

Improving “Look and Feel of a Thematic Exhibit”

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Unlike other exhibiting forms, Thematic Philately demands special care and treatment. It is easy to build up thematic exhibit but difficult to make it to ‘large vermeil’ and above medal levels at the national level. Though the judging is influenced by the variety of factors including the subjectivity of the judges, there is lot of scope for improving the exhibit on continuous basis. Though the medal level is influenced by variety of factors, the first look of the Title Page by Jury determines the medal level at sub-conscious level. If the Title Page is promising and interesting, the Jury would spend few more minutes in assessing the depth of the exhibit. Therefore, building up a better Title Page is very important. The objective of this paper is to emphasize certain essential aspects to enhance the ‘look and feel’ of the Thematic Exhibit.

For Thematic Exhibit, following is the categorization of marks:

a. Treatment	35
Title & Plan	15
Development	15
Innovation	5
b. Knowledge, Personal Study and resources	35
Thematic	15
Philatelic	15
c. Condition & Rarity	30
Condition	10
Rarity	20
d. Presentation	5
Total	100

Criteria for evolution of Thematic Exhibit is as below:-

- Consistency between the Plan and the Title
- Presence of the Plan page
- Adequacy of the Plan page
- Correct, logical and balanced structure (divisions and sub-divisions)
- Coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme.

Development will be evaluated considering the:-

- Correct assembly and positioning of items in confirmative with the Plan
- Connection between the items and the thematic text
- Depth, shown through connections, cross references, ramifications, causes and effects
- Balance, by giving to each thematic point the importance corresponding to its significant theme
- Elaboration of all aspects of the Plan

The Title with any Sub-Title defines the scope of the exhibit. The Plan defines the structure of the exhibit and its sub-divisions and covers all major aspects relevant to the Title. It should be entirely

structured according to thematic criteria. The order of the main chapters and their sub-divisions should demonstrate the development of the Plan rather than list its main aspects.

Development

Development means the elaboration of the theme in depth, aiming to achieve an arrangement of all the materials fully compliant with the Plan. The elaboration utilizes only thematic information, postally authorized and available from:-

- The purpose of issue or use of the item
- The primary and secondary elements of the design of the item
- Other postal characteristics

Such elaboration requires:-

- A thorough knowledge of the chosen theme
- A high degree of philatelic knowledge
- A thematic text, to ensure the necessary thematic links and provide thematic details, whenever needed.

Innovation

Innovation is shown by:-

- Introduction of new themes, or new aspects of an established or known theme, or
- New approach for known themes, or
- New application of material
- Innovation may refer to all components of treatment

The Plan Page

The Title represents the synthesis of the work. Therefore the Title and contents of the pages have to match and the sequence of the philatelic items mounted on the pages should give the full details of the story stated in the Title. Boosting Titles make the exhibit more attractive which can be misleading, if they deviate from the concept developed in the pages. The different chapters should have a good balance, according to their relative thematic weight within the scope of the theme as defined by the Title, rather than by the quantity of material available.

An adequate Plan page will ensure that the public and jury do not have to “reconstruct” the Plan by browsing through the pages of the exhibit. This will obviously influence evaluation of the exhibit. The depth of Plan may be limited to two or three digits of depth. The Title defines the overall concept, which then is structured through the Plan. Inconsistencies between the Titles and the Plan indicate either an inadequate breakdown of the Title or an inappropriate synthesis of its structure in the selected Title.

The Plan page that provides an insight into the theme has to be shown at the beginning of the exhibit. The Plan should be accurate, scientifically reliable and sound. The sequence of the main chapters and their sub-divisions must follow a rational order, without superfluous or misplaced chapters. The same improvement should be given to the different sections and in accordance with the thematic significance.

The correct assembly and the position of the items increasing the individual ones on each page are demonstrated by the well understood, correct and fluent thread of development. The misplaced items make development confused and difficult to understand as the thematic exhibit demands “the story line”.

This is achieved through fine balance of philatelic and thematic aspects. The thematic exhibit draws materials from postal history, postal stationery, traditional philately etc. The Jury expects a continuous thread-like story line from the title page to the final page. There should not be any jump/discontinuity in the story line. It is the ingenuity of the exhibitor that is instrumental in building up a great thematic exhibit. Each philatelic element in the exhibit needs to advance the story line. The exhibit philatelic items should speak for themselves rather than the text underneath them. Headings (Titles and sub-titles) matching the Plan should present the development of story line along the pages without unnecessary repetitions. The story of each page of the exhibit in the form of ‘summary’ to be placed on the right top corner of the exhibit pages as the time spent in looking the exhibit by the Jury members is very limited. This summary of the page story will help understand the story episodes as the Jury quickly look at the exhibit. The Title, Plan, Development including Innovation are components of the main criteria named treatment which has a weightage of 35 marks.

It is to be understood that the Jury is evaluating, how well you show, what you tell them, that you are showing. In other words, given the subject and scope that you define on your title page, the Jury will evaluate how well you tell that philatelic story.

How challenging is the subject? Have you limited the scope to exclude the material that is most difficult to acquire? Is the presentation “Complete” for the given subject and scope? Is the story told in a logical and easy to understand format? Is the condition of the materials as good as can be expected for this subject? Is the display aesthetically appealing? These are some of the questions the exhibitor needs to ask himself/herself.

It is the exhibitor’s responsibility to guide the Jury, for proper appreciation of the exhibit being shown. In order to ensure this, the exhibitor need to comply with all the criteria laid down as per the regulations on a subject. There is a responsibility on the Jury also to evaluate the exhibit by looking into the exhibit patiently with open mind and by giving due weightage to the efforts made, rather than penalizing heavily on some perceived short comings.

The Title should be drafted and chosen carefully after writing possible titles for the chosen theme. The Title and Plan page should be worked out at the end i.e., after completion of the other exhibit pages. Many a time it so happens that the initially chosen theme would branch out into too many areas, complicating and confusing the scope of the exhibit. Therefore, the Title should be specific and represent accurately the whole exhibit.

Most of the exhibit titles are sketchy and do not reflect the theme being shown. The Title should give an idea of the exhibit in simple language. The required boundaries to be set at this stage so that the Jury will understand the limitations of the exhibit in terms of what is included in the exhibit and equally important is that what is excluded. The exclusion of certain things spelt out in the scope should not make the Jury disappointed that the exhibitor conveniently chosen the easier subject and avoided certain challenging aspects of a subject. An outline of exhibit organization is required to show as a road map in the form of layout of the presentation. This needs to be summarized as chapters and sub-chapters in the Plan. The layout should be described in barest minimum detail in one or two depths of digits. If any special efforts are made in doing thematic/philatelic studies, the same to be outlined in brief in the Introduction.

The challenge factor in acquiring certain ‘difficult to get’ items, placed at so and so exhibit page, may also be indicated. If any great item (killer item) is available, the same can be mentioned on the Title page. I the beginning, one need to begin with a rough draft of the Title page that need to be developed many times as the exhibit construction progresses. As building up the exhibit progresses,

the Scope, Plan and the Title may undergo change. One needs to start preparing exhibit after acquiring the most of the material covering the subject across different time periods and geographies. The Jury might frown upon looking at the modern material of Indian origin. They eagerly look for surprise material, if any.

Such surprising (spice) material to be positioned in the first frame, may be in the middle of the exhibit i.e., second and third row, as the time spent by Jury per exhibit is very limited. The exhibitor effort is to guide the jury to appreciate his effort, which will ultimately enhance the score.

On all exhibit pages, the items are to be arranged intelligently, without compromising the story line. Juror may spend two minutes or so for the first frame of the exhibit, and about another two minutes will be spent for the rest of the frames. Due care to be taken showcasing the items on the last frame. The Juror may most of the times will look at his/her eye level at the items shown on the exhibit frame. Therefore, top three rows should be given more attention while arranging items. Unless these sub-conscious level thoughts of Jury are properly assessed and kept in mind at the time of preparing the exhibit, the overall appreciation of the exhibit by the Jury may not be optimal when exhibited. The scholarly rendition of the subject in so many thematic details will fetch only negative marks. The text beneath each item should be crisp and telegraphic. What is not shown, not to be described and what is not described not to be shown. In other words, the exhibitor needs to confine to the item displayed. Further, exhibitor should avoid mentioning the details of the item shown which can be seen easily. One need to mention what is not obvious on the exhibit page of the item shown. In thematic exhibit, too many technicalities of a traditional philatelic exhibit details and a postal history exhibit details need not be given. The text should be readable and same type face should be used throughout the exhibit. Distinction need to be made for giving philatelic details in contrast to thematic details in terms of font size, and manner in which it is shown. The page title should be of a bigger size. If any important details are to be presented to the Jury, the same can be achieved by using capital letters/bold type etc. Jury attention can be drawn to surprise material with e-matting etc. The exhibitor need to take care that such mat portion is not more than 2mm.

The fundamental principle of exhibiting is that the focus of Jury should be only on the item shown, but not on the other aspects like text, color, etc. The other aspects should help improve, look and feel of the page. When items are arranged on a page, when juror looks at them from 2 to 3 feet, they should present aesthetic balance. The item should not be placed in a cluttered manner or by leaving unnecessary white space among them. Whenever Jury perceives more 'white space', he/she assumes that the exhibitor does not have adequate material/skill.

The endeavour of the exhibitor is to ensure that philatelic materials so displayed to speak for themselves rather than creating blocks of texts. The Jury discourages lengthy texts on the exhibit page. It requires years of efforts on the part of exhibitor to build up the exhibit page which is worth awarding higher medal. The exhibitor should be clear in his mind that his exhibit page is targeted to the Jury because he is participating in a competitive exhibition. The public would like to see 'more text' as they intend to compare philatelic exhibit with a story book. This distinction should be clearly understood by the exhibitor. The Jury will easily notice the 'extra' text filled, in order to cover up the white space. The second distinction is that the Jury would like to see the philatelic knowledge of the exhibit and the normal public are not interested to read the philatelic details.

Therefore, on every page, effort is to be made to demonstrate the philatelic knowledge in appropriate measure as thematic exhibit objective is to unveil the story. The exhibitor is really required to balance the proportion of thematic text vis-à-vis philatelic description. The strict grammar rules need not be followed in writing the text. The practical test to know whether the exhibit story is complete in itself without any discontinuity or confusion is that to copy the whole text available on exhibit page on a single word document. If anyone, on reading that text from beginning to end, if he is able to understand the story, then the exhibitor is successful in creating a better thematic exhibit. A well-designed title page summarizes the story of the exhibit in a concise way. A good exhibit will have a

powerful beginning, engaging middle portion and a logical ending. The title page may contain an item appropriate to the main story.

Though the element innovation has five points, it will have greater importance in impacting the score. Innovation can be shown by:-

- New theme
- New overall concept
- New development of chapter or sub-chapter
- New development of pages or parts of pages
- New thematic application of material

Innovation starts from the title itself. If the chosen title is very broad or very narrow in its scope, it upsets the understanding of the exhibit and scores low. The Jury will form first impression after reading the title name. The purpose and scope of the exhibit and the introductory text will enable further the Jury to correlate contents with declared title. The division of the story as a 'plan' will further help understand the story well. The plan need to be a well laid out road that explains the title abundantly. A thematic exhibit develops and uses all kind of philatelic material in its postal aspects. An appropriate postal and philatelic material is that which, for the purpose of transmitting mail or other postal communication, has been issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation for issue, used, or treated as valid for postage by governmental, local or private postal agencies, or by other duly commissioned or empowered authorities. The Jury would like to test these principles by looking in to the thematic exhibit.

If any non-philatelic item failing to meet the criteria set out would invite low score as marks will be deducted for such deviations. The effort of exhibitor is to cover variety of philatelic elements on every page and evenly spread out across the exhibit. The Jury expects that the advanced exhibits would cover more than 16 philatelic elements per frame. Further, on each page also at least 4-5 different philatelic elements are to be positioned. The effort of the exhibitor is to limit the use of stamps, say by not more than 40%. Rest of exhibit should use more items of cancellations, postal stationery and commercially used covers. Here and there, usage of meter franked material that commercially used, archival material, like adopted designs, errors freaks and oddities will help improve the score. The Jury would like to see whether any border-line material is used. The effort is to not to use such material. Usage of maxim cards, picture post cards, photographs to be avoided. Certain French origin deluxe proofs are also not liked by Jury.

The exhibitor should show the stamp and the cancellation on it. The illustrations on the cover, sender information and addresses are not to be shown. Windowing is an effective technique to show stamp and cancellation. This will conserve the space. Jury would like to see material which is difficult to acquire like accepted drawings and essays, die proofs for controlling engraving process. Not much importance is given to preliminary drawings of accepted designs.

The Jury would like to see the old period material evenly spread out on the exhibit. The modern materials should be in best condition. The effort of exhibitor is to pick-up such commercially used covers on which only 'related stamps' are properly cancelled. In other words, a cover containing one or two related stamps and too many unrelated stamps is to be avoided.

The most difficult challenge is to convince the Jury on the "rarity" which has twenty points. This is where most of the thematic exhibits fail to secure even 10 marks. If there a possibility, one should try to acquire world status rarity, accepted drawings, stage proofs so that the thematic exhibit gets good marks. If such rarities are not found in the thematic exhibit, it may not win medal beyond vermeil at

national level. The takeaway is to make serious efforts to position relevant difficult to get materials in the exhibit.

Therefore, while choosing the topic, the exhibitor needs to keep the end objective in mind. The end objective could be to secure large vermeil /gold at the national level. Going by the trend, it becomes difficult to foresee a situation wherein thematic exhibit in India getting gold medal at the national level. The main issue is comparison of thematic exhibit with postal history or tradition exhibit at the subconscious level.

Never ever a thematic exhibit will beat postal history or thematic exhibit in the rarity score. Therefore, the score, most of the times stop at vermeil level. There should be a policy resolution by the Department of Posts prescribing quota of medals right up to gold for each class of philately. In other words, there should be an explicit provision to evaluate and award gold within that class for the best shown exhibit. At present, though thematic exhibits are huge in number in competition, even at the national exhibition, highest medals are not given for thematic segment. This is because of the thought process that thematic exhibit is inferior to postal history or traditional philately as the effort level and the money value of the thematic exhibit is less compare to them. This should change and only then Indian Thematic Philately reaches the FIP level exhibitions.

The exhibitor needs to find ways and means to position such material which has thematic connections on closer examination. In other words, such material, when seen in isolation, may not fit into the story line. But maybe, due to the design error or in other aspect, that may have thematic connection which needs to be explored and exploited by the exhibitor. These surprise connections will make the material thematically qualified. The Jury needs to be guided towards such surprise displays.

The exhibit must have been improved over a period of time. Probably such mention may be made on the title page on what new materials were added.

A latest generation thematic exhibits are also expected to throw up a new thematic/philatelic finding. The knowledge, personal study and research have 30 marks, wherein thematic weightage is 15 marks and philatelic component has also 15 marks.

Knowledge is the degree of knowledge of the exhibitor as expressed by the items chosen for display. Research is a presentation of new facts relating to the chosen subjects. To achieve high medals, competitive exhibiting requires that exhibitor to demonstrate a high level of achievement in personal study and when possible in presenting original research. Implicit knowledge is demonstrated by the correct selection of items to illustrate the exhibit subject. Explicit knowledge is demonstrated through the write-up of the items in the exhibit. High achievement requires that the exhibitor demonstrate both types of knowledge. Philatelic knowledge can be shown in terms of displaying printing flaws and variations and other intricate philatelic aspects. When postal stationary is shown, it should be shown fully. When commercially used cover is shown, the stamp and cancellation can only be shown, if the size of the envelope is large. Old post marks can be extracted and shown when required.

When variety of postal stationary is to be shown, they can be neatly and cleverly overlapped. Overlapping is not allowed in other cases. Advertised postal stationery from the thematic point can be shown. Illustrated telegrams, preferably postally used can be shown. Some unusual material like air graphs, varieties of stamps can also be shown. Among proofs, sepia printer's proof is given high importance. Private decorations marks are not to be shown.

There is nothing wrong in showing the auxiliary markings applied by post office. These include redirection remarks like return to sender, not found, not claimed, absent, too late etc. Water marks, perfins, over prints will add value to the exhibit. Each philatelic element used must fit into the development of the theme as advance the story line. The use of blocks or other multiples of modern material should be avoided. The thematic information brought by each stamp/element must be put in

the right sequence in order to build a correct thematic story line. Large sized items may be avoided. The Jury will object multiple uses of some items at different places. Some ancillary post marks or labels of the post office are also acceptable when they are connected to the story line.

Meter post marks with cover are preferable for display. The meter marks with zero (0) denominations are not to be used. The autographs on covers are non-philatelic in nature. Therefore, these have no significance. The proofs should appear before stamps and stamps before covers. The thematic text should be on the top with different font size and the philatelic material below that which can be distinguished from the thematic text.

The following items and the information made available by them should not be used for thematic development:

- Fantasy issues from non-existent postal territories
- Issues of exile governments
- Issues of organization without postal services
- Abusive, illegal and undesirable issues as defined by the UPU and the FIP philatelic congress of 1976

As per the regulations, the material displayed should be fully consistent with subject chosen. The selection should show appreciation of the exhibitor as to what is available in the context of his chosen subject. It should also include the fullest range on relevant philatelic material of the highest available quantity when all of them are fulfilled. A score equal to 80% of the maximum is assigned. When any of them is not fulfilled, mistakes occur and the 80% score is reduced accordingly. Therefore, in order to score more beyond 80% score, there should be additional achievements on the part of the exhibitor in advancing the exhibit to newer heights.

In assessing 'treatment' the Jury may look for:

- A logic development that is easy to follow
- A clear and concise write up
- A balanced exhibit for the theme chosen
- The degree to which the plan tells a story

They also check:

- whether the exhibit reflects the theme implied by the title
- whether the exhibit is developed in accordance with the plan
- whether it has new aspects and new approaches for known themes

The chapters should be by and large with equal weight in terms of pages earmarked. Presence of philatelic material, which has not been researched for that theme, or where there has been very little research deserves appreciation by Jury. When it comes to the rarity, the Jury will primarily be looking for:

- Rarities of general significance in philatelic, if available for the theme
- Rarities of specific significance for the chosen theme known to exist
- How easy it is to duplicate the exhibit

The Juror will also be looking for the scarce and the uncommon items, particularly from traditional philatelic, postal history and postal stationery classes. Cancellation should be as clear as possible with all essential wording complete and allow the stamp design where thematically relevant to be clearly visible.

The Synopsis is prepared generally as a one to four page document to help Jury understand the exhibit in advance. A crafted synopsis can help, improve medal levels significantly in its simplest form.

The synopsis is a perfect venue to explain various aspects of the exhibit, such as why certain material is absent. If condition is a factor, explain why the material is not in pristine mention. Similarly, the recent additions and new discoveries. As Jury gets acquainted with a display, they may grow complacent towards it. Let them know that this is not a "same old" exhibition, but a vibrant, expanding work-in-progress.

Synopsis need to be revised for every exhibition adding the exhibition name and the date as a footer. It is a good idea to describe any personal research that you have done. This is the place to let Jury know of any discoveries that you made, and contributions that you have made to the wealth of philatelic knowledge regarding the material. Such efforts are greatly appreciated by Jury and are appropriately rewarded when ribbons are posted. Also provide the Jury with a list of references. If you are referring a chapter of book, provide the page numbers. Don't just list the title of periodical, but provide the specific article, title, volume, issue date and page numbers.

The exhibit is just an expanded version of the title page. The title page briefly explains why you choose the limits of the exhibit and tell the Jury what makes collecting difficult to get the material, so challenging. Were the stamps issued in small quantity? Were that only briefly valid for postal use? Are varieties scarce because of the very high quality of the print? Once you have told them how tough the material is to acquire, then tell them about the gems that you have obtained and that you are presenting in the exhibit. Be frank in using the words like 'rare' and 'scarce'.

Exhibiting has evolved over a period of time from displays of rare items to philatelic studies, with well-developed stories that progress from beginning to main body to conclusion. The scope of exhibits has become more and more narrow and depth of study has greatly increased. As stated, the title page is a most important page. It is to reiterate that title page will have an unambiguous title, clear purpose and scope statement as first words. After the title, an outline or plan of the exhibit describes in paragraph form or list form the sequence of progression of the story. An appropriate item on the title page adds visual interest.

Certain key points to be noted are as below:

In thematic philately, diversity of philatelic elements is one of the most important factors. It implies that to use different type of authentic philatelic materials as many as possible. These need to be shown on each page and spread evenly across the exhibit. In order to analyze the extent of usage of different philatelic elements, it would be good idea to note down the philatelic elements in the Excel sheet item-wise available on each page for the entire exhibit. From that, one need to make a diversity analysis of philatelic elements used. Pie charts, bar diagrams etc. can be built up from the data. As exhibit keeps changing, one can keep track of proportion of different philatelic elements used over a period of time. Similarly, rarity analysis can also be done keeping the price of each item as a variable. From that analysis, the exhibitor will know- what are the strong and weak pages in terms of usage of philatelic elements and rare items. The effort is to balance the whole exhibit and also each page. The items which have more thematic and philatelic importance are to be positioned on the top of the exhibit page. Ordinary material, due to its special features like overprint, perfin, or error might become a surprise element, lifting the exhibit value.

Professor Damian Lage describes three main types of philatelic studies:

Type 1:- Several pages of an exhibit elaborate a thematic important aspects by the detailed study of the philatelic important varieties.

Type 2:- One page concentrated on a detailed study of the important varieties for an identical thematic detail.

Type 3:- Two or more items of identical thematic details are shown to underline personal knowledge or philatelic importance of the items.

The main items that will be used in philatelic studies are proofs and essays. The importance ranges from world status → high importance → moderate importance → lesser importance → no importance. It is essential to choose an item for philatelic study that is for thematic importance, so that the study strengthens the thematic development of the exhibit.

The exhibitor needs to know certain definitions of philatelic items so that an ideal mix of these will boost the exhibit medal level.

Specimen stamp: It is a copy of newly printed stamp issued that was not used for postal purposes. It was over printed or perforated with the word "specimen".

Plate proof: In the past, an artist used to design the stamp, an engraver then engraved that design to a "die" which is a small metal square. Then, once the printer approves the die, he duplicates it multiple times on to a metal plate. Then from that metal plate, the printer prints a sheet of stamps. The trial printing from a master metal plate are called plate proofs. Therefore, plate means a trial printing of a full sheet of stamps made from a completed printing master plate.

Artist's Proof: Artist's proofs of engraved stamps form part of the artistic tradition of fine art engravings. The proofs are printed by the official government printer on thick art paper directly from the die prepared by the engraver. This die is later used to make the printing plate or cylinder used to print the issued stamps. Initially during 1960's, the French government printer used to print 18 to 28 proofs. The quantity was reduced to 8 in 1999. Prior to 1960's, artist's proofs were printed by the engravers and no restriction was placed on the number printed. From 1961-86, proofs were usually printed in 6 different colours. From 1986-98, the number of colours was further reduced to 5. In 1999, the number of colours was further reduced to 3. Artist's proofs printed from 1960 onward have an embossed seal in the lower left corner. The stamps engraver usually signs an artist's proof with pencil inside, or just below, the lower right hand corner of the die impression.

Trial Colour Proofs: Trial colour proof sheets are plate proofs printed from 1950's to 1984 to show a stamp in different combination of ink colours. They were used to help decide the best colour for the issued stamp.

Thematic exhibit is a fusion of "Image and text". It is a condensed art of various elements such as research ability, story construction, logic, conciseness and coherent layout. Experience suggests that for advanced collectors having reached a saturation point in philatelic criteria, only room left for further improvement will be rarity. Therefore, acquiring the world class rarities is unavoidable. Thematic exhibiting is continuously changing with the items. The international Jury consistently is suggesting the exhibitor to bring in innovation. The current high level exhibiting is termed as "4th Generation" by Mr. Jonas Hall Strom. In the days to come, more and more new trends might come.

Therefore, the thematic exhibitor should always keep his mind open in order to constantly update the exhibit. He should be prepared to accept constructive criticism from the Jury members.

Though the presentation component carries only 5% of the points awarded in competing exhibiting, the ability to include relevant material and to present it in a clear and understandable manner is the essence of exhibiting.

High quality exhibition necessitates the following:

- High level of difficulty achieved
- Well-executed
- Ideal presentation-organization, heading, sequence
- Full knowledge demonstrated
- The exhibit is complete and the material is difficult to acquire and in excellent condition.

As each philatelic item, communicates a thought, and as the entire page communicates a concept, the pages must follow one another in a logical manner. One should avoid title page flaws, poor exhibit organization or insufficient exhibit development. One need to overcome the treatment issues, focus attention and guide the viewer's eye by hiding unnecessary portion of material.

Treatment can be diminished if the Judge cannot understand the philatelic element in an exhibit or see the aspect of a stamp or cover bearing address. An exhibit must describe item level what is being shown. In a five framed exhibit first, second and fifth frame should be very strong philatelic content as well as thematic content. Items with post marks from before 1920 are almost, always worth showing in their entirety.

Before ending, certain important points to be noted and followed for enhancing the medal level are reiterated as below:-

With regard to the Plan page, the exhibitor is to ensure that the structure is correct, logical and balanced. The Jury would like to decipher the degree to which a story is told and not a list of various aspects. In the plan page, keep chapter and sub-chapter only, the rest should go on the individual album sheets. For an easy-to-follow development, each page should have at the top, the numbered chapter or sub-chapter that indicates which part of the plan is being developed on the page. An additional page title summarizing the content and the page story is strongly suggested. Items should be placed near the thematic text. There should be perfect connection between items and thematic text. The depth of story shown by links, cross-correlations, structures, causes and effects.

The story line should flow like a red-thread on all the pages. In other words, there should not be any break in the story, and unnecessary items not related to the story are not to be included on the page. The exhibitor need to ensure if items are interchanged, whether the story line gets upset or not. If upset, then it means the poor development.

Innovation is demonstrated by a personal elaboration of the theme that transforms an exhibit from a sequence of classified items into an "original" story. Presence of new thematic finding for the theme are suitably rewarded by the Jury. Use of philatelic material that has a thematic qualification which is not immediately obvious and needs to be discovered by the exhibits is desirable. Factual errors in telling the story should be avoided. Presence of "surprising" material adds value.

Use of widest possible range of postal-philatelic material and its balanced use will be suitably rewarded. Presence of material which has not yet been researched for the theme or where that has been very little research was there will help improve the score. Skillful use of philatelic material in its various varieties will help score more marks. Overlapping is allowed when showing varieties postal stationery, in a way that the detail with the variety itself is clearly visible.

Windowing "cancellation" imprint on a postal story is allowed when the thematic text refers to the cancellation. Windowing or folding is allowed for very large items such are telegrams, complete sheets of stamps etc. Deluxe proofs are not be used. Rarity depends on the difficulty to secure them and also on the general demand for this item in philately. There should be thematic connection while using such rare items. "Key items" in the exhibit can be highlighted. Cancellation should be as clear as possible

with all essential wording complete and allow the stamp design, where thematic relevant, to be clearly visible.

Booklets should be presented with complete stamps. Presentation of exhibit is understood and perceived in terms of clarity of display; clarity of text and the overall aesthetic balance of the exhibit. May the Indian Thematic Philately grow in quality and bring success in FIP exhibitions in the days to come!

(This article is wrote essentially to help thematic philatelists and depended sources of material is quite vast. Author gratefully acknowledges the sources.)