# Synopsis

# Hyderabad: A Princely Indian State TRADITIONAL EXHIBIT

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Background - Hyderabad is the largest and most prosperous Princely Indian state in population with a population of 11,537,040 and the second largest Princely Indian state in area with 82,698 square miles, both statistics for 1891. Hyderabad is located in south central India, with the capital city Hyderabad. It has been an independent state since 1724. It is the first Indian Princely state to accede to British protection in 1798. The state was ruled by a Nizam until 18 September 1948 when independent India annexed Hyderabad after a military operation code-named Operation Polo. The Nizam and the majority of high officials were mainly Muslims and owned 40% of the total land in the state even though the population was over 80% Hindu.

The Exhibit – The exhibitor has collected Hyderabad postage stamp material since approximately 1975, 50 years. This exhibit is a complete exhibit as it includes the essential archival, postage stamp and varieties and usage to tell the complete story of the development of Hyderabad’s traditional philately. The Gibbons catalog lists 27 design types and all are shown. The catalog lists 60 whole numbered stamps and except for 2 numbers, all are shown with neither of the two missing numbered stamps (SG 9 and 11) appearing on the market in the last 50 years. The 8 anna Post Stamp perf. 11½ (SG 9) does not even have dashes or other indications to know the stamp exists. The exhibit does not include ever known item of Hyderabad philately as many items are unique or have not appeared on the market in the past 50 years. The exhibit is being shown for the first time in January 2025 because the exhibitor was finally able to acquire at a specialized Spink Hyderabad auction on 14 May 2024 important first and second issue material that was required to complete the Hyderabad stamp story and have the best Hyderabad traditional postage stamp exhibit ever assembled.

Hyderabad Postage Stamps - Hyderabad was the third Indian Princely state to issue postage stamps on 8 September 1869 (Soruth was first in 1864, and Jammu & Kashmir was second in 1866) and the first Princely Indian state to issue perforated postage stamps. Hyderabad was the first Indian Princely state to have engraved (recess) printed stamps with the printing plates produced outside of India. Due to its large population and prosperous economy its printing plates were enormous versus other Princely India States. It first stamp has a printing plate of 160 (10 x 16) and the second issue had two plates of 240 (15 x 16) and its third issue of seven values had four plates for each value with each plate containing 240 stamps (15 x 16). No Hyderabad stamp issue contained the portrait of an individual in accordance with the “no graven images” of the Muslim religion practiced by the rulers of Hyderabad.

Plan -The exhibit is organized into seven chapters in roughly chronological order. First Issue, 8 Sept. 1869. The first stamp was a 1 anna stamp, engraved by Mr. Rapkin of London, and the plate (it is likely only one plate) was made by Nissen and Parker of London. Printed and line perforated 11½ in Hyderabad. The 1 anna stamp was double the ½ anna postage rate for an ordinary letter. Thus, it was evident that more values were required. Second Issue,16 May 1870, the “Skeleton Issue” consisted of two values, a ½ anna value for ordinary letters and a 2 annas value for heavier weight letters. The stamps were individually engraved on a copper plate with only one major and one minor variety for the ½ anna value. Shortly after the ½ anna plate was put into production it developed cracks and broke into two parts between the 7th and 8th rows, basically breaking in half with one of the halfs not usable for producing stamps. Since Hyderabad was a very prosperous state it was in great need of additional values, particularly a stable ½ anna plate. Third Issue, 1871 – 1909, the “Post Stamp Issue”, consists of 7 values, ½, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 12 annas. The Post Stamp issue was in everyday use for 38 years, and is the most important issue studied in this exhibit. Fourth Issue 1898 to 20 Sept. 1900, the “Quarter Anna issues”, consists of the first Hyderabad provisional surcharged issue and the first locally produced ¼ anna plates, mainly for postal cards, particularly “Bazaar post cards”, normally an Indian postcard sold in the bazaar with the left half of the address side showing an stylized Indian scene. Fifth Issue 7 Aug. 1905 – 1915, the “Postage issues”, three issues with plates made by two London firms. Sixth Issue 1915 -6 May 1930, the “Post & Receipt issues” includes the first 1rupee issue and the second provisional surcharged issues. Seventh Issue 12 Nov. 1931 to April 1950, the “Pictorial issues”, when Hyderabad postage stamps were replaced by independent India stamps.

Balance – The Third issue, the Post Stamp issue, is by far the most important issue. This seven value issue was in everyday use from 1871 to 1909, 38 years, almost half of the 81 years of Hyderabad stamp issues and requires a good deal of exhibit page real estate to adequately tell the story. It has some of the most difficult to acquire individual postage stamp issues to acquire, some of the archival items are unique or very difficult to acquire and the method of engraving the recess plates, and the varieties that resulted from the unusual method of engraving the plates produce many individual varieties that due to the number of varieties, are difficult to acquire except over a long period of time in most cases. The pantograph method of engraving the four plates of 240 stamps each (15 x 16) for each of the seven “Post Stamp” values was not used for any other India area plate engraving and very few other stamp issuing countries.

The pantograph, when used to engrave a plate to be used to print stamps, is an instrument for the mechanical copying of a plane figure on a reduced scale, and consists of an arrangement of steel rods coupled to form a pointed parallelogram on one extended arm of which is a stylus or tracing needle, while a cutting needle or diamond is attached to the juncture of one long and one short side of the parallelogram. By moving the stylus along the grooves of specially engraved large copy of the design, the engraver, through the medium of the pantograph, cuts the design, proportionally reduced, on the die that is connected with the diamond.

Research – The exhibitor has figured out and reported a long-standing major mystery concerning the Third Issue, the Post Stamp issue. Why do the Post Stamp issue have 10 instances of missing characters or dots with 9 of the missing items missing on 8 stamps in a row and on one value, the 3 annas, the missing character is on 15 stamps in one column? The researched answer is that the string of missing marks is due to the pantograph engraving technique used to make the plate.

Rarity – Most Hyderabad postage stamps are not expensive and plentiful. The only difficult to acquire individual single stamps are the Third Issue, Post Stamps perforated 11½, except the ½ anna value, which is reasonably available, and the ½ and 1 anna Third issue Post Stamp issues perforated 8 to 9. The real rarities are acquiring a meaningful number of perforated, part perforated, color varieties, missing characters, blocks and usage (particularly of the higher value postage stamps) and much of the archival material, particularly for the Post Stamp issue. For instance, the ½, 1 and 2 annas Post Stamp have respectively 13, 13 and 10 varieties list in the Gibbons catalog and the exhibitor could add additional varieties. It is not necessary to show the majority of these varieties to tell a complete story. The exhibit concentrates on the ‘difficult to acquire’ material and leaves out insignificant material that does not advance the story.

Condition – Hyderabad climate is warm to hot and monsoonal rains (i.e., marked by wet and dry periods), with moderate annual precipitation. Most rain falls during the wet monsoon months of June to October. This climate is not kind to paper, particularly Hyderabad covers.

References –

* *Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth & British Stamps 1840-1970* – Hyderabad – approx. 3 pages, particularly the notes and illustrations before SG4.
* Hyderabad Half Anna Post Stamp 1871 to 1909 – Power Point presentation – November 7, 2020. (India Study Circle website indiastudycircle.org, Gallery, Zoom meetings. Membership in the ISC is **NOT** required to view this power point presentation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a66pp8pLJ1U>
* *Hyderabad Philatelic History*– Dr. M. A. Nayeem, pp 145-181 but a good deal of the information in these page numbers is not relevant to this exhibit.
* Hyderabad articles are plentiful but, in most cases not a good use of the judges time.