

Press Clippings

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Demonetisation might have worked in favour of collectors

Believes Sushilkumar Agrawal, the brain behind the country's largest online museums of old coins, notes and stamps www.mintageworld.com

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NASHIK, JAN 9

You shop, you bank and you book online. Why then not log on and explore the world of stamps, coins, notes and other artefacts?

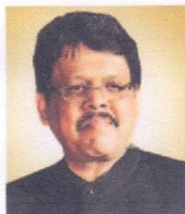
Businessman Sushilkumar Agrawal's online museum mintage-world.com got tremendous response when he participated in the recently concluded Rare Fair 2017, an exhibition of rare coins, stamps, notes and other artefacts held in Nashik.

And why wouldn't it? It's a museum that you can visit any time, any day, or night, at your convenience, free of cost.

For one, for all

While numismatists, numaphilists, philatelists and artefacts lovers are very welcome, the chairman and managing director of Mumbai-based Ultra Media & Entertainment Pvt Ltd says his online museum is not just for the serious collector or even just for adults. "Today's children are so engrossed in their mobiles that they have no idea what numismatics or philately is. Also, they don't have any motivation, thanks to the fast-paced lives their parents lead. The aim of mintageworld.com is to revive this hobby that can add important dimensions to one's personality besides encouraging one to preserve ancient heritage," he explains.

These hobbies ingrain discipline, patience, curiosity and knowledge among children and young adults. "When you collect coins,



Sushilkumar Agrawal

stamps, notes and other objects from other countries, you get intrigued by the small pictures, the animals and other things minted on them. It encourages kids to travel and explore the world," Agrawal says.

A reference point

To understand the importance and the history of such items, the website offers various audio visuals that make the experience entertaining and easy to understand. "For various collectors, our site has become like a reference point and I take immense pride in that," says Agrawal.

Type of investment

Collecting coins can be much more than a hobby; it can be a type of investment too. Many old artefacts, coins and stamps are immensely valuable. Take for instance silver coins from the 1930 era - a coin can be sold for up to Rs 5 lakh today. On a smaller scale, the 5 paisa and 10 paisa aluminium coins are now worth Rs 20 each.



Encourage your child to start a coin collection

- Ask your child to start collecting Rs 1, Rs 2 or Rs 5 coins every day rather than spending it.
- Buy your child a coin album where they can be stored.
- Ask your child to study the coin carefully. Apart from design and shape, tell your child to look for coins made of different metals as well as mintage. Different mints in India produce different coins and they are usually found around the region they have been minted in. It may be easy to find coins produced in Nashik, but finding a coin from the Calcutta mint here would be an amazing discovery for your child. There are more than 250 types of Rs 5 coins in India. The older ones are as valuable as Rs 1,000 a coin.

Agrawal talks about a collector who visited the Rare Fair. "The gentleman had a bundle of Rs 100 Haj notes and one such note in a great condition is as valuable as Rs 40 lakh," he says. "Hobbies such as numismatics and philately are also a type of investment."

The demonetisation effect

Like almost everything else, numismatics too has also suffered a mild setback because of the recent ban on old currency notes. But Agrawal believes that it will eventually work to the advantage of numismatists.

"In 1978, then prime minister Morarji Desai banned Rs 10,000 notes. Now any such note in good condition is worth almost Rs 20 lakh," says Agrawal, who believes that the recently banned Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes will become as valuable in time.

Not a flourishing industry

There are plenty of collectors in the country but the community is not exactly flourishing, says Agrawal, who hopes that his website will encourage people to explore the world of coin, currency

and stamp collections and create new collectors.

"Nashik and Deolali are home to several intellectual and unique collectors of coins, stamps, currency notes and other items. In fact, I have observed that smaller cities like Nashik, Nagpur and Aurangabad have more such collectors than the metros," he says, speculating that this could be because cultural heritage and its preservation are more deeply rooted in these places.

Government support

The need of the hour is government support and simpler rules. "Many rules encourage smuggling and boost the black market. A small example, one is not allowed to export anything that is more than 100 years old. Many of these laws and rules work against collectors. They don't even get tax exemption in many cases. In fact, they are often harassed. India could have easily become a Rs 10,000 cr collectors' industry, but the biggest hindrance in growth is our own government," says Agrawal.