

## The First Issue of Dungarpur - Synopsis

**Background:** The East India Company had established a network of alliances with nearly 700 Indian Princely States. They did not adopt a uniform policy towards these States. While the Sovereignty of the States was recognized the Imperial Government tried to impose the Imperial Post on these States, and was largely successful. Stamps & postal stationery of British India were valid in most parts of the Indian sub-continent including 629 Indian States. With six so-called “Convention States”, a Postal convention was established allowing the usage of British India stamps / postal stationery overprinted with the names of the respective States. A relatively small number (35) of States did not join the Imperial Post or accept a Postal Convention and instead issued their own postage stamps. These 35 States are referred to as Indian “Feudatory” States by Stanley Gibbons and Indian “Native” States by Scott. Dungarpur is one of these 35 Indian Feudatory / Native States that issued their own postage stamps.

Although Dungarpur started issuing postage stamps 1933, it was not until Jal Cooper’s article in *India’s Stamp Journal* February 1969 issue that the world learned about the existence of Dungarpur stamps. Dungarpur stamps first appeared in the 1988 Stanley Gibbons catalog.

Dungarpur was a very small State in size and had very small population of 100,103 in 1901. Of these only 3,286 persons could read and write. Stamps of Indian Feudatory States (Travancore and Cochin excluded), Dungarpur included, had franking power only with their respective State boundaries; mail intended to destinations outside the State required Imperial franking also. As no combination covers of Dungarpur State have been recorded the world outside of Dungarpur State was unaware of the existence of Dungarpur stamps. I am of the opinion that the stamps of Dungarpur were issued, initially, for official mail as all early covers bearing Dungarpur Coat-of-Arms issue adhesives are printed with “On Dungarpur State Service Only” brown envelopes. By late 1930’s stamps were being used on private mail as evidenced by a handful of known covers.

I have collected Dungarpur for 35 years and have methodically and diligently acquired virtually everything that has come on the market for the past 20+ years. I have also acquired Dungarpur items and / or collections formed by eminent Indian States collectors including Frits Staal, Dan Walker, H.D.S. Haverbeck, Pierre Couvreur, Bagh Chand Somani, Arjun Lal Harchandani; over 75% of the total recorded stamps & covers of Dungarpur are currently part of my collection.

**Research:** The listing for Dungarpur State in Scott catalog was compiled by Dan Walker and myself. A quick comparison of Dungarpur listing in Stanley Gibbons versus Scott catalog will reveal the detailed study carried out by Dan & myself resulting in a much more elaborate listing in Scott as compared to Stanley Gibbons.

**Rarity:** According to census taken by me, no more than 40 covers bearing stamps of the First issue of Dungarpur State exist. Virtually all known Dungarpur stamps are on covers being that they were discovered by a paper merchant in 1969 and by then the general practice of removing stamps off covers had been done away with. A total of only 11 mint stamps from the First Issue have been recorded. The exhibit features several unique items.

**Archival material:** No archival material of the First Issue of Dungarpur have been recorded.

**Catalog Values:** Catalog values in both Scott & Gibbons do not accurately reflect current market values. Dungarpur stamps & covers rarely come on the market (especially in the last 10 years) and in the absence of current data (auction realizations) catalog values have pretty much remained unchanged in the last decade.