CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION
Tantrism is the archaic cultic system which gave much prominence to the female principle. Internal and external evidences affirm that Śakti was a vital and inevitable principle in almost all early streams of Tantrism. In all the prominent streams of Kashmir Śaivism too Śakti is a crucial constituent of their epistemology. References to Śakti as feminine principle in the form of power-provider of the deities are available in Vedic literature also. The investigation about the origin of the term Śakti leads one back to a broader linguistic domain, instead of convincingly admitting the theory of its Vedic emergence. The only available discussion in this topic is of Rosa Ronzitti who provides much clearer way to find out the pre-Vedic roots of the Śakti. The terminologies- that show similarities with Śakti- which are taken from other early languages do not provide any assistance in favour of the feminine aspect of the corresponding concept. Hence the present study attempted to associate the origin and development of the term with the ancient Egyptian language. A close examination of the connotation and representation of the Egyptian term ‘Isis’ (later on developed to the Greek ‘Ischees’) with which the term Śakti bears close linguistic association, evidently points out the ‘feminine power’.

As regards to the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir, Śakti, the essential principal of the doctrine having an obvious feminine nature, has been undergoing noticeable changes in its history. The very concept of Śakti which in the early times was placed atop its philosophic structure
gradually has lost its prominence. Even though there are numerous Śakti-s exclusive to the monistic Śaivism of Kashmir, the pentadic and triadic forms are treated here as inclusive of all the other varieties. Nature of these types of Śakti-s suggests the subordinate position of Śakti in the developed philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism.

The prominence of Śakti has thus been changing constantly in all the sub-streams of Kashmir Śaivism. This evolution happened to the Śakti was through the four major sub-systems viz., Kula, Krama, Spanda and Pratyabhijñā. Kula, the earliest cultic tradition, is popularly identified for its Śakti-orientation. Regarding its earliest origin of Śakti, the present study deviates from the traditional accounts and proposes an observation that Kula is a re-emergence of the cult of archaic mother goddess worship prevailed once all over the world. It is assumed thus because of the Śaivite traditions like Pāśupata and Kāpālika flourished around the first century CE, which exhibit the features of both Tantric and Vedic religions. In fact it was the foremost attempt of Brāhmanic domestication of Tantra. But Kāpālika system of Śaivite school, which could not survive effectively for long period, kept aloof itself for retaining of the previous cultic or Tantric peculiarities such as the centrality of feminine principle and later it sustained through the new system named Kula.

Even though the earliest sources of Kula system available at present do not offer unsophisticated ritualistic form of the basic Kula,
the developed metaphysical principles expressed in them are centered on Śakti. The main aim of the ritualistic practices in Kula is the attainment of supernatural powers. In this scheme, the practitioners, teachers and those who attain the powers are known as Yoginī-s. According to the level of powers they have, Yoginī-s are of different types such as Khecarī, Gocarī and Dikcarī. Among these, Khecarī is one who acquired the power to travel in the sky. The state of Khecarī is called Khecaratva, the highest level of supernatural power to be attained by the contemplators. The very concept of Khecaratva has been viewed as an archetype of the concept of Svātantra- a much more progressive philosophical idea of later time.

In the subsequent phase of Kula, the origination of more philosophical ideas that assure the prominence of Śakti is found. The cultic model of Śakti here evolved into the alphabet goddesses called Mālinī and Māṭrkā. Parā, Aparā and Parāparā are the visual identities of Śakti in Kula.

Krama system, originated from Kula propounds the ultimate principle as Kālī or Kālasaṅkarṣinī. The supreme principle here indicates the time which controls birth, sustenance and death. Some internal contemplative practices lead the practitioner to the ultimate Śakti. The concept of Śakticakra consisted of Kālī-s is comparatively more philosophical one.
The subsequent tradition, Spanda has a visible layer which intended to establish the supreme consciousness, Śiva; and has an inner layer which inwardly ardent to Śakti. Finally, Pratyabhijñā perceives Śakti as the nature of Śiva, as identical to Śiva and as subordinate to Śiva.

A perusal of the fundamental textual sources explicitly says that the remarkable changes happened to the principle of Śakti in different sects of Kashmir Śaivism were the effects of significant social transformations that took place in their respective historical period. It can be learnt from the evidences scattered in the authentic treatises that make deliberate efforts to transport Brāhmaṇical notions into Tantrism was transformed the peculiar characteristics of the latter. This led the mainstream orthodoxy and its philosophy to internalize, purify and moralize the Tantra-s in accordance with their own worldview. As the fundamental perspective of Brāhmaṇism was deeply rooted in patriarchal mindset, it induced the necessity of the establishment of an omnipotent masculine principle instead of the feminine-centered doctrines of Tantrism. This ultimately ended in a process which can categorically be called De-Śāktisation in the realm of Kashmir Śaivism.

De-Śāktisation tendencies are not a matter of early medieval or medieval age alone as it did not confine to the writers and practitioners of bygone centuries. Modern scholars who are regularly engaged with the studies and analysis of diverse concepts of Tantrism also seem to
have been following a strong inclination towards this framework of Brāhmaṇic orthodoxy.

The Śakti-centered conceptions and connotations got disoriented from their actual feminine characters through extortion and expansion, and the principles with masculine identities viz., Akula, Anuttara, Bhairava, Cakreśa etc. were placed upon them. This resulted in the germination of numerous sub-schools and their own literary works within the sphere of Kula and Krama systems. Various processes such as giving new interpretation and interpolations to existing treatises, formation of new works, formulation of new sub-sects and also amalgamation of ritual practices, which has precisely been termed by Arindam Chakrabarthy as “the relentless play of hermeneutical imagination”, were resorted to fulfill this goal.

Kashmir Śaivism in its zenith had displayed an enormous religious-philosophic nature. The reason for this is the amalgamation of various elements of religion and philosophy made by the Kashmirian polymath Abhinavagupta. The fundamental concepts which support such amalgamated highly esoteric philosophy do appear as the manifestations of the concept of Śakti. These Śakti oriented concepts highlighted the religious and philosophical prominence of the non-dual Śaivism in the later period. It suggests that the divergent roles of Śakti-including the linguistic, aesthetic, gnostic and categorical aspects- in the
aforesaid domain could be viewed as the patterns of structural replication.

The main observations and findings arrived at through this study are highlighted as follows.

**Observations and Findings**

- The Tantric non-dualistic philosophy originated in early medieval Kashmir known which is Kashmir Śaivism is one of the most significant schools of Śaivite Tantra and it has four major sub-streams viz., Kula, Krama, Spanda and Pratyabhijñā.

- The feminine principle called Śakti is one of the two most prominent constituent elements in Kashmir Śaivism as is an integral part of all antique religious philosophic tradition of Tantrism.

- The references of Śakti found in the later portions of Veda-s indicate the later inclusion of the same as a necessity of the time. Etymological history of the term too goes far back to the development of Vedic Sanskrit. The exploration of the feminine principle in the cosmological discussion also predates Veda-s. Thus the theory of linguistic and conceptual emergence of Śakti from Veda-s is untenable.

- The principle of Śakti established in Pratyabhijñā, the fully developed later non-dualistic school of Kashmir Śaivism, is in a degenerated form.
• Kula is the re-emergence of the archaic mother goddess cult, because the traditions like Kāpālika emerged in between the primeval and Kula cults of goddess were unsuccessful in their function of propagating the Brāhmaṇic orthodox values.

• Khecaratva is a philosophically well-developed concept of Kula which exclusively verbalizes the freedom of female. It also acts as the archetype of the concept of Svātantrya- the key metaphysical notion of Pratyabhijñā.

• Krama is an emergent of Kula and hence is appropriate to be articulated as Kaula. In the same way the Kāpālika School acted as the intermediary cause of Kula.

• The epistemological interpretation of the 12 Kālī-ś of the Krama stream by modern scholars as the triad called knower, knowledge and known is unacceptable, for it is a religious philosophy.

• The Buddhist Tantra which is a fusion of Śākta Tantric and Yogic traditions is the source of the germination of the Spanda.

• Spanda is a two-layered tradition which externally is keen to the launch of Śiva- the supreme consciousness, while it internally maintains the Śākta nature.

• The interpreters of Spanda, in support of the former layer, explain Spanda meaning ‘vibrating consciousness’ as ‘vibration of consciousness’ and make the metamorphosis of the inherently Śākta school into a Śaivite one.
The earliest Kula concept of Śakti has a semi-divine nature and it successively evolved into the divinized audial and visual models. Krama treats Śakti as the controller of time i.e., Kālī. In spanda the prominence of Śakti is concealed in the monistic Śiva-centered philosophy. Finally in Pratyabhijñā, Śakti is a full-fledged and multifarious philosophical principle. To sum up, the principle of Śakti has undergone an evolution in all the four sub-streams of Kashmir Śaivism.

This evolution of Śakti is of a negative nature as far as its prominence is concerned. This assertion inspires to re-imagine the history and categorization of the streams of Kashmir Śaivism.

It was the post scriptural authors like Somānanda who made effective changes in the concept of Śakti and pushed the very principle aside to a subordinate position. Such an attempt with an aim to generate a masculine-centred non-dual philosophy of Tantrism was necessitated by the rise of Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara.

The society existed then formed with the anti-feminine and anti-Tantric-ritualistic thoughts, was the prime cause of the evolution of the Śakti principle.

The entire after effects of the evolution of Śakti are conceived here as ‘De-Śāktisation’- the process that committed to the establishment of the supreme masculine, by disintegrating the prominence of Śakti.
The de-Śaktisation took place through the divergent exegetical practices in the later phase of monistic Śaivism developed after the Pratyabhijñā school. This exegetical process was executed as interpolations, formulations and interpretations. (The discussions on samāveśa, upāya and siddhi in the early work like SYM and Dev.Pañ are the interpolations. Akula, bhairava, hṛdaya, and anuttara are the concepts newly formulated in the later domain of Kula, for presenting the supreme reality, Śiva. New sub-schools such as Tripurā, Śrīvidyā, Sāhasa and Chummā were framed through the interpretations of the earlier works and the composition of new ones).

The system of Kashmir Śaivism was completely subordinated to the Brāhmaṇic orthopraxy in its later stages.

The later exponents of Kashmir Śaivism including Abhinavagupta did not concede the anti-Śakti perspective of Somānanda as such, because Śakti is an inevitable principle which helped the later phase of Kashmir Śaivism to become socially and philosophically popular tradition.

The inclusion of Śakti in a variety of forms is considered as the Śaktyāviśkaraṇa (disclosure of Śakti). The expressions as Śaktipāta, Śaktisparśa, Kuṇdalini, Pratibhā, and Vāc are the Śaktyāviśkaraṇa. The linguistic and aesthetic modes of Śaktyāviśkaraṇa are the Pratibhā and Vāc.
The relations of the principle of Śakti with the philosophical, religious, ritualistic traditions of India and other regions of South Asia, and more importantly its association with the concept of mother goddess, make the study of the very principle a task to be carried out with greater paraphernalia. To say more specifically, there is ample scope for a comprehensive search into the manifold issues connected with the principle of Śakti in Kashmir Śaivite philosophy from a feminist and anthropological perspective which would relate it with the feminine concepts of a wider cultural context of India and the world.