth and honor. Blue is

the colour of the mind and is essentially soothing; it affects us mentally, rather than the physical reaction we have to red. Intense blue can be a helpful accent. Examples of tints and shades of blue are aquamarine, royal blue, sea blue, navy blue, periwinkle blue, peacock blue, indigo, iris blue, turquoise blue and cyan. Blue is used as a caution against movement or use of equipment being worked on such as elevators, scaffolding etc. and also for protective materials.

Blue can be used to promote products and services related to cleanliness (water purification filters, cleaning liquids, vodka), air and sky (airlines, airports, air conditioners), water and sea (sea voyages, mineral water). According to research studies, blue is a masculine colour as it is highly accepted among males. Dark blue is associated with depth, expertise and stability. Light blue represents health, healing, tranquility, understanding and softness.

### Red

It is the colour of fire and blood. It is expressive of primitive passion, war, vigor, power, movement, tension and danger, and aggression. It is the symbol of love, vigor, action, virility and sex. It's hot, exciting and stimulating. Bright red should be used in limited area to add life and cheer. Effect of red colour is physical. Although not technically the most visible, it has the property of appearing to be nearer than it is and therefore it grabs our attention first. Hence it is effective in traffic lights all over the world. In decoration, red gives impression of splendor, warmth, hospitality and exhilaration. It is cheerful but not restful and so must be used discreetly. Cool reds like harmonize with blues and purples. Warm reds like tomatoes harmonize with yellow and orange. Dark, dull, raspberry red has proved to be a successful colour for carpets. Examples of tints and shades of red are maroon, crimson, pink, cherry red, straw berry red, tomato red etc. Interestingly, Red is the only colour that has an entirely separate name for its tints while tints of blue, green, yellow, etc. are simply called light blue, light green etc. Other names of tints and shades of red colour are Amaranth red, Salmon red, cardinal red, raspberry, tomato red, blood red, pomegranate red, cherry red, beetroot red, onion peel, pearl pink and fire red. Pink should be usually grayed if used in large quantities. If pink and blue are used together, pink should be slightly orchid and the blue should have a violet. Red is used for fire protection systems and equipment and stop signals.

## Green

Compared to the other colours, green is relatively neutral in its emotional effect, tending to be more passive than active. Being in the centre of the spectrum, it is the colour of balance - a more important concept than many people realise. In ordinary usage green expresses freshness, raw, callow youth and immaturity. It is associated with luck of Irish. Green is the colour of grass, leaves and vegetables and naturally suggests rest, cool shade and refreshment, all pleasant things. Negatively, it can indicate stagnation. Some colorists say that green has negative qualities as well as positive ones and that it suggests envy, jealousy and ill health. It also denotes life, spring and hope. The most usable greens are those that have been reduced in density and made subtle. Greens that are employed on the exteriors of houses or on garden furniture or fences should be warm in quality so that they will harmonize with the colour of the foliage. Examples of tints and shades of green are navy green, military green, moss green, apple green, leafy green, spring green, sea green, grape green, algae green, sap green, mint green, olive green, asparagus green, emerald green, pine tree green, avocado green, pear, parrot green, fern green, moss green etc. Green is used for safety i.e. first aid dispensary or kits, stretchers, safety showers etc.

## Orange

It shares the qualities of reds and yellow. So it is the combination of physical and emotional. It focuses our minds on issues of physical comfort - food, warmth, shelter etc. - and sensuality. In its pure form it is so warm, hence should be used in small quantities. It is a 'fun' colour. It expresses energy, spirit, hope, courage and cordiality. Neutralized forms of orange like peach, rust, copper are used in home decoration radiate hospitality and cheer. Other tints and shades of orange are Amber, Apricot, carrot orange, pumpkin orange, and papaya orange. Dangerous parts of moving machinery are colored with orange.

## Violet

The shortest wavelength is violet, often described as purple. It is made of red and blue, which possess quite opposite characteristics and when mixed cancel each other's effect, so that purple is somewhat gentle and vague. It is highly introversive and encourages deep contemplation, or meditation. Hence it is a spiritual colour. It has associations with royalty and usually communicates the finest possible quality. It suggests mystery, dignity, reflection, mourning, philosophical musing and twilight. It is the symbol of royalty. It must be used with caution. It is artistic suggesting subtlety and sensitivity. Royal violet projects dignity and some violets project tension and depression. Eg; lilac, lavender etc. Valuable materials are colored with violet.

## Brown

It suggests seriousness, warmth, Nature, earthiness, reliability and support. It also has some negative qualities like lack of humour, heaviness and lack of sophistication. It is designated to peasants during middle ages, thus associated with humility. It is the reminiscent of autumn, harvest and decay. It ranges from yellow to red in cast and has richness and depth. Brown is used for walls with natural wood furniture and light beige rugs or with one striking colour such as turquoise or cherry red. Chocolate, burnt cinnamon, or other red-browns are more usable than yellow-browns. Other forms of brown are chestnut brown, rust colour, wheat brown, almond brown, mud brown, sand colour, buff, copper brown etc.

## Black

It is the powerful accent colour, depressing if used in excess. Black is essentially an absence of light, since no wavelengths are reflected and it can, therefore be menacing; many people are afraid of the dark. It suggests weight, dignity, formality and solemnity, evil, old age, silence, subdued, profound and depressing. Black is also indicative of sorrow, gloom, death, secrecy and terror. It also suggests efficiency, substance, mystery, wisdom or sophistication. To a decorative scheme of dark colours, it adds spirit and interest, but in a light colour scheme, it gives too much contrast and makes other colour appear faded. Electrical conduit is colored with black. Creates a perception of weight and seriousness. It is a solid, reliable colour and most people find it quietly supportive.

## Gray

It is produced by mixing black and white, has no particular character of its own, although in light tints it seems gentle and serene and in dark shades it is dignified and restrained. When used with limited areas of chromatic colours, grays are useful. They provide sober and good background colour and are subject to dullness; giving an impression of monotony. It is associated with retirement, sadness, modesty and indifference. It has negative effects like lack of confidence, dampness, depression, hibernation and lack of energy.

## White

Just as black is total absorption, so white is total reflection. In effect, it reflects the full force of the spectrum into our eyes. It communicates, "Touch me not!" It is the safe colour and can be used in large areas. It is associated with cleanliness and sanitation. It is positive, stimulating, luminous, airy, light and delicate. It suggests clarity, openness, brightness, purity, chastity, innocence, faith, truth, peace and surrender. It also signifies honesty and integrity. White used with accents imply modernity and high style. Sanitary equipment are colored with white. Visually, white gives a heightened perception of space. The negative effect of white on warm colours is to make them look and feel garish [1-5].

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