

The Symphony of Red Colour in Indian Art and Advertising: An Aesthetical Approach

Amarjeet Singh, Researcher, Department of Fine Arts, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana

Abstract:

Red is not only a colour but is a language of art and creativity from the dawn of civilization. The aroma of the red colour has the extravaganza of life with its fullest energy. In India art and architecture, variety of application of colour red can be seen as having multiple associations. Consequently, the approach can be seen in the art and architecture, the folk and tribal art practices too. This very genesis of red colour has been adopted in Indian art and advertising too. The symbolic association of red and its religious values which are usually associated with deities and ritualistic performances have been taken as a tool to manipulate the minds of the consumer. In various countries the same symbolic and organic temperaments of red colour have been taken as a semiotic for the coding of physiological approach in the consumer and art lovers. The paper aims to discuss the effective role symbolism of red colour in the creative process and productions. The paper has been based on two major aspects i.e. the approach of art and advertising with the significance of red colours with a special reference to Indian art.

Keywords: Red Colour, Symbolism, Indian Art and Architecture, Art and Advertising

I. INTRODUCTION

Colours reverberate in the life of human beings in each and every sphere of life. The symphony of colours is omnipresent and human mind always feels delighted with it. In the discourse of art and creativity colours play a significant role and from the very beginning of civilization, history has been filled with the aroma of colours. In the development of human race, the first impression of artistic quest has been marked in the rock shelters of ancient caves. The hunter and gatherer or nomads have documented their lifestyle through these cave paintings. The natural and organic colours were their only tool to manifest their communication in the form of visuals. In the execution of art, artists have executed their imagination and expression with the help of red. The red colour is very prominent in most of the Indian paintings. In advertising too, a clear approach of its symbolic significance can be observed through various brands like lux, Brook Bond's Red Label etc. In this way, the colour red has grabbed its strong place in the markets whether it is art or it is advertising.

II. COLOURS AND THEIR SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE IN INDIAN ART

Colours add value to the depicted form and provide a strong visual support but they have various symbolic associations too. Each and Every colour has a particular meaning and represents its organic nature and can evokes feelings as per its nature in human minds. As per the scientific distribution of colours there are three major kinds of colours i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary. To understand the colour division, there are different colour systems, for instance, Ostwald, Munsell and CIE. This system works differently as per the need of digital application of the colours like RGB etc. The primary colours are the pure colours which are the purest forms as like Red, yellow and blue while the secondary colours can be produced through the mixture of these primary colours such as yellow + blue= green, red+ blue= purple, red+ yellow= orange. The third category can be produced after mixing these colours. The basic significance of these primary colours are as follows:-

Red: Passion, blood, Femininely, Love, Anger, Fire, Danger, Aggression, Power, Desire etc.

Blue: Calmness, Masculinity, sky, coldness, solitude, water etc.

Yellow: Intelligence, brightness, sun, spirituality, Hope, Happiness, divineness etc.



Fig. 1 Bison painting Alta Mira, Spain

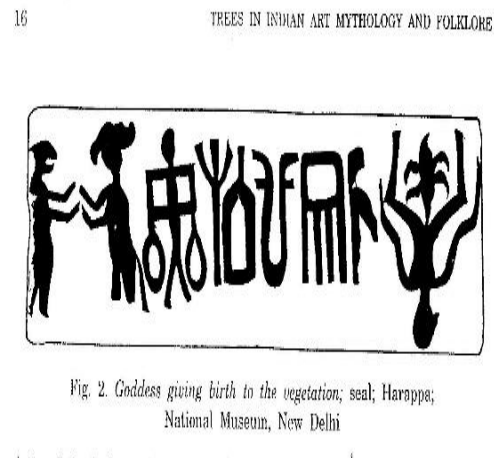


Fig.2 Lajja Guri Image of Indus Valley seal

Source <http://www.talariaenterprises.com/shop-prehistoric-ancient-goddesses-skulls/>

Source <https://tamilandvedas.com/tag/lajja-gauri-seal/>

Apart from these organic colours, the other major colours are associated with different meanings, for instance, black denotes anger, darkness, wrath and white are related with purity and peace, and green is related with fertility and procreation, happiness. Apart from this, the association of colours can vary as per the religion, tradition and socio-cultural aspects of the individuals. White can be a symbol of

mourning in Hindu culture and contrary to it, it can be a sign of happiness in Christianity. The diversity of colours has been adopted as per the singularity of various groups despite their basic meaning. In this context, it can be observed that there are numerous meanings, associated with these colours but to some extent, to get a basic idea, the colour significance can be defined as per the ideology of a particular group/religion/class/cast etc. The primary colours have a major connection in term of socio-cultural to the society because people can take them directly from natural or organic objects. In contemporary art trends, the colour red is appeared as a colour of feminism, political adjustment, revolt, cast and class politics and so on and on (**Mandakini¹ 2016**). It is the colour of war, freedom and sacrifice and has a divine attribute in various religious sects. Among all the colours the red colour keeps a strong root universally in all kind of manifestations. The impression of the same can be observed in artworks, as art is the mirror of society. In Indian context, the dominance of red can be seen almost everywhere including art and creative forms.

III. THE OMNIPRESENCE OF RED IN INDIAN ART AND ADVERTISING FROM ANCIENT TO CONTEMPORARY AGE

As per going back towards history, the prehistoric paintings cannot be forgotten as those were the harbinger of artistic scenario in India. During the prehistoric times, the red colour was the universal colours not only in Asia but in other similar paintings also. The living style of people was particularly related to blood, sacrifice, black magic, shamanism, sexuality, fertility and so on and on. Even the cult of mother goddess has been primarily originated in that era only after indicating the genital parts in the language of signs and symbols (**Muesse 2011², Martin³ 2012, and Nelson⁴ 2007**). Additionally, it is the only pigment which was available in readymade form rather than doing effort in burning the wood or grinding the bone. Its cognitive value is incomparable because of its attraction and correlation with the fire and blood. Blood-related practices were primarily performed during hunting and food was the prior concern for the prehistoric man. In this way, the physiological factors may have bound more and more to those people for the representation of their pictorial language (**Sharma⁵ 2016**). The outcomes are so marvelous that they are still attracting the eye of all. In the Indus valley civilization, we can again see the mark of this colour as the natural elements like fire, water & sky, sun and nature have become the symbol of ritual practices. Blood sacrifices were on its peak due to shamanistic practices and tantric cults, the emergence of the Goddess of sexuality has been particularly found in various cylindrical seals and coins and in the form of small clay figurines (**Sankalia 1960⁶**). In Indian context, this Goddess has been identified as Lajja Guri or Aditi and has so many names in different civilizations. This Goddess has been celebrated through the blood application on her genitals. In the world-known mural traditions, we can again observe a sudden change in the depiction where the frescos of Ajanta and murals of Ellora have been executed in the brownish and whitish tone but the colour red has emerged as a colour of offering and

worship. Then suddenly, in manuscripts traditions, the focus was again given to red, and the attire of religion has been covered through this. Consequently, the miniature paintings have also been executed as having the same approach as having the focus of red colour. The passion and romance were on its peak and the royal life of the kings has been illustrated with the aristocracy of elite class. The *nayikas* (heroines) have been executed as wearing red tones in their burning desires. After the break-in patronization due to British Raj, the artists encountered Academic Realism, Occidentalism and Orientalism in art and were going under various impressions including modern trends.

In this way, the very journey of red colour which has been initiated from the prehistoric age turned in to conceptual themes after coming in the contact of modernism (**Albers⁷ 1963**). As the term is particularly defined through innovative and novel ideas in artistic practices, there is so many approaches to credit its evidence. It is particularly related to innovative ideas and thoughts.



Fig.3 Brook Bond's Red Label Tea Brand



Fig.4 Lux Bathing Bar

Source <https://www.hul.co.in/brands/food-and-drink/brooke-bond-red-label.html>

Source <https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/lux-rose-bar-21033328330.html>

The Hindustan Unilever limited company is one among the most leading companies in India and its brand of Red Label (lunched by Brook Bond, 1869) has emerged as the most preferable brand in Indian markets. The Red Label is a tea brand which is known for his red colour packaging. The company is a British-Dutch company known for its multiple products in food, beverages, personal care products and many more. The colour red which has been applied in its brand has gain popularity and the popularity may not be only gained by its quality but the logo design, cover and packaging design and ad campaign also played an important role in its promotion. It has garb a group of larger consumer. In the colour of Lux Bar (from the same company), the existence of red can also be seen as it has been shown as made out of roses. Two different approaches have been given to both the products, the tea brand is demonstrating love and care in the form of red and the soap brand is representing the freshness of red roses. In this way, the consumer is bind to take both the brands at their home because they are psychologically manipulated by the designer. The mind of the consumer is directly or indirectly consciously or unconsciously dragged

into the design thinking behind these products. The thinking to attract minds, which can be easily done through red.



Fig.5 the Ad-campaign of Ambuja cement made by Brandwizz: we put emotions in to design

Source: <http://brandwizz.com/shaktiroopena.php>

Brandwizz with the tagline of ‘we put emotions in to design’ showcased the power of red. This private digital agency has been founded in 2010 at Kolkata. This advertisement has been created for a private limited company of cement named Ambuja. This particular design showcases the amalgamation of the Goddess with the strength of the cement. The two approaches have been found in this design one is the power of cement has been compared with the power of deity. Another approach is related to the cultural symbolism, which has been created through this impression.

IV CONCLUSION

To conclude, it has been taken into consideration that all the approaches in respect to red colour are indicating towards various synopsis. The colour has so much power and attraction in itself that no one can ignore its picturesque quality and sensational nature. Apart from this, the visual communication of its power is developed through the semiotics of culture, traditions and ritualistic manifestations. In Indian

context, red is everything and can be seen everywhere. There is no other colour who can touch the psychology of human mind than this, it has the romantic, sacred, fearsome, ferocious, spiritual, divine and passionate values and no other colour can replace it. The psychoanalytical approach of the art lover and consumer has been manipulated and adjusted through the different- different approaches to various situations. The voyage of red which has been started from the pre-historic times has taken its strong roots in contemporary society through commercialization. The value of artworks and brands is being channelized through the application of red colour.

The psyche of human mind is played by the commercialization and product friendly policies. The human mind is so connected to this colour that sometimes it forget to relate anything and just directly dragged into the world of red.

References

1. Mandakini: Gupta, I. & Jha P., (2016) "*Gender and Space in the Paintings of Raja Ravi Verma and Amrita Sher-Gill*", 'Understanding Built Environment: Discussion of Architectural Advances and Sustainable Urban Regeneration', Transactions in Civil and Environmental Engineering published by Springer vol-1, 2016 (ISBN 978-981-10-2138-1).
2. Martin, L.2012, "The Goddess Lajja Gauri: Origins: on the Footsteps of the Universal Goddess of Sexuality." *Create-space Independent Publishing Platform*.
3. Muesse, Mark W.2011, *The Hindu Traditions: A Concise Introduction*. Fortress Press.
4. Nelson, Sarah Milledge.2007, *Worlds of gender: the archaeology of women's lives around the globe*. Rowman Altamira.
5. Sharma M.,Gupta, I. & Jha P., (2016) "Amrita Sher-Gill's Paintings: a Cultural Evaluation", THAAP Journal: People's History of Pakistan pp.254-265.
6. Sankalia, H. D. "The Nude Goddess or" Shameless Woman" in Western Asia, India, and South-Eastern Asia." *Artibus Asia* (1960): 111-123.
7. Albers, J. 1963, "Interaction of colour". New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.