CHAPTER VII

"EPilogue"
Lingayat Religion and Philosophy have a distinct place in the Religious History of India. Lingayat Religion and philosophy comes under Shaiva School of Philosophy and are known as Veerashaiva Religion and Philosophy popularly called Veerashaivism. Veerashaivism is not merely a sect and a mode of worship but a regular system. Lord Basaveshwar gave to Veerashaivism a prophetic turn and a popular appeal.

*Lingadharma* is a distinctive feature of Veerashaiva Religion. It is on account of this *Lingadharma* this religion is called Lingayat Religion and its followers, Lingayats. The *Linga* concept of Veerashaivism is quite different from the rest of the Shaiva concept. The Linga worn on the body and worshipped by the Lingayats is called *ista Linga* as against the *Sthavara Linga* worshipped by other Shaivites.

Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are indigenous religions of India. Like these religions Veerashaivism or Lingayatism is a native religion of India. Some scholars say that Veerashaivism or Lingayatism is a branch of *Shaiva* religion, while other say that it is a separate religion. As regards the founder of the Lingayats religion, there are three opinions. According to one view, this religion was founded by Lord Shiva himself. It is a belief. The second view is that, this religion was founded by Panchacharyas (Five great Acharyas) This is a traditional view. Third view is, this religion was founded by Lord Basaveshwar. (in the 12th
century.) Any how Basaveshwar played an important role in the 12th century and infused a new life in the movement of this religion.

Basaveshwar was a saint, statesman and an ardent social reformer in the twelfth century in a region now included partly in the present Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra states, and mostly in the Karnataka state. He started a reform movement marked by its revolt against the caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmins maintaining that all people are born equal and die equal. Basaveshwara played a significant role in the religious and cultural history of Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra for about four decades in the twelfth century, approximately from 1132 to 1167 A.D. His thoughts, teachings, ideals and actions have exercised powerful influence on the generations of men and women in a conspicuous sector of the society to the present day.

Lingayat community is a minor but important community in India. At present majority of Lingayats are situated in Karnataka, Southern Maharashtra and west Andhra Pradesh. In Kolhapur district a number of Lingayat families are founded and following trade activities mainly.

Kolhapur district came into existence in 1949. Earlier Kolhapur was the seat of Maratha Chhatrapati since 1710 A.D. Even though, Karnataka is the original place of Lingayats, now Lingayats are found in the district of Kolhapur, Sangli, Solapur and Latur districts in large numbers. The early history of the spread of Lingayat religion from Kalayani to Kolhapur is interesting and fascinating one. Kolhapur, right from the 12th century onwards was a stronghold of Lingayat religion. Because, in Kolhapur district we
can come across Allama Prabhu Mandir, Alate which was in existence since 12th century. This place is situated in Hatkanangle taluka of Kolhapur district and 18 Kms. east of Kolhapur. This Allama Prabhu was a contemporary of Basaveswvar and took part in the discussion of Anubhav Mantap. He came from Kalayani, (the original place of Lingayatism, where Basaveshwar founded the religion) to Alate, where he lighted a flame which is the earliest evidence of Lingayats centre in Kolhapur district. Another early centre of Lingayatism is Siddhagiri Matha, eight Kms. south of Kolhapur, which is established in the 13th century. These two places were the earliest Lingayat settlements. Even, Dr.R.C.Dhere's opinion is that, Lingayat came into contact with Maharashtra in the 12th century during the period of Yadavas of Devgiri.

Philosophy and practices of Lingayat religion is distinct from other religion. The Veerashaiva Philosophy is called Sakti-Visistadvaita, a term which means the non-duality of God. The Satsthala or the six stages of approximation towards Union with the Siva, are Bhakti, Mahesa, Prasada, Pranalinga, Sarana and Aikya. Astavarana and Panchachar has very important place in Lingayat practice religion.

In brief, Lingayat religion and community is prominent since the 12th century and played a vital role in the cultural life of South Maharashtra and Karnataka state, It is ideal religion and maintains its special identity and features even today.

Kolhapur district which came into existence in 1949, is one of the advanced district of Maharashtra in the domain of agriculture, industry, co-operative and education. Lingayat community in
Kolhapur district is a minor one but occupies important place in the cultural and economic life of Kolhapur district. Lingayats of Kolhapur are mainly professing trade business. This is rich community and observing all religious rites prevailing in the Lingayat community all over India. According to the census of 1911, the population of Lingayats in Kolhapur district as 72,350. Right from the 13th century Lingayat community was in existence in the area of Kolhapur. Lingayats have their own priests called Jangams, who are found in the Kolhapur district also. These Jangams look after the day to day religious rituals of the family of the Lingayat community. The Kolhapur Lingayats can speak generally Marathi and Kannada but now-a-days a new generation would speak English and Hindi also. All Lingayats observe fast on Shivaratri (i.e. Night of Lord Shiva). Generally Lingayats are vegetarian even though now-a-days some are non-vegetarians. Lingayats celebrate the ceremony of Basaveshwar Jayanti, Akkamahadevi Jayanti etc. on large scale in Kolhapur district. Marriage system in Lingayat community is simple. Lingayats have adult marriages at present. Lingayat community of Kolhapur district is changing on modern lines as the rest of communities but it keeps their own separateness and distinct identity.

The Lingayat religion was a well organised movement which spread throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka and the neighbouring areas like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in the 12th century. Monastic institutions called Mathas were established on a large scale for the propagation and popularising the tenets of the faith. Almost every village even in the remotest corners of the
land had one such institution or matha. Many of them have survived to the present day. Cultural contribution of the Lingayat monastic institutions (mathas) in Kolhapur district is notable and praiseworthy. Kolhapur district fortunately has 15 mathas out which 3 mainly Siddhagiri matha, Chitradurga matha and Bilvashram matha Gadhinglaj are important. Chitradurga matha came into existence in Kolhapur city itself in 1906 and run the Lingayat hostel, in which eminent persons like B.D.Jatti, Ex.Vice President of India, Dr.Ratnappa Kumbhar, S.R.Kanthi etc had stayed for some years for their study. In addition to education these mathas arranged lectures of the scholars on Lingayatism. They made provisions for lodging during travel. The programmes like Sravanmas, Mahashivaratri, Basava Jayanti, Akkamahadevi Jayanti, Pravachana, Samuhik Lingapuja are arranged by monastic institutions regularly. As regards the economic position, the economic position of the Kadsidheshwar and Chitradurga monastery is sound as compared with other monasteries in the Kolhapur district. Monastic institutions are useful in many ways for Lingayat community. There is a close relation between Lingayat community, religion and monastic institutions.

Social organisations of the Lingayats are rendering vital services to the cause of spreading teaching of Lord Basaveshwar and Lingayat philosophy. Southern Maharashtra Veerashaiva Lingayat Sanstha, Kolhapur, (1907), Kolhapur Veerashaiva Samaj, Kolhapur (1967), Veerashaiva Utkarsh Mandal, Ichalkaranji (1973), Kolhapur Zilla Veerashaiva Sabha, Kolhapur (1979) and Jaysingpur Veerashaiva Samaj, Jaysingpur (1989) are some important social organisations of
Lingayats of Kolhapur district. These social organisations have been doing very good activities in the Lingayat community of Kolhapur district and generating new interest in religion. Moreover young generation of this community is also taking interest in these social institutions and fulfill the need of the society.

Lingayat community in Kolhapur district produced the great leaders and men who devoted their whole life for the welfare of not only the Lingayat society but also the society at large. In Kolhapur district, Kumbhar (Dr.) Ratnappa, Kore Tatyasaheb, Nasthe, Shivpadanna, Late Dr. Shreshthi, Dr. Ghali, Patil Shankarrao, Mali D.B., Malabade K.L., Patil S.P., Patil Appasaheb alias S.R. Sankanwade S.B. Kitturkar, Raosaheb, Dattwade D.B. are eminent leaders of Lingayat community. These and several others have worked for the progress of the society by founding various educational institutions, co-operative sugar factories, various lift irrigation schemes and co-operative banks which ultimately culminated into the all round progress of the common man. Raosaheb D.B. Mali (1894 to 1954) was the first great person in the Lingayat community of Kolhapur, who did yeomen service in the Kolhapur state and prepared the ground for other leaders of the community. The great revolutionary, freedom fighter, Desh Bhakta Ratnappanna Kumbhar (1909 to present day) the leader of the Lingayats in Maharashtra is a versatile personality. His monumental work is the famous sugar factory Shri Panchaganga Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., Ganganagar, Ichalkaranji, established in 1955. He was also a great leader of Praja Parishad of former Kolhapur state. He worked not only in the political field but in the co-operative, education and religious
fields also. Like Ratnappa Kumbhar, Late Tatyasaheb Kore (1914 to 1994) was Jewel of the Lingayat community of Kolhapur district, who founded Warana Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., Warananagar in 1955. Besides, Sugar factory, Tatyasaheb Kore started educational institutions, co-operative banks, milk projects and other co-operative institutions in Warana area. Due to the work of Tatyasaheb Kore socio-economic life of the farmers of the Warana area is changed. Tatyasaheb Kore is regarded as the architect of Warana area, who infused a new vigour and spirit in the common man of Warana area. The next important figure of Lingayat community of Kolhapur district is Sankanwade S.B. who dedicated his whole life for the spread of Lingayat philosophy and teaching of Basaveshwar through his writings. He is the present editor of 'Dnyanprasad' monthly and versatile writer.

Co-operative movement has made rapid strides and progress in a developing economy like India. Co-operation means working together. Some important co-operative organisations of Lingayat community in Kolhapur district have been working well and extending monetary help to needy persons not only Lingayat community but all other communities. Shri Veerashaiva Co-operative Bank Ltd. Kolhapur run by Lingayat leaders is one of the leading co-operative banks in Kolhapur district having 13 branches. This bank was founded by Late Ravasaheb Mali D.B. and the other leaders of Lingayat community on 21st February, 1942 in Kolhapur. Shri Veerashaiva Co-operative bank has contributed a lot for the welfare of the society. Veerashaiva bank has financed and donated many social institutions and organisations in the Kolhapur district. This bank is really a pride.
of Lingayat community in Kolhapur district because, through the work of this bank the socio-economic change has been taking place in the life of common man of this area. Besides this bank, Shri Basaveshwar Co-operative Credit society Ltd., Kolhapur (1932), Shri Basaveshwar Nagari Path Sanstha Ltd., Ichalkaranji (1987), Shri Akkamahadevi Nagari Sahakari Path Sanstha Ltd., Kolhapur (1987) are rendering a great services in the socio-economic field and occupying a vital place in the life of every Lingayat of Kolhapur district.

In brief, our study of Lingayat community in Kolhapur district "A Socio-Economic Study (1949-1990)" is important one and useful to the posterity in future.