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USE OF COLOURS IN POST-MODERNIST INDIAN CREATIVE ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Post Modernism in India is believed to have evolved after Indian Independence in 1947 and continues till the early 20's. When we talk about Post Modernism in context to India, it is often connected to the country's modernization and decolonization. After the Indian independence, advertising developed with the development of forms of media at each decade. Since the beginning, colours have stirred our emotions. White chalk was a precious tool in the hands of Palaeolithic artists. Gold from the very first civilisations reminded us of the sun. A desire for the mysterious and exotic blue changed the course of history. Colour was definitely grabbing worldwide attention as the civilizations advanced, but it certainly wasn't easy to get hold of. This is why it became the ultimate symbol of luxury. Those who could afford it, used favourite hues to decorate their surroundings. Today, not so long since the beginning of the Digital Revolution, we have free access to any colour we can possibly think of, and more and we use it in abundance and variances in Indian Advertising, basically since 1950's when colour ads occupied special importance amongst the people who were only confined to black and white images and ads. Colour is powerful because it can change our mood – the mood of potential customers. Advertisers and designers are well aware of, the fact that customers are not guided entirely by logic when making purchases, but tend to be driven by less identifiable factors such as emotions. Through colours we can control reactions of an audience and provoke them to certain behaviours. Creativity in one word can be described as being different, i.e. different from the quo. The designer's role is to build clear and understandable communication through the impact of colour. Creative advertisers use more dramatic mixture of colours in those ads to differentiate them from the general clutter of the ads and also to produce stronger communicative effect. The following paper presents examples of ads from mid 1990's till the onset of 21t century and description of its colours. This paper will also present the aesthetics related to those colours and their suitability in designing those ads, to attract maximum consumers by appealing their senses.

Keywords: Advertisement, Creativity, Aesthetics, India, Colour

INTRODUCTION

A rapid growth in Indian Advertising can be seen after the war of Independence. This era after 1950 till the late 20th century is termed a Post Modernist era. During this period Industrial revolution took place which gave rise to advertising. As advertising was related to only very few

media in the mid 1990's, colour was considered as the most important element to describe and define an ad. Although various forms of media evolved with time, but still colour was considered tectonic in advertising. This paper presents the importance of ads, examples of ads from mid 1990's till the onset of 21st century and description of its colours. This paper will also present the aesthetics related to those colours and their suitability in designing those ads, to attract maximum consumers by appealing their senses.

POST MODERNISM IN INDIA

Post Modernism in India is believed to have evolved after Indian Independence in 1947. When we talk about Post Modernism in context to India, it is often connected to the country's modernization and decolonization.

The Post Modernism thought, in attacking the idea of a national centre or dominant ideology, facilitated the promotion of a politics of difference. Under Post Modern condition, the ordered class politics preferred by socialists had given way to a far more diffuse and pluralistic identity politics, which often involves the self conscious assertion of a marginalized identity against the dominant discourse.

With Indian Independence, the political order in Indian changed completely with Indian Government replacing the English Government .Moreover the law and order were not completely based on Indian ideals, but the 200 years of the British rule, did lay a heavy impact on the Indian people, the politics, the society and the system of education. On a whole, it almost transformed the view of Indian scene which had shifted from Kings and Kingdom to a democratic society. This event also changed the various modes of communication, leading to a change in the system of art too. Technological advances followed after 1950 with the launch of various satellites, the development of radio, television, and finally internet in the 1990's. Industrialization took place after 1950's leading to the production of variety of products , the increase in consumerism followed and materialism became one of the main motives of the people of these period.

VARIOUS THEORIES AND AESTHETICS RELATED TO COLOUR: A BRIEF LITERATURE SURVEY

According to Aristotle"Colour is the transition from Dynamics to energia =colour reflects not appearance, but condition of things difference of objects which depends on shadow light and angle. According to Collins paperback English dictionary (1993), colour is a property of things that results from the particular wavelengths of light, which reflect or give out, producing a sensation in the eye. Marketing practitioners have often turned to colour consultants to help them determine products colours that appeal to consumers (Funk and Ndubisi, 2004; Ndubisi and Funk, 2004). For instance, Igloo Products Corporation used a colour consultant to develop coloured coolers for the firm. Igloo attributes the subsequent 15 per cent increase in sales to the new colours (Lane, 1991). White-Sax (2000) stated that, "when it comes to a product design, much more importance is now being placed on how texture, patterns and specialty effects influence colour. Despite claims that these preferences are unsystematic and that saturation and brightness exert more influence on judgements than hue, a substantial body of research suggests that the rank order of preference for hues – blue, red, green, violet, orange, yellow – emerges with some degree of consistency and in

particular, blue is regularly preferred to other hues (Crozier, 1999). Williams (1996) reports on international differences in taste, which British retail companies have to take into account when selling, say fashion items even within Europe. Apparently, red lingerie sells very well in Spain but only if it is flamenco red whereas lilac sells poorly in Scandinavia, because it is asserted, this is the colour of mourning there (Crozier, 1999). In a formal study of the effect of colour on consumers in retail setting, Bellizzi *et al.* (1983) manipulated the background colour of a photograph of a furniture store and measured consumer's perceptions of the store and numbers of store attributes. The results indicated that warm colours such as red and yellow were more exciting, while cool colours such as blue and green were more calming. Other associations that consumers have may interfere with a marketer's intent for the use of that colour (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). For instance, outdoor colours, such as green and blue are associated with sporting goods stores and even though red may stimulate approach behaviour in general, it is not likely to be appropriate for such a retail environment (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). One study that explains the dual nature of colour response is Crowley (1993). The findings suggest that colour may have both an arousal component and an evaluative component. From an associative learning perspective, the dual nature of colour responses makes intuitive sense as researches in classical conditioning process may result both from belief formation (a cognitive process) and through direct affect transfer (a more emotional process) (Kim *et al.*, 1996; 1998). Crozier (1999), hue refers to what we have so far been calling colour, red green, yellow, etc., and corresponds to the wavelength end of the spectrum and red and orange at the high end. Value is a function of the energy of the light source and corresponds to the amplitude or height of the wave, although it is also related to hue, in that some hues appear brighter than others even when all have equal amplitudes (Crozier, 1999). Chroma refers to the apparent purity of the colour and is associated with the complexity of the light wave, in that light wave that is composed of only a few different wavelengths will appear most saturated and least diluted (Crozier, 1999). Chroma is not independent of value as marked changes in amplitude will affect the purity of the hue, and the three accounts for colour attractiveness.Thus various literatures are available on colour and its importance in marketing and advertising, but very few studies do define about its role in the ads of he post modernist period in India. My research describes its role during this period.

ADVERTISING AND THE USE OF COLOURS
Colour and Advertising go hand in hand with each other. Colours in advertising, help in promotions, in branding or in packaging design. It even sends either a positive or negative subconscious or at times conscious message, creating a good or bad perception of the product or service that is been advertised.

Individuals react or respond to the feelings of others around even in making colour choices. Prior studies in different fields have reported such external influences. For example, Ajzen (1991) considered the influence of others (which he called subjective norm) on people's behaviour. Subjective norm "refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). It has been noticed that people tend to rely on opinions of others in important decisions such as in the purchase of an automobile, it is expected that the choice of colour by the consumer may be influenced by ones peer group, family, and friends. Funk and

Ndubisi (2004) documented the salience of normative colour on consumer choices of unpackaged products.

Colour preferences do not exist in a vacuum rather, colour preferences for particular objects or settings are dependent upon the situation and the underlying associations people may have developed (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). A number of studies suggest that consumers may prefer certain colour over others for various product categories (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). A study conducted by Pantone (1992) found that the most popular colours for clothing were blue, red and black with black the most worn colour for dressy occasions. Automobiles are preferred in blue, gray, red, white and black, while beige is preferred for carpeting, upholstered furniture and paint (Mundell, 1993). Holmes and Buchanan (1984) asked subjects to report their overall favourite colour and they profiled colours for products such as automobiles, clothing and furniture. They found that people's colour preferences differ depending on the product and their favourite colour was independent of these preferences. Children were shown to favour certain colours when choosing candies (Walsh *et al.*, 1990) and adults of certain cultures prefer particular colours on cheese, even when taste cannot be distinguished (Scanlon, 1985).

Clydesdale (1993) described an experiment where some participants felt ill when a change in lighting conditions revealed to them that they were eating "blue steak, red peas, and green french fries". There is some evidence that preferences among simple coloured stimuli do generalize (Crozier, 1999). Taft (1997), showed that preferences among simple chips did correspond well to actual object and are guided by he called "generalized conceptions of colour-object appropriateness" which are presumably influenced by cultural conventions and stereotypes.

NECESSITY OF COLOURS IN CREATIVE -POST MODERNIST INDIAN ADVERTISING

In Recent years advertising has emerged as a powerful economic and social force. Before the Industrial Revolution, when goods were produced mostly by the small consumers, needs of the consumers could hardly be met. Mass Communication did not play a notable role.

The Industrial revolution resulted in mass production which brought in its wake new problems as well. It became imperative for producers to inform educate and persuade the public to buy the products produced on a large scale. The growing communication gap between consumers and producers also created many problems. To overcome these problems, producer tried to bridge the gap between producers and consumers through various means of mass communication, one of which is advertising. In the 20th century when there are unending forms of media to reach the people and unending types of products, it becomes difficult for a producer to clearly define their product, in a way that it would be appealing to the consumers. And at the same time it becomes difficult for the consumers to choose the right kind of product in an era where all producers, products and brands promise some or the other attributes or benefits.To overcome these difficulties and move out of the clutter of ads, advertisers moved towards using a different mode of presentation of their products. And this gave birth to "Creativity".

In the mid 1900's, colours played a very important role in infusing creativity in the ads because, before this period, people generally used blck and white colours to design ads an attract people. And the use of colours were very important and attractive in defining the elements and the subject of the ads.

The Colour was used in advertising for several reasons. It was used in order to represent what is being advertised more accurately. It was also used to present an ad in a more attractive way in order to arouse a favourable tone in the viewer (Ndubisi and Funk, 2004). Colours were used for one more important reason in order to enhance the memory value of an advertisement. As Increased recognition of advertisements leads to increased sales, which is the main objective of advertising. Colour directed attention to those parts of the advertisements which are coloured, and therefore it is those parts which are remembered more often.

Colours are also related to the attitude's factors that enter into consumers' colour decision helped to prevent marketers from wasting time and energy chasing the latest trend (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999).

COLOURS AS A MARKETING WEAPON

Colours can be used as a marketing weapon if managed strategically. Although in the mid 1900's the term management ws not so profusely used but with the growth of industrial revolution in due course of time, gave new definitions of management and thus colours also started to be related with the various aspects of management , basically to advertising. As per management studies, Strategic management of colour deals with planned, consistent exploitation of colour as a vital component of the marketing levers, adding measurable value in terms of awareness, differentiation, satisfaction, brand recognition, and loyalty. Chapman (1998) reported that an informal survey of top notch marketers from selected global firms suggest that the value colour adds to brand worth is increasingly being recognized. Managers should identify the colour preferences and normative colour of target markets, in order to deliver need satisfying cars to them. Apart from need satisfaction, identifying and delivering the right colour is in consonance with the marketing concept. Also understanding the colours that attract individuals and their attitude towards colours generically will help managers to learn about colours that will sell their automobiles fast and to avoid colours that may be deemed repulsive.

Thus colours played a very important role infusing creativity in advertising.

INFLUENCE OF COLOURS ON CONSUMER DECISION

The consumer decision process consists of two parts: the process itself and the factors affecting the process. The decision process has six steps: stimulus, problem awareness, and information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behaviour. The consumer can make these two decisions separately or jointly. The consumer can rely on the retailer for supports such as information, assortments, knowledgeable sales personnel and market research over the entire decisions process. If the decisions are made independently, what to buy vs where to buy, the person then gathers information and advice before entering a store and views the retailer more simply as a place of purchase. In addition to identifying the characteristics of its target market, the retailer should have an understanding of how customers make decisions. This requires knowledge of consumer behaviour or choice, which involves the process by which people determine whether, what, when, where, how and from whom and how often to purchase goods and services. The impact of colour on brand choice has been recognised by a number of scholars. Chapman (1998) reports that colour is an underleveraged motivator of brand choice.

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THIS COLOUR CHOICES DIFFER WITH THE GENDER OF THE PERSON

The relationship between the colour dimensions and product choice is moderated by gender. the impact of colour significance on choice is statistically higher for male consumers than for female consumers, the impact of attitude towards colour on choice is significantly higher for female consumers than for male consumers, and the impact of colour attractiveness on choice is significantly higher for female consumers than for male consumers. That is, men select auto colour based on the significance of the colour, while women tend to select on attractiveness and attitudinal bases .There is research evidence supporting decision-processing differences between men and women in financial decision making (Powell and Ansic, 1997), hospital problem solving (Steffen and Nystrom, 1988), college course and major selection (Wilson *et al.*, 1994), what is perceived or processed as being ethical (Franke *et al.*, 1997), attributes important in determining self-esteem (Tashakkori, 1993), emotional expression (Kring and Gordon, 1998), leadership style (Eagly and Johnson, 1990), perceptions of successful management styles(Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002), and communication or conversational style (Tannen, 1995).

In relation to consumer behaviour several issues have been examined, including the relationship between gender identity and consumers' perceptions of masculinity and femininity in products (Allison *et al.*, 1980), female role portrayal in advertising (Coughlin and O'Connor, 1985; Jaffee, 1991; Jaffee and Berger, 1988), food/gendered product preference (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Worth *et al.*, 1992), gift shopping/gift choice/gift exchange (Fischer and Arnold, 1990, 1994), patronage of the arts (Gainer, 1993), etc. In some of these studies, gender identity was found to play a significant role (e.g. Coughlin and O'Connor, 1985; Fischer and Arnold, 1990;Jaffee, 1991; Jaffee and Berger, 1988). Within these studies, however, there are conflicting results with respect to the relative importance of masculinity and femininity in explaining findings. For instance, Coughlin and O'Connor (1985) found masculinity to be a significant predictor of consumer purchase intentions, while Fischer and Arnold (1990) found femininity to be more important than masculinity in relationship to Christmas gift shopping. It is important to document gender differences in colour impact on choice as there is currently no such empirical evidence.

CONCLUSION

Thus colours occupy a very significant place in advertising. It is used so as to not only attract the audience but also in a way that they could seem appealing to the senses, i.e the colours could be aesthetically appealing. In the following paper various theories related to advertising has been defined and the importance of colour n advertising has also been written. When we deeply study each ad and the concept behind it, we come to know that, all ads which are termed as creative ,in some or the other way, the difference between their effectiveness is caused by the varying importance given to the various elements of the ad ,among which, one of the the main element is

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colour .However more study should be done about the use of colours in relation to various mediums of advertising like outdoor posters, indoor posters ,web banners in today's 21st century and proper analysis of those colours impact on the contemporary customers is necessary so as the Indian advertising could evolve in a much rapid manner than it has done till day.

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