**Philatelic Activities**

Mr. Sahadeva Sahoo has been awarded in 2021 ‘**Philatelic Ratna**’, the highest national level award in the field of Philately for his yeoman contribution to the Indian philately, by the apex national body, the Philatelic Club of India (PCI), Mr. Sahadeva Sahoo got interested into stamp-collecting as a village child of Class 6 (Middle English School) through articles in the children’s magazine ‘Sansar’ in 1952. He got a lot of Pakistan stamps from a gentle man, Ali Jan, of his village, who was then employed as a peon in the Hajj office at Dacca in the East Pakistan. Having learnt that Hajj Office receives a lot of applications of people wishing a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina he contacted his Muslim neighbor, Ali Jan, to get Pakistan stamps. Ali Jan’s wife became a good aunty as the child Sahoo became a medium of correspondence with Ali Jan. Sahoo used to write on Post Cards supplied by Mrs. Ali Jan to her husband. He also used to read out the replies received from Mr. Ali Jan to her. Mr Sahoo enjoyed whenever Ali Jan sent envelope-full packets of used Pakistani stamps – taken off the postal articles as well as stamps on used covers. As the poor Mrs. Ali Jan (her name Mr. Sahoo never asked to know) found the Post Card the cheapest means of communication and that time India’s inland rates of postage was applicable to the East Pakistan, I used to incorporate as much information as Mrs Ali Jan could supply, but each time Mr. Sahoo was asked to begin a “salutation from ‘LiaQat’s mother to LiaQat’s father”. Being open, the post card did not invite any Censorship.

Shri Sahoo was then a student of Class VI in the Gandhi Middle English School at Sujan Pur, a distance of 5 Kilometres from his village, (the M.E. School was later merged in a High School, renamed as Rudra Charan Mohanty High School). When he got into Purusottampur High School (now in Jajpur District of Odisha) he found in the postmaster of the nearby Kabirpur subpostoffice a good uncle who and his postmen who used to tell Sahoo the addresses of persons who had high value postage stamps affixed in their mails. Mr. Sahoo’s mother advised him to offer used to visit them and beg for stamps and covers, besides getting First Day Covers from Kabir Pur sub postoffice.

Shri Sahoo took part in School Stamp Exhibition organized by the then United States Information Service, Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1955 when he was in Class VIII and got the First place in Orissa (now Odisha). The US Postal Service (USPS) used to send him the ‘first day issue’ cancelled covers (FDC) under direction of ‘Peoples to Peoples’ programme, created by (General) Dwight D Eisenhower, the erstwhile President of the USA. Original USA FDC’s with the First Day of Issue cancellation came to him gratis till 1959, when because of an NCC teacher’s preying on his stamps Shri Sahoo had to suspend his collection

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Head Master of Purusottam Pur Hish School was so worried over Shri Sahoo’s attention to his hobby that he took away the entire collection into his custody to force Sahoo to devote full time to his studies in the final year of schooling. Lo and behold! Shri Sahadeva Sahoo stood first in the state of Odisha in 1957 High School Certificate Examination.

On entering the College life Sahoo had carried his collection into his Hostel (Ravenshaw College East Hostel). His NCC teacher at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, was an avid stamp collector, who cajoled Sahoo to show his collection, but Sahoo could not protest when the teacher on a plea of seeing the collection took away some Chinese Expeditionary Force sets, some overprinted THREE PIES,and a few old British Indian stamps, which he never returned. A further set-back to Shri Sahoo’s hobby came in his second year at the East Hostel when his side-room-occupant Shri Khandei clandestinely took away some of his stamps kept on his study table in Room no.23. Shri Sahoo had to leave his collection at home in his village. The dark period in his hobby continued until he found some spare time during his tenure as an IAS probationer in 1964-66 to return to his hobby of philately.

While he was an Administrator (19 Jan AN 1970-31.Jan 1973) of the Dandakarnya Development Project (East Pakistan Refugees Resttlement) he had an opportunity to get a lot of letters affixed with Refugee Relief Stamps. When he came back as the DM and Collector of Balasore District he saw release of a FDC on Bagha Jatin who was gunned down in Balasore by the then British-Indian Police.

 When he was the ADM, Keonjhar, Major Mohanty who once took away some of his CEF stamps during his first two years in the Ravenshaw College approached him to purchase some 10 Rupee Archaeology Series stamps from the District Treasury, Shri Sahoo obliged him inspite of his ill-feeling about his lost stamps. Subsequently he went as Administrator, Umerkote zone of Dandakaranya (Refugee Rehabilitation) Project where the refugees from the East Pakistan were being resettled during 1970-72. He collected a lot of Refugee Relief stamps on cover. He was then the DM & Collector, Balasore in 1973, where he was the Chief Guest in celebrating the Bagha Jatin stamp release, as Bagha was captured by the British forces while he was hiding from the BritishIndian police in connection with a case of bomb throwing at the then British Indian officers.

Shri Sahoo took part in the 1st Orissa State Philatelic Exhibition in 1973 and got the best exhibit prize. When he was posted in Bhubaneswar, he persuaded Dr. Radhanath Rath, Editor of the premier Oriya Daily, ‘ the Samaj’, and some stamp collectors to establish the Orissa Philatelic Association in 1974. Dr Rath became the President. Sahoo organized one after another Philatelic Exhibitions for the students, the first being STUPH1LEX (Students’ Philatelic Exhibition) at Cuttack, on 30-11-75, at Bhubaneswar on 14-12-75 and at Sarnbalpur on 22-2-1976. Special covers, sponsored by Orissa Philatelic Association were issued with the support of the PMG, Orissa. Date cancellations were provided on all the 3 occasions even though the exhibitions were held on Sundays. On 29-2-1976, BHUPEX'76 was held at Bhubaneswar. The Orissa Philatelic Association sponsored it in collaboration of the PMG, Orissa. A special cover was: prepared and a special cancellation was arranged. (Due to lack of publicity, it could not be enlisted in the Souvenir issued on the occasion of INPEX '77).

ORPEX '76, was organised by the Department directly and special cancellations provided on 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th June, 1976 depicting Barabati Fort Gate, Ratnagiri Gate, War elephant, Lion over Elephant and cloth umbrella of Pipli respectively, Gopabandhu Centenary Philatelic Exhibition was held at Cuttack G. P. O. on 28-8-1977. The Orissa Philatelic Association issued a special cover and an attractive cancellation, was provided.

 In 1976 he wrote ‘Dak Tikat Parichaya’ (Introduction to Stamps) which was reprinted in 1988.

He wrote a series of articles in weekly column under the head “Stamps as A Source of Knowledge” in the Odia daily ‘TheSamaja’ from 1985 to 1999, a period of 14 years – 750 articles on stamps for School and College students. This brought him a name of ‘Stamp Man of Odisha’

Some of these articles were printed as books in 5 thematic Volumes in Odia, “Adbhuta Prani Jagat” (Scientific stories on animals through postage stamps) in 1991 and “Gachha Gachha Gachha” (Trees on through Stamps) in 1992.

First time Shri Sahoo entered international competition in INDIA ’80 world Exhibition when Shri P C Chatterjee, the Commissioner-General, accepted his entry as a novice, only after Shri Sahoo joined as a life member of the Philatelic Congress of India (PCI). Shri Sahoo got a bronze for his ‘Odisha Postal History’. Koeffel Manners who had perhaps seen his entry asked him if he could supply the details of Odisha’s (then spelt Orissa) feudatory states along with write-up on each stamp. His wife Smt. Sumitra Sahoo who was publisher of ‘Stamps & Stamps’, a magazine edited by Shri Sahoo, sold enough fiscal stamps to buy a Rourkela Development Authority’s Middle Income Group (MIG) house at Rourkela which Shri Sahoo sold in 1998 to finance his second son’s marriage.

While Shri Sahoo was posted on deputation as Dy.Gen. Manager of Rourkela Steel Plant he helped organize ‘ORPEX-82’, accepted as the Third Orissa (State Level) Philatelic Exhibition by the Department of Posts.

Shri Sahoo was a Vice President of PCI 1984-2000 and President PCI 2000-2004

He edited and published (i) “Stamps & Stamps”, devoted to spread of the hobby of stamp collecting , 1980-2005.

And edits (ii) "SIGNET", quarterly mouthpiece of Philatelic Congress of India since 1998.

*He has authored 3* Books on philately

(iii) “A Guide to Stamp Collecting”,

(iv) ‘Postal History of Orissa:1803-73’

(v) ‘BAMRA- Postal and Fiscal History’ (A Feudatory State of British India)

And submitted

(vi) A *teacher’s handbook* on collecting stamps and coins for the secondary schools in Orissa. 1990

Shri Sahoo was a Member of **Philatelic Advisory Committee**, Government of India, 1989-91, & 1998-2004

And has organised **2** **National Philatelic Exhibitions** in Bhubaneswar, Odisha: Millipex 2000 and INPEX 2002

And helped PCI organize **INDEPEX-ASIANA 2000**, at Kolkata where he took over as the President of PCI.

Shri Sahoo is now setting up Odisha Philately & Education Museum at Cuttack, Odisha.

He has been an International Jury, FIAP, since 2016. He has been the Chairman of Jury, ‘Philavirtue’ National Virtual Exhibition, 2020.

*Shri Sahoo has been India’s National Commissioner* forArgentina for Prenfil 1988, (World Exhibition on Philatelic Literature and Press at Buenos Aires) Nov.25- Dec.2, 1988; for Canada (World Youth Philatelic Exhibition, Montreal, 25-29 March, 1992, for Thailand (Bangkok 2000 Apr.), for China Adsiana at Chengdu, Nov 20-24, 2003), for UAE (Doha Cultural Festival, Qatar, March 9-15, 2004), for Rumania (Bucharest 2008), for Indonesia (Jakarta) 2012, for Malaysia (KualaLumpur 2014) and for Indonesia (Bandung 2016), for Indonesia 2022 (Jakarta) He was a Volunteer for Washington 2006.