

The Meghnad Saha Archive and its Lessons

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Preamble

HISTORY
ARCHIVE
ACCESS



When was the Saha Institute established?

The 1954 diploma Associate of the Institute of Nuclear Physics awarded to Rangalal Bhattacharyya shows that the Institute was founded in 1949. It was then housed in the Palit Laboratory of the Department of Physics, Calcutta University.

The Institute, in its new building was, however, inaugurated on January 11, 1950. Since then this date is accepted as the Foundation Day.

The relation of the institute with the University of Calcutta

"The Institute grew out of the activities of the Palit Professor and therefore it was right that the Palit Governing Body was associated with the administration of the Institute. But as matters now stand, only Rs 32,000 is provided by the Palit fund which constitutes a very minute fraction of our total expenditure most of which is contributed by the Government of India. We want very much to retain our connection with the Palit Governing Body for historical and academic associations. But if this ceases, almost the whole direction of administration and management will pass on to the Government of India, which will somewhat impair the academic atmosphere. In our opinion, this will react unfavourably with the progress of the Institute, the limits of which it is difficult to foresee today. We, therefore, hope that the grants which we are receiving from the Palit Fund should be continued and Palit Professorship may remain in the Institute, subject to the condition inherent in the Palit Trust that the Professor will be absolutely free to work on his own line of research, provided it is "Nuclear Physics" ."

- Saha, on the occasion of laying the Foundation Stone of the Students' Hall of INP, 19 January 1956 said,

Types of Documents

- ▶ Correspondence
- ▶ Photographs
- ▶ Testimonials
- ▶ Diaries
- ▶ Manuscripts
- ▶ Reprints of Scientific Papers
- ▶ Reports
- ▶ Books
- ▶ Paper clippings
- ▶ Medals etc

Correspondences

About 3000 pages with 360 persons.

- ▶ Alphabetical (Surname)
- ▶ Yearwise (in the process)
- ▶ Subjectwise (spectrum of activities, in the process)
 1. Scientific
 2. National Planning
 3. Refugee Problem
 4. State Reorganisation
 5. Common Language
 6. Atomic Energy
 7. River Policy
 8. Damodar Valley Corporation
 9. University Grants Committee
 10. Autobiographical Notes
 11. Correspondence with family members: (a) Wife, Radharani Saha (b) Eldest son, Ajit Kumar Saha (c) Second Son, Ranajit Kumar Saha (d) First son-in-law, Kshudiram Saha (e) others.

How did we organize them?

Each alphabetically labelled folder is organized in three parts :

I. Catalogue of the letters contained therein. Example;

Bhabh/HJ-46-1(E)-1

-2

Bhabh/HJ-55-31A(Ecp)

II. Summary of the letters

place, designation of the Saha's correspondent during the period of correspondence, whether to or from Saha, a summary of the contents including bio-notes on the persons referred to. This part also gives the summary/subject of the letter a copy of which we have not preserved in our Archive. These are marked **.

III. Main body of the letters

treated as the master copy

Volume Names

- ▶ A,B
- ▶ C,D,E
- ▶ F.G
- ▶ H, I, J, K, L
- ▶ N Bohr, JC Ghosh, PK Kichlu
- ▶ HJ Bhabha, SS Bhatnagar
- ▶ M
- ▶ Nehru
- ▶ N, O, P, Q
- ▶ R
- ▶ S
- ▶ SN Sen, BN Srivastava, GR Toshniwal
- ▶ HN Russell and his correspondence with others on Saha.
- ▶ T-Z.
- ▶ Takamine & others
- ▶ AK Saha I
- ▶ AK Saha II
- ▶ Radharani Saha.

Two or three supplementary volumes containing assorted letters procured at a later time are in preparation. 90% of the matter is already digitized.

Reports

Here we have

1. Report of the Calendar Reform Committee, Govt of India, CSIR, 1955
2. National Planning Committee Series, Ed by KT Shah (Vora & Co Publ, 1947)
 - (a) River Training and Irrigation
 - (b) Power and Fuel.
3. Indian Scientific Mission (1944-45): Report of the visit to UK, USA and Canada (draft with corrections).

Scientific papers and other articles

Copies/originals of reprints.

Books and Treatises

Some of the books and treatises written by Saha are preserved under this section.

One of them is the original Volume of the **Principle of Relativity**, published by the **University of Calcutta** in 1920. Some Diagrams referred to in the text of Minkowski's paper are missing in the print. These have been added in the new edition of the book recently reprinted by the University.

Photographs and Testimonials

* Strong room articles

A large collection of family and group photographs where Meghnad Saha features are preserved here. They have been electronically stored , some of which can also be accessed through our website. Testimonials are electronically stored.

Diaries

* Strong room articles

- ▶ Note-book 1927
- ▶ Pocket Diary 1928-29, 1931, 1933, 1936(1 -2), 1940 (1-3), 1941, 1942 (1-2), 1943 (1-3), 1944, 1945 (1, 3), 1946, 1949, 1950, 1952.
- ▶ Table Diary 1944-47, 1953-54, 1955-56.
- ▶ Pocket Notebook 1945.
- ▶ Table Address Book 1946.
- ▶ Pocket Engagement Book 1954.
- ▶ Table Engagement Book 1954.
- ▶ Address Book, undated.

Most of these, except for the first few years, are sparsely written. A volume containing entries in the diaries of the first few years is to appear on the rack.

Articles in edited volumes which are no longer available in their current editions.

Unpublished travelogue (Kashmir), Autobiographical Notes (Minnette, Plaskett, Electoral pamphlet).

Access

Folders arranged alphabetically are preserved in the strong room to which no users are allowed.

E-access:

Presently we are taking steps to post the catalogue and the summary parts on our website.

Physical access:

However, for the benefit of the users, we keep on rack bound volumes containing copies of one or more of the alphabetically labelled folders. 18 such volumes are now ready.

We do not allow xeroxing from any of the bound volumes. Copies are to be made by the library staff from the loose sheets kept in the folders, subject to the authority's approval.

The End