

Indian Registration Labels

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Being a student of Indian Postal History, I felt that, to the best of my knowledge, no detailed note on the various types of Registration Labels used during the Pre-Independence Period as well as the Post Independence Period in India has so far been written. As such an attempt has been made in this article to bring to light the various registration labels till date.

Registration labels are tiny bits of paper, affixed by postal officials, on letters or packets, which have been 'registered' for safe transit. These labels were introduced in India around 1909 (Ref. Page 163, R.S. Nutall, 1977, Handbook of Indian Philately, India Study Circle), and were usually printed in blue on white paper. In my opinion these were introduced, possibly, to save time of the postal officials in writing, for better identification, and probably to have a uniformity in the system of sending registered articles. These labels are also referred to as 'Number Slips' or 'Registration Labels Slips'.

The classification is based on a study of as many as 556 registered covers in my possession. The classification has been broadly categorised into two major groups viz. that pertaining to the Pre-Independence period and the other to the Post-Independence era. For easy identification Pre-Independence period labels has been indicated as Type 1, Type 2 etc. and Post-Independence period labels as Type I, Type II and so on.

Pre-Independence Period

The registration labels of this period till 14th August 1947, fall broadly into four different types, Type 1, as illustrated, consists of a set of numbers only. In my collection, I have only one cover dated B.10.1921 (Khurai), the details of which are as under:

TYPE 1

Frame Size		Dimensions of each Number			Colour of printing
Length mm	width mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	
46.0	27.0	16.0	7.0	2.5	Black on white paper

Type 2 labels, as illustrated, consists of the alphabet 'R' and a set of numbers. All the labels of this type are printed in blue on white paper. The alphabet 'R' has

been observed to be of two types. The first type is the straight one as illustrated in Type 2 and the other is of the serpentine variety as shown in Type 4. Total covers seen in this variety are 13 in number. The earliest date observed is 24/7/1923 (Nagaur Marwar) and the latest observed is 15/4/1942 (Nihataur (Bijnor Distt)). The variation in dimensions are as under:

TYPE 2

Frame Size		Dimensions of Alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each number		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
41 to 45	11.5 to 17.5	2.5 to 6.0	2.5 to 12.0	0.25 to 3	2.5 to 6.0	1.5 to 4	0.25 to 1.0

A number of the registered covers of Type 2 have the name of the post office of origin stamped on it.

Type 3, consists of the alphabet 'R', a set of numbers, and the post office of origin all printed. Normally the colour of the printing ink is the same, viz. blue but, for one cover dated 22/1/1930 (Allahabad) out of 11 covers the Post Office of Origin is printed in black, whereas the alphabet 'R' and the set of numbers is in blue. The earliest date observed is 14/2/1919 (Kalbadevi) and the latest observed is 26/5/1947 (Shoolay). As in Type 2 the alphabet 'R' is of both the straight and serpentine variety. Further one cover dated 29.7.1920 (Bankura) has the printing in dark grey.

The details and variations in dimensions are as under:

TYPE 3

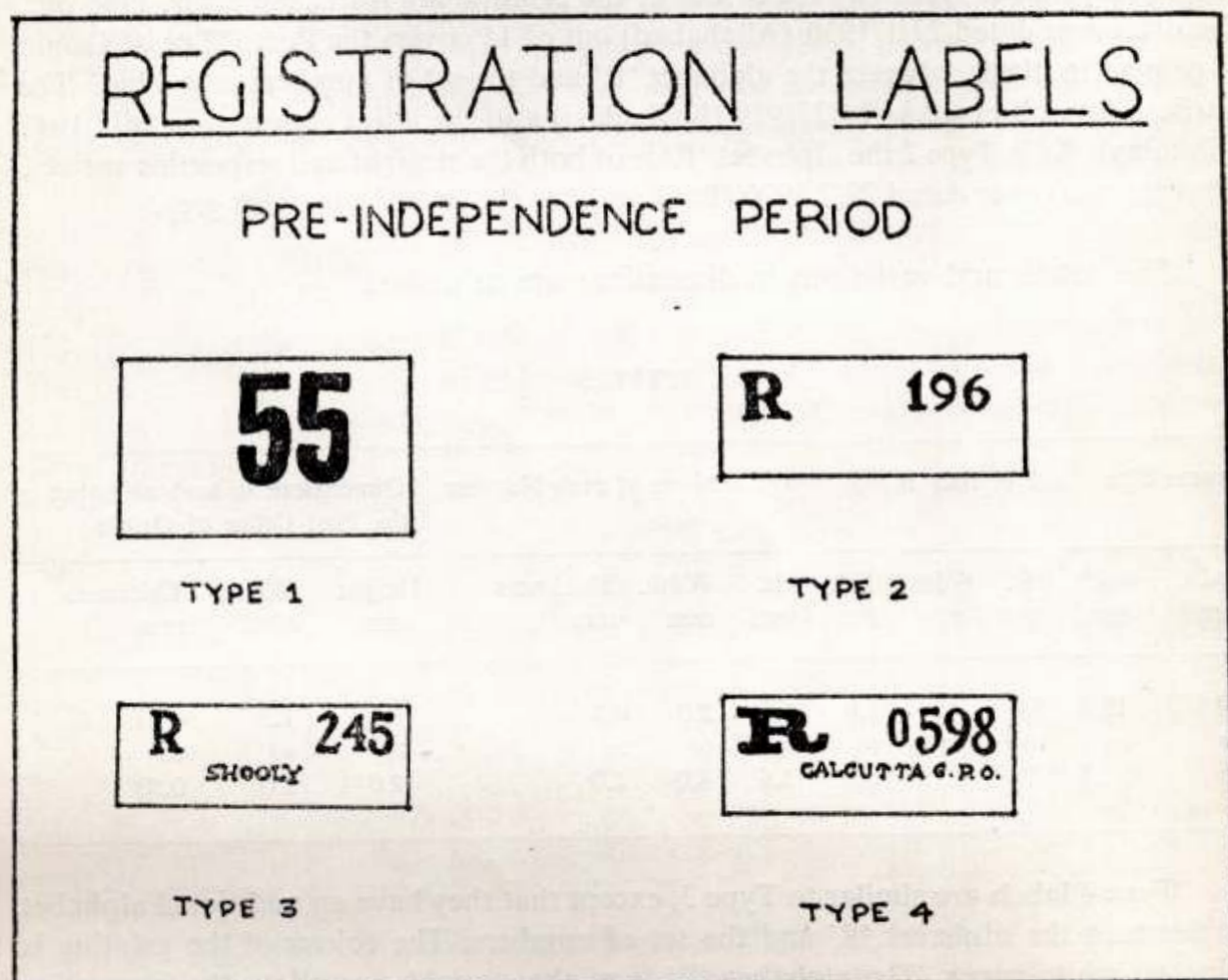
Frame Size		Alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each Number			Dimensions of each alphabet in the Post Office of Origin		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth. mm	Thk. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth. mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
40 5 to 46	15.5 to 17.5	5.0 to 7.0	4.5 to 13.0	1.0 to 3.0	4.5 to 5.5	2.0 to 4.0	0.5 to 1.0	1.5 to 2.0	1.5 to 2.0	0.25 to 0.50

Type 4 labels are similar to Type 3, except that they have an additional alphabet in between the alphabet 'R' and the set of numbers. The colour of the printing is blue on white paper. The alphabet 'R' is of the straight as well as the serpentine

variety. The number of covers observed are 3 in number. The earliest date observed is 27/11/1942 (Calcutta G.P.O.) and the latest date is 8/8/1946 (Calcutta G.P.O.). The variation in dimensions are as under:

TABLE 4

Frame Size		Dimensions of Alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each number			Dimensions of each alphabet in post office of origin			Dimensions of additional alphabet		
Lnth.	Wdth.	Ht.	Wth.	Thk.	Ht.	Wth.	Thick-ness	Ht.	Wdth.	Thk.	Ht.	Wdth.	Thick-ness
mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm
42	15.5	5.0	5.0	1.0	5.5	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.25	4.5	2.0	
to	to	to	to	to	to	to					to	to	1.0
43	16.5	6.0	12.5	3.0	6.0	3.0					6.0	3.0	



Post Independence Period

The Post-Independence period has as many as 14 different types. Type I consists of the alphabet 'R' and a set of numbers, as well as another additional alphabet between 'R' and numbers, as illustrated. I have seen only one cover with this type of label and the date is 20/3/1953 from Bankura. The label is printed in blue on white paper. The details of the various dimensions is as under:

TYPE I

Frame Size		Dimensions of Alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each			Dimensions of Additional Alphabet		
Lnth.	Wdth.	Ht.	Wdth.	Thk.	Height	Width	Thick- ness	Height	Width	Thick- ness
mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	mm
42.0	16.5	5.5	3.0	1.0	6.0	2.5	1.0	5.0	2.0	1.0

Type II of the Post-Independence period is similar to Type 3 of the Pre-Independence period and consists of alphabet 'R' and a set of numbers in the first line, and in the second line the name of the post office of origin. Only one cover of this type has been observed and its date is 14/9/1956 (Jamashedpur). It is printed in blue on white paper. The detailed dimensions are as under:

TYPE II

Frame Size		Dimensions of Alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each number			Dimensions of each alphabet in post office of origin		
Lnth.	Wdth.	Ht.	Width	Thickness	Ht.	Wdth.	Thck.	Height	Width	Thickness
mm	mm	mm	mm		mm	mm	mm	mm	mm	m
42.0	15.5	5.5	3.5	1.0	5.5	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.25

Type III is similar to Type 2 of the Pre-Independence period and consists of the alphabet 'R' and a set of numbers. Total covers observed by me are 41. The earliest date observed is 21/12/1954 (Dhanbad) and the latest date is 5/2/1982 (Shakespeare Sarani, Calcutta). The majority of labels on these covers are printed in various shades of blue (light blue, dark blue, and turquoise blue) on white paper, except one cover which has the label printed in black on light grey paper and the date is 7/8/1973 (Dadar). The variation in dimensions are as under:

POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

R J 598

TYPE I

R 158
JAMSHEDPUR

TYPE II

R 423

TYPE III

REGISTRATION
No. 6080

TYPE IV

No 392

TYPE V

2048

TYPE VI

REGISTRATION
No. E 1671

TYPE VII

Registration
No. 4A 1738

TYPE VIII

Registration पंजीकरण
की No. 0929
B

TYPE IX

B 1553
CAL GPO
700001

TYPE X

रजिस्ट्री Registration
No. कि 3 Q052

TYPE XI

C 5090

TYPE XII

रजिस्ट्री/REGISTRATION
की No. T 2219

TYPE XIII

Registration
पंजीकरण
No. 2883

TYPE XIV

TYPE III

Frame Size		Dimensions of alphabet 'R'			Dimensions of each Number		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
30.0	16.0	4.0	2.5	0.50	3.5	2.0	0.5
to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to
47.0	26.5	7.0	5.5	1.25	7.0	4.5	1.0

Type IV label consists of the word 'Registration' in the first line, and "No" and a set of numbers in the second line. The label is printed in blue on white paper. Only one cover is observed of this type and is dated 20.5.1980 (Bombay). The dimensions are as under:

TYPE IV

Frame Size		Dimensions of each Alphabet in "Registration"			Dimensions of each Number			Dimensions of "N" and ("O")		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth. mm	Thickness mm	Ht. mm	Wdth. mm	Thk. mm	Ht. mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
30.0	10.0	2.0	1.5	0.25	3.0	1.5	0.25	2.5 (2.0)	2 (1.5)	0.25 (0.25)

Type V consists of the words "No" and a set of numbers in one line. Number of covers with this type of label seen are 5. The earliest date observed is 13/10/1973 (Industrial Town Area, Jullundar) and the latest date is 4/5/1983 (Vadodara). All the labels of this type are printed in black on white paper, and the variations in dimensions are as under:

TYPE V

Frame size		Dimensions of alphabet 'N'			Dimensions of Alphabet 'O'			Dimensions of each number		
Lnth mm	Wdth. mm	Ht. mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
34.0	10.0	4.5	3.5	0.5	2.5	3.0	0.50	4.0	2.5	0.75
to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to
34.5	11.5	5.0	4.0	0.75	3.0	3.5	0.75	4.5	3.0	1.0

Type VI label is the most common type of label used in the Post-Independence period, and is similar to Type 1 of the Pre-Independence period. This type consists of a set of numbers. The majority of labels are printed in red, black and blue on white paper. Only in 3 Registered covers (22/2/1960 (Panchet Dam, Dhanbad), 25/3/1972 (Chakulia, Singhbhum), and 4/6/1974 (Kotah), the paper used is of light yellow colour and the printing is in black. The printing in red has been observed on 3 registered covers, in black on 69 covers, and the rest 155 covers have labels printed in blue on white paper. Total covers seen by me in Type VI are 391. The earliest date observed is 22/2/1960 (Panchet Dam, Dhanbad) and the latest cover is dated 24/1/1984 (Tengra), with this type of label. The variations in dimensions are as under:

TYPE VI

Frame Size		Dimensions of each number		
Length mm	Width mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
38.0	16.5	3.0	2.5	0.5
38.0	16.5	3.0	2.5	0.5
to	to	to	to	to
50.0	24.5	6.0	4.0	1.25

Type VII consists of the words "Registration" in the first line, and 'No', alphabet, and a set of numbers in the second line, as illustrated. The total number of covers are seen by me in this type are 38. A majority of labels have the printing done in blue on white paper, except for 6 covers in which the printing of the label is in black on white paper, and 3 covers in which printing is in blue (first line) and black (second line) on white paper. The earliest cover observed is dated 22/10/1979 (Bhopal) and the latest is dated 14/1/1984 (Bhopal). 6 covers have Registration in first line with alphabet 'R' in capitals and the rest of the alphabet small, whereas all the other 30 covers have all in capitals and the rest of the alphabet of "Registration" in capitals. The variation in dimensions are as under:

TYPE VII

Frame Size		Dimensions of Alphabet in "Registration"			Dimensions "N" and ("O")			Dimensions of Alphabet			Dimensions of Number		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth. mm	Thck. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth mm	Thk. mm	Ht. mm	Wdth mm	Thk. mm	Ht. mm	Width mm	Thick- mm
29.5	12.0	1.5	1.5	0.25	2.5	2.5	0.25	2.5	1.5	0.5	2.5	1.5	0.25
to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to		to	to	to
34.0	16.0	2.5	2.0	0.5	4.0	(1.5	1.0	3.5	3.0		4.0	2.5	1.00
					(1.5	2.5)	(0.25						
					to		to						
					2.5)		1.0)						

Type VIII label is similar to Type VII, except that the additional alphabet between 'No' and a set of numbers, in bilingual i.e. in English and Hindi. Only two Registered Covers have been seen by me having this label. One cover is dated—11/8/1982 (Bombay Samachar Marg) and the other dated 10/12/1983 (Bhandup). Both have the label printing in black on white paper. The frame size 33×11.5 mm. The rest of the matter is as illustrated.

Type IX label has Registration in English and its equivalent word in Hindi, in the first line. The English word is before the Hindi Word. The second line has the alphabet in bilingual (one above the other), 'No', as a well as set of numbers in the second line. Only one Registered cover bearing this label has been seen by me and is dated 13/7/1979 (New Delhi-110055). The frame size is 31×12 mm and the label is printed in blue on white paper.

Type X label consists of an alphabet and a set of numbers in the first line, the post office of origin in the second line, and the pin code in the third line. Number of covers with this label seen by me are 5. The printing of the label is in various shades of blue (light blue, turquosie blue, dark blue, and blue), on white paper. The earliest registered cover with this label observed is dated 28/5/1979 (Calcutta G.P.O.), and the latest is dated 26/7/1980 (Khengrapati, Calcutta). The frame size observed is 43×20 mm and the rest is as illustrated.

Type XI label is alightly defferent from Type IX label, in that in the first line the Hindi equivalent of Registration is before the English word "Registration". Further the Hindi equivalent word of Registration is different in Type XI from that in Type IX. The number of covers seen by me of this type are 36. The earliest date observed is 14/2/1980 (Little Russel Street) and the latest is dated 1/12/1983 (Bhandup). The printing of the label is in blue on white paper, and the frame size is 34×11 mm. The rest is as illustrated.

Type XII label consists of an alphabet "C" and a set of numbers in one line. Only one Registered Cover with this lable has been observed and is dated 8/6/1982 (Bombay G.P.O.). The printing is in black on white paper and the dimensions are as under:

Frame Size		Dimensions of alphabet "C"			Dimensions of each number		
Lnth. mm	Wdth. mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Height mm	Width mm	Thickness mm
35.0	16.5	3.5	4.5	0.5	4.0	3.0	1.0

Type XIII label is slightly different from Type XI label in that the 'No' is in Hindi as well as English (Bilingual). Only one registered cover of his label is seen by

me and is dated 13/6/1983 (Brajrajnagar). The label is printed in the blue on white paper and the frame size 31.5×10.5 mm and the rest is as illustrated.

Type XIV label is slightly different from Type IX label. Type XIV label has the Hindi equivalent of Registration in the second line, and the words "Registration" in the first line, whereas Type IX label has Registration and Hindi equivalent in one line i.e. first line. The earliest cover is dated 8.8.1983 (Shivaji Marg) and the latest from the same place is dated 26/8/1983. The number of registered covers seen are 4, and the frame size is 35×13.5 mm. The printing is in black on white paper.

In concluding this note I wish to add that all covers (registered) seen by me and bearing the various types of Registration labels have been illustrated and details given here. This may not be a completely exhaustive list. There may be many more varieties, about which I am not aware. If any philatelists could add to my list of Registration Labels it would indeed be good and any additional information, clarifications etc. on these labels may be sent to me care Signet.



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