



**Holi Hai!**

**Hope U have a great time!**

**Celebrate**  
**A**  
**Safe Holi**

The soft tender green leaves on the trees, the 'Kachnar' and 'Harsinghar' blossom in the gardens and 'flame of the forests' (Tesu) in the jungles, the sweet and seducing calls of the Cuckoo mark the arrival of spring or Vasant. As well as the festival of Holi.

Holi has enduring traditional links with several legends of Hindu Mythology. No other festival brings home the spirit of spirituality and social harmony like the festival of Holi. Like all aspects of day-to-day life of consumers, festivals have been increasingly commercialized. Urban consumers are beneficiaries to some extent as they do not have access to the traditional knowledge inputs and

thus need to 'buy' everything needed to celebrate Holi. Now urbanization has delinked consumers from local resources and rituals involving them. Convenience of ready made products mostly brings added anxieties about their safety. The main concern during Holi is about 'safe' colours used to play Holi with. Whether dry or liquid, most colours sold in the market are unsafe and chemically hazardous in several ways. Increasingly aware consumers are not looking for safer options. For example in earlier days the colours used in Holi were extracted from flowers that blossom only during this season. But over the years colours are

made artificially with chemicals and pistons made of different materials especially plastic are available in various designs. Today, the way we play Holi, is becoming highly dangerous and hazardous. Throwing water balloons with force and from a distance, filled with artificial colours can cause injury to the eyes or ears.

**Artificial colours sold in the markets...**

- Green colour is made up of copper sulphate,
- Purple has chromium and bromide compounds,
- Shades of red, pink, orange, maroon or black colours or Gulal, Sindhur, Kumkum, Ambar are



## EDITORIAL



We are bringing you a Holi special as we will, a special on International 'Consumer Rights Day' which Happily also falls on the 15<sup>th</sup> as well! We are taking this happy coincidence to empower consumer club members to think of safe options for Holi Colours. Read this News-letter carefully to learn how to be safe while playing a rambunctious Holi. You have already done this for making Divali safer.



**Play your role in a safe Holi as you did earlier for changing the way we celebrate Divali.**

*“An initiative similar to the one taken by school children during Divali needs to be taken by schools prior to the advent of Holi. Take during assembly time, for a safe Holi can be given in the schools. Once awareness is generated it is usually picked up with great enthusiasm by the children. So kids! have a great and a “SAFE” time.”*



**from inorganic pigment powders of lead and chromium in different combinations.** All these colorants of lead and chromium are toxic and can result in anything from allergies, to cancer, and chromosomal abnormalities and toxicity to foetus, reduced fertility in men and women etc. Any direct exposure to these pollutants on skin makes them even more hazardous.

**It is therefore important that lead and chromium health**

**awareness programmes should be introduced to students. Delhi school students have already helped change the manner in which Divali is**

**celebrated.**

**if given a chance they can do the same for Holi.**

- Abir is nothing but Mica, and powdered glass is added to give glitter to the colours. Even the base made of 'Asbestos', 'Chalk powder' or 'silica' in which these colours is mixed are highly toxic. Asbestos can cause cancer even in micro quantities.
- Colours in the form of pastes or paints have compounds in a base of engine oil or any other inferior quality oil, capable of causing skin allergy or temporary blindness.



In view of the above risks, this Holi we bring you information to celebrate in the true spirit, as played traditionally in a more elegant, environment friendly and sustainable way, with natural colours. A style, which we have forgotten over the years due to the ready convenience of nearly fatal readymade, colours easily available in the markets. We give you an option to choose some of these natural colours from plants to play Holi and methods of their preparation for the great celebration. These colours obtained from the sources mentioned below are totally harmless.

### Where to get Safe Holi Colour

- All plant flowers or leaves which can be used in Holi are available with grocery shops which source whole spices and ingredients used

### in Ayurvedic Medicines.

- Most Indian homes also grow many of these plants as almost all have medicinal value or are used in temples. Flower petal or plant leaves can be collected and dried in the shade and stored. These can then be used to make Holi colours.
- Your corner flower shop can also supply you these flowers. If ordered and bought in bulk, they can work out quite cheap. Resident Associations in colonies can place bulk orders for flowers in 'Mandis' and then make them available to the community.
- Some enterprising housewife can actually do good business during the season by preparing and selling these safe colours.

• **How to use them**  
Buckets or old 'Gharas' or earthen pots used to store water during the summer months can be made to prepare liquid colours. These pots can then be discarded and new ones bought for the coming summer months.

- Fill the pots with water and add 200 to 300 grams of flower petals or leaves to the water. If a more



intense colour is desired, more quantities can safely be increased. Soak them over two or more nights.

- To shorten the process these can be boiled in smaller quantities of water and then added to more water to obtain more quantity.
- Only the coloured water and not the flowers should be used to avoid a messy feeling or complicate cleaning-up jobs.

### Health and Safety

- None of the colours prepared from these flower are toxic
- They actually have natural fragrance and healing properties.
- They are temporary and wash out easily in a day or two

In Vrindavan Holi is still played with actual flower petals of Rose and Rajnigandha chosen for their fragrance and colour. A non-government organization like 'Navdanya' run by Dr. Vandana Shiva and 'Clean India' are also promoting herbal colours and



gual. A pack of 150 gm of eco-friendly gual costs Rs. 30. People are realizing the ill effects of synthetic colours and there is heavy demand for herbal colours which Navdanya is not able to meet. Herbal

### Flower Colours

- **Dhak / Tessu flowers** : The flowers of *Butea frondosa* are bright orange in colour. They produce a yellow dye. These can be bought in dried forms from grocers who store them. They can be soaked in water to extract colours :
- **Harsinghar / Parijatak flowers** : *Nyctanthes arbortristis* flowers bloom in the night and are shed in the morning. The orange coloured corolla tube yields a yellow dye in water. The dye is fleeting and is used to play Holi.

- **Haldi (Turmeric)** : *Curcuma longa* produces a yellow coloured dye in the rhizomes of the plant. It can be used to play Holi by adding one teaspoon of haldi to two litres of water.
- **Kachnar (Bauhinia)** : *Bauhinia variegata* flowers produce a light pink colour in water which can be used to play Holi.s
- **Henna (Mehndi)** : *Lawsonia inermis* leaves yield an orange dye. It can be used to smear other persons hair while playing holi, as a lot of people do it with artificial colours.
- **Marigold and amaltas** : *Tagetus erecta* and *Cassia fistula* flowers yield yellow colour which can be prepared by soaking 50 marigold flowers in 2 litres of water. Boil and leave overnight. Different shades of yellow can also be prepared with drying the petals of yellow *Chrysanthemum*.

- **Gulmohur** : *Delonix regia* leaves dried and finely powdered can give a green colour like the tender and crushed leaves of wheat plant to obtain a natural safe green colour.
- **Red pomegranate (peels) / tomato / carrot** : Their juices can give red colour. Dilute with sufficient quantity of water to remove the stickiness.
- **Indigo / Neel** : *Indigofera tinctoria* leaves and berries give deep blue colour dye, which can also be used to play holi.
- **Beet Root** : *Beta vulgaris* when sliced and soaked overnight give a beautiful magenta colour.s

By resorting to the above safe and natural colours we can avoid the hazards which have come to be associated with Hoi.

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