

Commemorative Coins Issued in Sri Lanka and Their Symbolic Features of Communication (From 1957 to the end of 2021)

GAMAGE, UPEKSHA

Department of History and Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Ruhuna. E-mail: upeksha_gamage@yahoo.com

Abstract: Today, millions of people generally use currency as a mode of official communication and dissemination and, it has become a powerful and trusted aid material. Coins issued as a means of the transaction include various artistic expressions and are also used as a symbol of power. Coins issued by any state always represent different aspects of its society. It is acknowledged that the images, symbols, and legends inscribed in a coin, reflect the political, religious, cultural, and economic statuses. Among those are also coins that were issued to commemorate a particular event. These coins are identified as commemorative coins. From 1957 to 2021, the Central Bank of Ceylon has issued 68 commemorative coins of various denominations for 43 special events. When issuing commemorative coins related to special events, images related to that event are depicted on the coin. This study aimed to identify the symbolic communication features depicted on commemorative coins. This study is based on a field survey that facilitated obtaining data and information. The commemorative coins on display from 1957 to 2021 at the Central Bank of Ceylon Museum were studied. Published literature was critically reviewed. Commemorative coins issued based on special occasions can be divided into several themes. Many of these commemorative coins were issued to communicate political information. Even in the issuance of commemorative coins, the primary purpose was to communicate political information to the public. It can also be considered a mode of representation of the Sri Lankan identity that can be proudly communicated to the world.

Keywords: Central Bank, Commemorative coins, Images, Symbols, Legends

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Introduction

Early humans, who lived within a self-sufficient economic pattern, turned to the 'barter exchange' economic pattern with the surplus of commodities in production. As transactions that began with the barter system developed rapidly, its long-term consequence was introducing the unit of value identified

as ‘currency’. Currency is a unit of exchange used by every society for official communication and publicity, for the value of goods or services provided (Gamage *et al.*, 2019). Today, millions of people generally use currency as a mode of official communication and dissemination and, it has become a powerful and trusted aid material. The currency in circulation in the world is of two types, i.e., coins and notes. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a coin is a piece of plate made of an acceptable metal medium (The Oxford English Dictionary 1989: 454-455) denoted by an authority with a specific weight and a specific denominator. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines a coin as a rare piece of metal certified as a unit of value (The New Encyclopedia Britannica 2005: 438). In the Sri Sumangala Dictionary, the coin is defined as money (Sabdakosaya. A Sinhalese - Sinhalese Dictionary 1963: 262). The Webster Dictionary defines a coin as a usually flat piece of metal issued by a governmental authority as money (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coins>). The Cambridge Dictionary defines a coin as a small, round piece of metal, silver or copper-colored, used as money (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coin>). The Collins Dictionary (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/coin>) states a usually round piece of metal with a distinctive stamp and of a fixed value and weight issued by a government is considered as a coin.

Accordingly, a coin can be described as a piece of metal issued by a governing body with a specific weight and shape, marked with legends, symbols, and designs, for circulation in a given country. It is officially used to maintain the flow of funds in accordance with the monetary policy of a country and is circulated for transactions relating to goods and services.

Gold and silver alloy coins called ‘staters’ were introduced to the world for the first time around the 7th century in western Turkey. This marked the beginning of the use of coins. The Greeks developed the minting of coins that moved from Turkey to Greece through international trade relations, into a delicate art form. By 500 BCE, the Greeks began minting coins in all their colonies, identifying the need for a fair trading system to engage in trade without any hindrance. Later, the minting of coins gradually spread to other parts of the world as a medium to carry out transactions. Archaeological evidence suggests that the minting of coins had begun around the 3rd century BCE in Sri Lanka.

Coins issued as a means of the transaction have also been used as a symbol of wealth and power by incorporating a variety of artistic expressions on them. Accordingly, coins issued by any state always represent different aspects of its society. Therefore, it is acknowledged that, the images, symbols, and legends inscribed in a coin, reflect the political, religious, cultural, and economic statuses. This is reflected primarily by the direct featuring of various contemporary events in many ancient and modern coins. Among those are also coins that were issued to commemorate a particular event. For example, special coins were issued to celebrate various events in European countries, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These coins were identified as commemorative coins. It can be assumed that the purpose of issuing these coins was to establish a general opinion on some event deemed important by the authorities, among the nation’s public. From 1957 to 2021, the Central Bank of Ceylon has issued 68 commemorative coins of various denominations for 43 special events. When issuing commemorative coins related to special events, images related to that event are used on the obverse and reverse of the coin. These images often tend to depict historical information as well as contemporary social and cultural aspects. The research aims to understand the themes used in the issuance of commemorative coins and discuss how the images and symbols depicted on the obverse and reverse of the coins fit into those themes. The main purpose of this study was to identify the symbolic communication features found in commemorative coins.

Literary Review

One obvious characteristic of the study of coins is that coins can be accepted as a communicator able to disseminate certain ideas to the public (Hewitt, 1998). It is also one of the most popular

means of prominent messages of national identity to the public (Hewitt, 1998; Hewitte and Unwin, 2001). Therefore, commemorative coins issued in connection with special events in a country play a vital role as a powerful tool of communication. Numerous researches have been conducted on coins issued in Sri Lanka. But these researchers are limited to studies of coins circulating in ancient Sri Lanka. After the arrival of the Portuguese, the coins circulating in Ceylon in each of the bygone eras have undergone various changes to emerge in their current form. However, there has been minimal research on coins used from 1505 to date. The existing research also merely focuses on describing the images, legends, and symbols appearing on the obverse and reverse of the coins. Additionally, the research focused only on ancient coins and did not address the issue of commemorative coins issued in Sri Lanka.

Gunawardena (2011) describes the notes and coins issued after establishing the Central Bank of Ceylon. The author presents a brief description of coins and notes issued from 1957 to 2011 and details of commemorative coins issued up to that time. Details such as the year the commemorative coin was issued, its denomination and the metal it was issued are presented in a table. But the images and themes depicted on these coins are not mentioned in this study.

Silva (2000) has also presented a table with details of the year of Sri Lankan commemorative coins, denomination, shape, weight, and mintage. While the author has also included images observed on the obverse and reverse of the coins, it does not mention the communication features they represent.

Ratnasekera (2018) also pointed out only the physical appearance of the commemorative coins. The author presented these details as a table, including denomination, diameter, weight, shape, mintage year and place, and material they used to mint the coins.

Meanwhile, *Satahana* (2016) and *PuranayenRupiyalata* (2013) also briefly describe Sri Lanka's commemorative coins. These authors also point out only the physical appearance of the commemorative coins and include images of those coins. A brief description of the denomination, diameter, weight, shape, mintage year, place, and material of the coins are given.

Sallay (1986) pointed out a brief overview of commemorative coins issued up to 1981. The description indicates the year the coin was issued, denomination, diameter, weight, material, and the place where the coin was issued. The author has painted the front and back designs of the coins but has stopped mentioning the communication features they represent.

The reviewed literature explain only the physical appearance of the commemorative coins. Despite nothing that commemorative coins depict specific events, none of the above studies mentions the communication features they reflect. Commemorative coins are issued to commemorate institutions and individuals who have contributed to various special occasions, such as anniversaries and conferences of national and international importance. However, can the commemorative coins be used to convey a message to the public about Sri Lanka's national identity, historicity, unique individuals and institutions? Although many previous studies emphasise the physical appearance of the coins, they do not adequately address the communication features of the coins. Hence, this study mainly focused on filling this gap.

Aims and Methodology of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify the symbolic communication features of commemorative coins issued after the establishment of the Central Bank of Ceylon. It also aims to identify the special occasions for which these commemorative coins were issued and examine to what extent the symbols and images on the obverse and reverse of the coins fit the particular occasion. The research method used

here depends on a field survey. In obtaining data and information for this study, the commemorative coins on display at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Branch Museum were studied. Sixty-eight commemorative coins issued from 1957 to 2021 were studied there. The images and symbols on the obverse and reverse of the coins were observed and identified separately. The face value of the coins and the metals issued were studied. Journals articles, books published by the Central Bank, and sources on commemorative coins in other countries of the world and Sri Lanka were also examined. Reported data were analyzed by classifying, summarizing and tabulating.

Result and Findings

Historical Background of Commemorative Coins

Commemorative coins have been issued in different countries of the world for various reasons that are of national or international importance at certain times. A study of coin issuance and relevant information reveals that coins have been issued on special occasions throughout history. Accordingly, commemorative coins have been issued to commemorate various occasions such as anniversaries and conferences of national or international significance or to honour institutions and individuals who have played a significant role in recognized fields. It is clear from the past that coins generally have been used in addition to its intended purpose as a currency, as a propaganda tool to convey one's power to the people such as marking accession to the throne or various governments coming into power in the relevant era. But since the 19th and 20th centuries, specially designed coins, recognized as commemorative coins, have been issued for those celebrations, directly. The world's first commemorative coin was issued in 1892 by the United States to mark the 400th Anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus. The United Kingdom then issued a commemorative coin in 1935 to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V. The first Indian commemorative coin was issued in 1964 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru. Since then, several commemorative coins have been issued to celebrate the birthdays of public figures, government events or sporting events, anniversaries of historical events, or government organizations that have significantly contributed to society. In 1965, the Republics of the Soviet Union issued a commemorative coin commemorating the victory of World War II. As presented, commemorative coins have also been issued to mark important events based on national interests in other parts of the world. It can be considered that the first recorded commemorative coin of Sri Lanka was issued in 1957 after the establishment of the Central Bank of Ceylon. No record of pre-colonial or postcolonial commemorative coins has been found in Sri Lanka. The Monetary Law Act No. 58 of 1949 delegated the authority to issue currency to the Central Bank of Ceylon, and it has had the power to issue currency for circulation in Sri Lanka since. The first commemorative coin was issued in Sri Lanka in 1957 to mark the 2500th Anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha. Subsequently, the Central Bank of Ceylon issued commemorative coins to celebrate special occasions such as anniversaries, conferences, historical events, religious events, and international and national special occasions. The commemorative coins thus issued can be considered as souvenirs of the respective events.

Commemorative Coins Issued in Sri Lanka

The issuing of commemorative coins in Sri Lanka began in 1957, issued to mark a religious occasion. From 1957 to 2021, 68 commemorative coins were issued to celebrate 43 special events. Commemorative coins issued up to 2021 can be listed as follows.

Table 1: Commemorative coins issued from 1957 to 2021

| <i>Sr. No</i> | <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Metal</i> | <i>Circulating / non-circulating</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 5 | Silver | Circulation |
| 2 | 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 3 | 1968 | 2 nd World Food Congress | 2 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 4 | 1976 | 5 th Non-Aligned Summit Conference | 5 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 5 | 1976 | 5 th Non-Aligned Summit Conference | 2 | Nickel | Circulation |
| 6 | 1978 | J. R. Jayewardene - First Executive President | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 7 | 1978 | J. R. Jayewardene - First Executive President | 1 | Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 8 | 1981 | 50 Years of Universal Adult Franchise | 5 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 9 | 1981 | Mahaweli Development Scheme | 2 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 10 | 1987 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless | 10 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 11 | 1987 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless | 10 | Copper-Nickel | Frosted Proof |
| 12 | 1990 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 40 th Anniversary | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 13 | 1990 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 40 th Anniversary | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 14 | 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 500 | Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 15 | 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 100 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 16 | 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 17 | 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Frosted Proof |
| 18 | 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 19 | 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 | Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 20 | 1993 | AnubuduMihindu Jayanthi - 2300 Anniversary | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 21 | 1995 | United Nations Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 5 | Nickel-Brass | Circulation |
| 22 | 1995 | United Nations Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 5 | Nickel-Brass | Frosted Proof |
| 23 | 1995 | Food and Agricultural Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 2 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 24 | 1996 | United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 25 | 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 5000 | Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 26 | 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 27 | 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 10 | Bi-Metal, Outer ring Copper-Nickel Inner disc Nickel-Brass | Circulation |
| 28 | 1999 | Winner 1996 - Cricket World Cup | 1000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 29 | 1999 | Winner 1996 - Cricket World Cup | 5 | Nickel-Brass | Circulation |
| 30 | 1999 | Sri Lanka Army - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Nickel-plated steel | Frosted Proof |
| 31 | 1999 | Sri Lanka Army - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Nickel-plated steel | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 32 | 2000 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 33 | 2000 | Sri Lanka Navy - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Frosted Proof |
| 34 | 2000 | Sri Lanka Navy - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Nickel-plated steel | Brilliant Uncirculated |

| <i>Sr. No</i> | <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Metal</i> | <i>Circulating / non-circulating</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 35 | 2001 | Colombo Plan - 50 th Anniversary | 2 | Copper-Nickel | Circulation |
| 36 | 2001 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Copper-Nickel | Frosted Proof |
| 37 | 2003 | Syamopasampadawa (PHRA Upali Nahimi) - 250 th Anniversary | 5 | Nickel-Brass | Circulation |
| 38 | 2003 | Syamopasampadawa (Weliwita Sri Saranankara Sangaraja Mahimi) - 250 th Anniversary | 5 | Nickel-Brass | Circulation |
| 39 | 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 2000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 40 | 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 1500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 41 | 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 5 | Brass-plated steel | Circulation |
| 42 | 2007 | Runner up 2007 - Cricket World Cup | 1000 | Nickel-plated steel | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 43 | 2007 | Runner up 2007 - Cricket World Cup | 5 | Brass-plated steel | Circulation |
| 44 | 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Nickel-plated steel | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 45 | 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Nickel-plated steel | Frosted Proof |
| 46 | 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 2 | Nickel-plated steel | Circulation |
| 47 | 2009 | Sri Lanka Army - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 | Silver | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 48 | 2009 | Sri Lanka Army - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 | Copper-Nickel | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 49 | 2009 | Bicentennial celebrations of Sri Lanka Customs | 200 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 50 | 2010 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 60 th Anniversary | 5000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 51 | 2011 | Ananda College, Colombo - 125 th Anniversary | 2000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 52 | 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 1000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 53 | 2011 | People's Bank - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Gold Plated Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 54 | 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 10 | Nickel-plated steel | Circulation |
| 55 | 2011 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 60 th Anniversary | 2 | Nickel-plated steel | Circulation |
| 56 | 2012 | Sri Lanka - Japan Diplomatic Relations - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 | Nickel-plated steel | Frosted Proof (one side color print) |
| 57 | 2012 | 100 Years of Scouting in Sri Lanka | 2 | Nickel-plated steel | Circulation |
| 58 | 2014 | Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala -150 th Birth Anniversary | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 59 | 2014 | Bank of Ceylon - 75 th Anniversary | 5 | Brass-plated steel | Circulation |
| 60 | 2015 | Colombo Municipal Council - 150 th Anniversary | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 61 | 2015 | Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka | 500 | Silver | Frosted Proof |
| 62 | 2017 | Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo - 100 th Anniversary | 2000 | Silver & Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 63 | 2017 | Ceylon Tea - 150 th Anniversary | 10 | Stainless Steel | Circulation |
| 64 | 2018 | Sri Lanka Signal Corps - 75 th Anniversary | 10 | Stainless Steel | Circulation |

| <i>Sr. No</i> | <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Metal</i> | <i>Circulating / non-circulating</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 65 | 2020 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 70 th Anniversary | 20 | Aluminum Bronze | Brilliant Uncirculated |
| 66 | 2020 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 70 th Anniversary | 20 | Nickel-plated steel | Circulation |
| 67 | 2021 | Sri Lanka - China Diplomatic Relations - 65 th Anniversary and Communist Party of China 100 th Anniversary | 1000 | Gold | Frosted Proof |
| 68 | 2021 | Sri Lanka - China Diplomatic Relations - 65 th Anniversary and Communist Party of China 100 th Anniversary | 1000 | Silver | Frosted Proof |

Source: Field Survey - 2021

The table above shows that these coins were issued in different denominations and minted using different metals. Regarding the denomination of coins, 13 coins in 1 rupee, 8 coins in 2 rupees, 10 coins in 10 rupees, and 7 coins in 500 rupees were issued. 11 coins of 5 and 1000 rupees each have been issued. One of 20, 100, 200, and 1500 rupees coins were also issued while 3 coins in 2000 rupees and 2 in 5000 rupees denominations were issued respectively.

The coins had been minted using metals such as gold, silver, bronze, nickel, brass, steel, and alloys. 28% of all commemorative coins issued are made of silver. 25% were made of copper-nickel. Coins minted using nickel-plated steel made up 17% of the coins issued, and nickel-brass coins made up 9% out of the total number. Gold was used to mint a mere 6% of the coins. 5% were brass-plated steel, and 3% were stainless steel. Coins are made of aluminum-bronze, and nickel was at 1% each. Nickel-plated steel and copper-nickel metals are often used to make commemorative coins issued for circulation in Sri Lanka. The value of the metal from which the coins are made affects the value of the commemorative coins. Also, the importance of the event being celebrated and the antiquity of the coin also determines the value of the commemorative coins.

Commemorative coins issued in Sri Lanka are printed by authorized coin and note printing companies in foreign countries. These include Britain, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Japan, France, and China. However, most commemorative coins were minted at the British Royal Mint. The Central Bank of Ceylon has issued commemorative coins of two types. Namely, Circulation Standard Commemorative Coins and Un-Circulation Standard Commemorative Coins. Of the 68 commemorative coins issued by the Central Bank from 1957 to 2021, 44% were issued for circulation, while 56% were issued under Un-circulating legal tenders. A special feature of minting commemorative coins is that they are not re-minted and issued after the first time it was minted.

Un-Circulation Standard Commemorative Coins

These commemorative coins are not used as ordinary currency but have a legal denomination inscribed. These coins are issued to be kept as souvenirs, to be given as gifts, to be displayed or to be sold. Events chosen for coin issuance are often selected based on the market rather than events that are important to the country. Due to the high demand for coins, they generally sell out in a short time. The metal composition used to make coins is also considered in determining the price of the coins. Also, the importance of the event being celebrated and the antiquity of the coin also determine the value of the commemorative coins. These coins are always sold for more than their face value. Gold and silver are often used in the issuance of these coins. Commemorative coins that are not used for circulation are

issued under certain special conditions. Namely, Frosted Proof², Brilliant Uncirculated³, Multicolor⁴ and Selective Plated⁵ (Ratnasekera 2018: 171).

Circulation Standard Commemorative Coins

These commemorative coins are issued with a face value similar to that of ordinary currency. They are in circulation in parallel with other coins made of metals of lesser value. Metals such as copper, nickel, brass, steel, and aluminum have been used to make these coins.

Events of the Commemorative coins

According to the commemorative coins issued from 1957 to 2021, there were 43 commemorative events chosen to be featured. The first Sri Lankan commemorative coin was issued in 1957 to mark the 2500th Anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha. Since then, the Central Bank of Ceylon has issued commemorative coins for international and national special occasions. When commemorative coins are issued, the focus is on whether it marks an important milestone in society, either locally or internationally, or whether it is an important occasion for the well-being of society, or, in the case of an individual, if it is a person who has played an important role for the well-being of the community. Sri Lanka has issued coins covering a wide range of topics, including religious events, historical events, events of regional significance, personality representations, corporate celebrations, and other special occasions. The commemorative coins issued so far based on the occasion of the celebration can be shown in a table as follows.

Table 2: Commemorative coins according to the ceremonial events

| <i>Sr. No</i> | <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 5, 1 |
| 2 | 1968 | 2 nd World Food Congress | 2 |
| 3 | 1976 | 5 th Non-Aligned Summit Conference | 5, 2 |
| 4 | 1978 | J. R. Jayewardene - First Executive President | 1 |
| 5 | 1981 | 50 Years of Universal Adult Franchise | 5 |
| 6 | 1981 | Mahaweli Development Scheme | 2 |
| 7 | 1987 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless | 10 |
| 8 | 1990 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 40 th Anniversary | 500 |
| 9 | 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 500, 100 |
| 10 | 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 |
| 11 | 1993 | Anubudu Mihindu Jayanthi - 2300 Anniversary | 500 |
| 12 | 1995 | United Nations Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 5 |
| 13 | 1995 | Food and Agricultural Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 14 | 1996 | United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |
| 15 | 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 5000, 1000, 10 |
| 16 | 1999 | Winner 1996 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 |
| 17 | 1999 | Sri Lanka Army - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |
| 18 | 2000 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 19 | 2000 | Sri Lanka Navy - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |
| 20 | 2001 | Colombo Plan - 50 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 21 | 2001 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |
| 22 | 2003 | Syamopasampadawa (PHRA Upali Nahimi) - 250 th Anniversary | 5 |
| 23 | 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 2000, 1500, 5 |
| 24 | 2007 | Runner up 2007 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 |

| <i>Sr. No</i> | <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 25 | 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1000, 2 |
| 26 | 2009 | Sri Lanka Army - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 27 | 2009 | Bicentennial celebrations of Sri Lanka Customs | 200 |
| 28 | 2010 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 60 th Anniversary | 5000 |
| 29 | 2011 | Ananda College, Colombo - 125 th Anniversary | 2000 |
| 30 | 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 1000,10 |
| 31 | 2011 | People's Bank - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 32 | 2011 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 60 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 33 | 2012 | Sri Lanka - Japan Diplomatic Relations - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 34 | 2012 | 100 Years of Scouting in Sri Lanka | 2 |
| 35 | 2014 | Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala - 150 th Birth Anniversary | 500 |
| 36 | 2014 | Bank of Ceylon - 75 th Anniversary | 5 |
| 37 | 2015 | Colombo Municipal Council - 150 th Anniversary | 500 |
| 38 | 2015 | Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka | 500 |
| 39 | 2017 | Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo - 100 th Anniversary | 2000 |
| 40 | 2017 | Ceylon Tea - 150 th Anniversary | 10 |
| 41 | 2018 | Sri Lanka Signal Corps - 75 th Anniversary | 10 |
| 42 | 2020 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 70 th Anniversary | 20 |
| 43 | 2021 | Sri Lanka - China Diplomatic Relations - 65 th Anniversary and Communist Party of China 100 th Anniversary | 1000 |

Field Survey - 2021

Discussion

Thematic of Commemorative Coins

Commemorative coins have been issued based on depictions of events and special occasions of international or national importance. Those celebrations can be categorized as follows under several themes. The table below shows the occasions when commemorative coins were issued under those themes and the value of coins issued for them.

Table 3: Commemorative coins issued under the thematic

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Religious | | |
| 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 5, 1 |
| 1993 | Anubudu Mihindu Jayanthi - 2300 Anniversary | 500 |
| 2003 | Syamopasampadawa - 250 th Anniversary | 5, 5 |
| 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 2000, 1500, 5 |
| 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 1000,10 |
| 2014 | Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala - 150 th Birth Anniversary | 500 |
| 2015 | Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka | 500 |
| United Nations Organizations | | |
| 1968 | 2 nd World Food Congress | 2 |
| 1995 | United Nations Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 5, 5 |
| 1995 | Food and Agricultural Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 1996 | United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Politics | | |
| 1976 | 5 th Non-Aligned Summit Conference | 5, 2 |
| 1978 | J. R. Jayewardene - First Executive President | 1, 1 |
| 1981 | 50 Years of Universal Adult Franchise | 5 |
| 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1, 1, 1, 1 |
| 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 5000, 1000, 10 |
| 2012 | Sri Lanka - Japan Diplomatic Relations - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 2015 | Colombo Municipal Council - 150 th Anniversary | 500 |
| 2021 | Sri Lanka - China Diplomatic Relations - 65 th Anniversary and Communist Party of China 100th Anniversary | 1000, 1000 |
| Development | | |
| 1981 | Mahaweli Development Scheme | 2 |
| 1987 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless | 10, 10 |
| 2001 | Colombo Plan - 50 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 2017 | Ceylon Tea - 150 th Anniversary | 10 |
| Economics & Financial | | |
| 1990 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 40 th Anniversary | 500, 500 |
| 2000 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1000, 1000, 2 |
| 2009 | Bicentennial celebrations of Sri Lanka Customs | 200 |
| 2010 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 60 th Anniversary | 5000 |
| 2011 | People's Bank - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 |
| 2014 | Bank of Ceylon - 75 th Anniversary | 5 |
| 2020 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 70 th Anniversary | 20, 20 |
| Sports | | |
| 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 500, 100 |
| 1999 | Winner 1996 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 |
| 2007 | Runner up 2007 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 |
| Military | | |
| 1999 | Sri Lanka Army - 50 th Anniversary | 1, 1 |
| 2000 | Sri Lanka Navy - 50 th Anniversary | 1, 1 |
| 2001 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 50 th Anniversary | 1 |
| 2009 | Sri Lanka Army - 60 th Anniversary | 1000, 1000 |
| 2011 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 60 th Anniversary | 2 |
| 2018 | Sri Lanka Signal Corps - 75 th Anniversary | 10 |
| Education | | |
| 2011 | Ananda College, Colombo - 125 th Anniversary | 2000 |
| 2017 | Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo - 100 th Anniversary | 2000 |
| Other | | |
| 2012 | 100 Years of Scouting in Sri Lanka | 2 |

Source: Field Survey - 2021

Symbolic features of Communication

The obverse and reverse of the commemorative coins depicted images and symbols typical of each occasion. The images and symbols on the obverse and reverse of the commemorative coins can be distinguished as follows.

Table 4: Images and symbols depicted on the obverse and reverse of commemorative coins

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Obverse</i> | <i>Reverse</i> |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|--|
| | Religious | | | |
| 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 5 | Anuradhapura Moonstone The numeral 2500 at the center | Jasmine flower design with lotus flower background |
| 1957 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2500 th Anniversary | 1 | Dhamma Chakra, Stupa | Pineapple motif (Annasi Mala is a traditional Sinhalese design) |
| 1993 | Anubudu Mihindu Jayanthi - 2300 Anniversary | 500 | Dhamma Chakka, King Devanampivatissa with bow and a deer, at the Missaka Pabbata | Bodhi Tree |
| 2003 | Syamopasampadawa - 250 th Anniversary | 5 | Portrait of monk | |
| 2003 | Syamopasampadawa - 250 th Anniversary | 5 | Portrait of monk | |
| 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 2000, 1500 | Siddhartha, after his birth in Lumbini, took seven steps under which seven lotus blossoms | A lake with lotus, Dharma Chakra |
| 2006 | Buddha Jayanthi - 2550 th Anniversary | 5 | Sri Pada Mountain, Dharma Chakra | |
| 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 1000 | Bodhi tree with railing | Dharma Chakra |
| 2011 | Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - 2600 Anniversary | 10 | Dharma Chakra | |
| 2014 | Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala - 150 th Birth Anniversary | 500 | Portrait of Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala | |
| 2015 | Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka | 500 | His Holiness Pope Francis | Official logo for the Pope Francis |
| | United Nations Organizations | | | |
| 1968 | 2 nd World Food Congress | 2 | Statue of King Parakramabahu the Great, on either side by ears of paddy | |
| 1995 | United Nations Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 5 | Official 50 th - anniversary logo of the UNO | |
| 1995 | Food and Agricultural Organization - 50 th Anniversary | 2 | Oblate logo of the FAO at the center, FAO theme 'Food for All' | |
| 1996 | United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Official 50 th - anniversary logo of the UNICEF | Traditional Sinhalese designs - Pineapple motif, <i>Liyavela</i> art |

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Obverse</i> | <i>Reverse</i> |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--|
| | Politics | | | |
| 1976 | 5 th Non-Aligned Summit Conference | 5, 2 | Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall | |
| 1978 | J. R. Jayewardene - First Executive President | 1 | Logo of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka | President His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene facing left |
| 1981 | 50 Years of Universal Adult Franchise | 5 | Original Parliament building | |
| 1992 | R. Premadasa - Executive Presidency - 3 rd Anniversary | 1 | Portrait of Sri Lanka President H.E. Ranasinghe Premadasa | Two traditional Sinhala lions with swords face each other, President's flag, traditional Sinhala <i>Liyavela</i> artwork |
| 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 5000 | Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara | National Flag of Sri Lanka |
| 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Famous Lion sculpture found at Anuradhapura | National Flag of Sri Lanka, traditional Sinhala <i>Liyavela</i> artwork |
| 1998 | Sri Lanka regaining Independence - 50 th Anniversary | 10 | Temple of Tooth Relic | |
| 2012 | Sri Lanka - Japan Diplomatic Relations - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 | Upper Kotmale Hydro-power Project | Insignia for the 60 th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Japan |
| 2015 | Colombo Municipal Council - 150 th Anniversary | 500 | Colombo Town Hall | |
| 2021 | Sri Lanka - China Diplomatic Relations - 65 th Anniversary and Communist Party of China 100 th Anniversary | 1000 | Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapakse theater, National flag of China on the left and Sri Lanka on the right. | |
| | Development | | | |
| 1981 | Mahaweli Development Scheme | 2 | Victoria dam | |
| 1987 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless | 10 | International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) logo | |
| 2001 | Colombo Plan - 50 th Anniversary | 2 | official logo of the Colombo Plan | |
| 2017 | Ceylon Tea - 150 th Anniversary | 10 | Logo of the Ceylon Tea | |
| | Economics & Financial | | | |
| 1990 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 40 th Anniversary | 500 | Logo of the Central Bank | Older Central Bank building with three towers |

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Obverse</i> | <i>Reverse</i> |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|---|
| 2000 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Sun in the center within an annulus around, lotus flower | New Central Bank building |
| 2008 | Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) - 50 th Anniversary | 1000, 2 | Two upholding palms, office employee, a tea plucker and a garment factory employee | |
| 2009 | Bicentennial celebrations of Sri Lanka Customs | 200 | Logo of Sri Lanka Customs | New building of Sri Lanka Customs |
| 2010 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 60 th Anniversary | 5000 | Crest of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka | Banyan tree |
| 2011 | People's Bank - 50 th Anniversary | 1000 | Crest of the People's Bank | |
| 2014 | Bank of Ceylon - 75 th Anniversary | 5 | Official logo of Bank of Ceylon 75 th Anniversary | |
| 2020 | Central Bank of Sri Lanka - 70 th Anniversary | 20 | Head Office building of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka | |
| Sports | | | | |
| 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 500 | A seated figure of 'Kuvera' | Logo of the SAF Games |
| 1991 | 5 th South Asian Federation Games - Colombo | 100 | Sun, Moon, Lion, Elephant | Logo of the SAF Games |
| 1999 | Winner 1996 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 | Cricket World Cup trophy | Two cricketers, a batsman, and a wicket-keeper. |
| 2007 | Runner up 2007 - Cricket World Cup | 1000, 5 | A bowler | Lion in the National Flag |
| Military | | | | |
| 1999 | Sri Lanka Army - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka Army | Helmeted soldier with a gun hung behind, holding a child with the right hand, on the left hand of the soldier a peace dove. |
| 2000 | Sri Lanka Navy - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka Navy | Gunboat of the Sri Lanka Navy |
| 2001 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 50 th Anniversary | 1 | Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka Air Force | Three planes used by the Sri Lanka Air Force |
| 2009 | Sri Lanka Army - 60 th Anniversary | 1000 | Soldier holding the National flag of Sri Lanka with one hand and his weapon with the other hand, map of Sri Lanka | Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka Army |
| 2011 | Sri Lanka Air Force - 60 th Anniversary | 2 | Logo of the Sri Lanka Air Force 60 th Anniversary, Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka Air Force, four planes used by the Sri Lanka Air Force | |

| <i>Year of issue</i> | <i>Ceremonial Events</i> | <i>Face value (Rs.)</i> | <i>Obverse</i> | <i>Reverse</i> |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| 2018 | Sri Lanka Signal Corps - 75 th Anniversary | 10 | Logo of the 75 th Anniversary of the Sri Lanka Signal Corps | |
| | Education | | | |
| 2011 | Ananda College, Colombo - 125 th Anniversary | 2000 | drawing of Ananda Viharaya with rays, Portrait of Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala Thera (1827-1911), Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera (1823-1890), and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) as founders of Ananda | The Ananda College crest, decorative floral designs |
| 2017 | Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo - 100 th Anniversary | 2000 | The Portrait of Selestina Jeremias Dias | Visakha Vidyalaya school logo (traditional oil lamp) |
| | Other | | | |
| 2012 | 100 Years of Scouting in Sri Lanka | 2 | Logo of the World Scout Movement | |

Source: Field Survey - 2021

Focusing on the obverse and reverse of the coin, it is clear that the obverse is always illustrated with a symbol or marking associated with the commemoration relating to the issuance of the coin. Some coins also have a legend associated with the occasion on the obverse of the coin. Also mentioned is the time of the celebration shown. The reverse shows the face value of the coin. It is denoted in numerals and mentioned in the Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages. Below that is the year the coin was issued. The word 'Sri Lanka' is featured on the upper perimeter of the coin in the Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages to indicate that the Government of Sri Lanka issued it. In addition, some coins on their reverse also include images related to the occasion. Now, let us discuss the communication features represented by the images and symbols used on the coins to mark various occasions.

Commemorative coins have often given prominence to carvings and sculptures. The Moon-stone is one of them. It is a masterpiece of Sri Lankan stone carving and is one of the best examples of Sri Lankan art. Scholar opinion has associated it with Buddhism. Therefore the moonstone was used for the first coin issued to commemorate the Buddha Jayanthi as it is a symbol of Buddhist culture. The stupa, which is considered a religious creation, is also depicted on commemorative coins. A stupa is an architectural masterpiece built as a burial place or a receptacle for sacred objects. It represents the Buddha, especially through the pandal carvings on the Sanchi stupa in India. The Dhamma Chakra and the Bodhi tree are also featured on these coins to symbolize the Buddha. A protective fence erected around the Bodhi tree is used to symbolize its religious significance. It is also reminiscent of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura. The birth of Siddhartha is depicted on the commemorative coin issued on the occasion of the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi. These depictions of commemorative coins are able to evoke Buddhist sentiments and reverence of the Buddha in the minds of users.

The image of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, a masterpiece of sculpture, is also considered to be a representation of the Buddha. The original sculpture is currently on display at the Colombo National Museum. Although there are various theories for the masculine statue carved into a small rock near the

Parakrama Samudra reservoir that is a display of great talent, it is generally regarded as a sculpture of King Parakramabahu the Great I (1153-1186 AD). The reign of Parakramabahu is the best example in the history of Sri Lanka to reflect the agricultural development that marked the self-sufficient economy of the Polonnaruwa period. The statue was used for coins to emphasize the national effort to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production during the early 1970s. Various traditional decorative designs can also be seen on commemorative signs such as rows of swans, floral designs, pineapple flowers (*Annasi Mala*), and flower designs. Swan, considered as a mark of fortune, can be seen everywhere in the art of Hindu and Sinhala decorations. In Sinhala decoration art, *Wela* or *Liyawela* (botanical decoration) are two segments consisting of individual flowers or leaves or rhythmically arranged floral or leaf elements (Coomaraswamy 1962: 84). The lion is also commonly depicted in Sinhala art. The lion also signifies ancient man in Sinhalese mythology (Coomaraswamy 1962: 84). The lion symbolizes the identity of Sri Lanka as a nation. Lions are also depicted on commemorative coins in reminiscence of the Sinhala nation and the national flag. Eternity is symbolized by the use of sun and moon symbols on coins. The eight auspicious symbols, i.e., the white parasol, the white conch shell, the two golden fish, the knot of eternity, the vase of great treasures, the victor banner, the lotus flower, and the eight-spoked wheel, are used to feature prosperity, fertility, perfection, and victory. To date, these symbols are considered auspicious signs in Sri Lankan culture. Ancient coins that were in circulation in Ceylon and India also bear these markings. The Kuvera concept symbolizing wealth and prosperity is embedded in the coins, reminiscent of the features of the medieval gold coin on its reverse.

The Temple of the Tooth Relic and the Octagon (*Paththirippuwa*), which are of religious, and historical value, are also featured prominently. The Temple of the Tooth Relic is considered to be one of the works of art of the Kandyan period, where the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha is housed and is one of the main attractions for both local and foreign tourists. The *Sri Pada* mountain is also a major religious site revered by Buddhists. Buddhists believe that when the Buddha visited Sri Lanka for the second time, the sacred foot imprint of the Buddha was left there at that time. Past rulers have used coins to show their power to the people since their ascension. They have depicted their image on coins and used them for circulation following ascension to power in order to display this to the public. That is evident when taking into consideration the world's oldest coins⁶. Accordingly, J.R Jayewardene, who was elected the first Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the second executive President, also featured their bust on coins. It can be seen as a more recent and modern attempt to establish and express the political power.

Commemorative coins with the image of Srimath Angarika Dharmapala and his holiness the Pope have been issued in appreciation of their service. Also, commemorative coins with the image of Ananda College founders Rev. Sri Sumangala Thera of Hikkaduwa, Rev. Migetuwatta Gunananda Thera, Sir Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, and Celestina Jeremias Dias have been issued in appreciation of their service. Rev. Upali Thera was the one who took the lead in establishing the higher ordination of Bhikkus of Sri Lanka through the Mahasangha from Siam. Likewise, Sangharaja Welivita Sri Saranankara Thera rendered a great service to the country by taking steps in 1753 to re-establish the Upasampada in Sri Lanka. Commemorative coins have also depicted the development of Sri Lanka. A sluice gate dam was featured to depict the Victoria Dam of the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project, a mass project in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's diplomatic relations with Japan after 1952 set the stage for establishing a lasting friendship. This secured for Sri Lanka to obtain funding for numerous development projects. The Upper Kotmale Hydro Power Project in the Nuwara Eliya District of the Central Province of Sri Lanka was funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. This is, to date, one of the largest hydropower projects in Sri Lanka. The United Nations General Assembly

declared 1987 as the International Year of Housing for the Homeless and took effective action nationally and internationally to improve housing for the homeless. The commemorative coins issued on the Anniversary of the Armed Forces also depict symbols and images symbolizing the services rendered by the Armed Forces to maintain national security, law, and order. An armed soldier holding a child on the right and a dove on the left is a loved symbol of peace in the island after thirty years of insurgency in recent memory. The images of the soldier holding Sri Lanka's national flag in one hand and his weapon in the other, while the Sri Lankan map features on the background symbolizes he will protect the country's territorial integrity. The ship on the water illustrates how Sri Lanka will be protected in the ocean, while the illustration of the aircraft symbolizes Sri Lanka will be protected in the skies as well.

Images of a tea plucker, an office employee, and a garment factory employee are placed between the hands. It symbolizes the care and protection offered to all members of the Provident Fund. They represent the economic sectors of agriculture, industry, and services. A few commemorative coins depict the Bandaranaike International Conference Hall, the Original Parliament Building, the Colombo Municipal Council, the Central Bank Head Office Building, and other buildings for memorial purposes. Commemorative coins were issued for Sri Lanka's world cup cricket victory and became runners-up using a batter, a keeper, and a bowler in 1999 and 2007. Many of these coins use a logo to mark the occasion. There are also logos designed for the occasion. Those logos are often unique to each institution or organization. Those logos are made up of signs, symbols, and images that fit the occasion. Of these, the issuance of coins for half-century celebrations seems to have become quite popular. Commemorative coins were issued continuously from 1995 to 2001 to coincide with the 50th-anniversary celebrations. Of the 13 coins issued between 1995 and 2001, with the exception of two issued for the Cricket World Cup, 11 were to mark 50th anniversary commemorations. Therefore, the coins often bear the logo of the celebration. Commemorative coins issued based on special occasions or events can be divided into several themes. Most of the commemorative coins issued from 1957 to 2021 deal with political events. This is around 21% of the coins issued. Meanwhile, 18% of the coins had been issued for religious occasions, and 17% of the commemorative coins depicted economic and financial issues. 14% of commemorative coins were issued on the theme of the Armed Forces and were related to security. 9% of coins issued were for sports and entertainment. 8% each of the coins issued depicted the work of the United Nations and represented the beginning and continuous development activities in Sri Lanka. 3% and 2% coins were issued for school anniversaries and other events, respectively. This can be shown in statistical analysis as shown below.

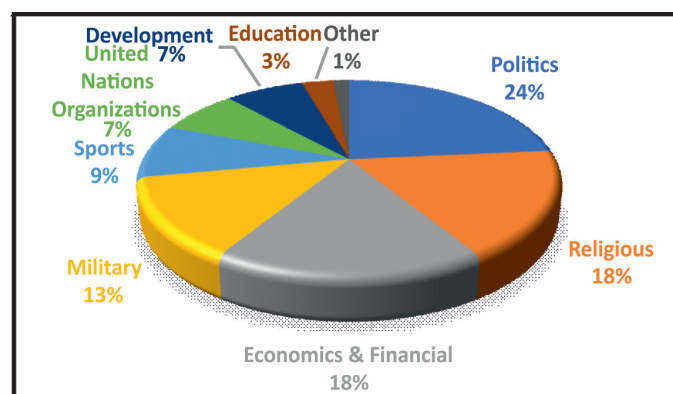


Figure 1: Themes communicating in commemorative coins

This shows that even in the issuance of commemorative coins, the primary purpose was communicating political information to the public.

Conclusion

The images and symbols presented on the commemorative coins issued under various themes were perhaps expected to reveal to the world Sri Lanka's national identity and instil a sense of pride in the minds of the people of Sri Lanka. It can also be considered a mode of representation of the Sri Lankan identity that can be proudly communicated to the world. Recording of data in various methods secures information for future purposes. In this case, the coins represent nationally specific information, which in one way records the data and attracts public attention. Circulation Standard Commemorative Coins are also minted for general circulation, which also creates more public awareness of the event.

Similarly, today, commemorative coins can be considered as part of the national culture and economy. It is conceivable that commemorative coins have been issued to mark a special occasion that has significantly impacted Sri Lankan society. When issuing commemorative coins, coins are issued under each theme, using the images, symbols, and legends, summarising the event or events associated with the commemoration. It can also be concluded that profound communication is conveyed through the use of images, symbols, and legends to reflect the theme conveyed through the coin.

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Notes

1. Electrum is a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver. The first metal coins were made of electrum and date to the end of the 6th century BCE. This metal is found naturally in some rivers in western Turkey.
2. The surface of frosted proof coins is not shiny and has a very delicate rough texture.
3. The surface of the brilliant uncirculated coins takes on a shiny like a mirror.
4. Multicolor coins are completely colored on one or both sides.
5. Only a limited areas on the surface of the selective plated coin are painted or coated with another metal.
6. The Kings and the Emperors of the ancient times used coins as a means of communicating personal and official messages to their subjects and the world around them, using the images and the texts on the coins. E.g. Ancient Greek, Roman, and Indian coins (Kushan, Indi-Greek and Gupta emperors) and Polonnaru period coins in Sri Lanka.

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