Chapter VI

The Roads Taken and Not Taken

A dissertation on literary controversies can only raise issues that may help us formulate what sorts of questions can be productively asked through literary controversies in order to theorise the contemporary culture for a better understanding. This is so because several contexts and nuances of literary controversies are not simply available for analysis because the mainstream literary history never records them. Rather, it treats them as 'trivial' matters of no significance to literary analysis. As researchers we have to tread a different and difficult path not only to collect the data dispersed in newspapers, journals, archives, personal collections, temple records, libraries maintained by mutts etc, but also had to look into diverse histories of literature and the Viraśaiva community to identify and record the details of literary controversies. Therefore, it may be safe to say with regard to this dissertation, to borrow a phrase from George Luckacs "the journey is ended but the way begun." (George Luckacs, 1971).

Conceptual Framework

Let us recapitulate some of the main arguments foregrounded in the earlier chapters to arrive at certain hypotheses. Towards this end, we need to first recall the conceptual assumptions on the basis of which, the empirical details are discussed in the dissertation. The central focus of the thesis is that the literary controversies arose in Karnataka from time to time around literary texts related to the Viraśaiva philosophy; history and literature. And they are not isolated and sporadic incidents. They must be considered as important cultural signifiers. Hence, the analysis of literary controversies has to go beyond the conceptual vocabulary such as the dichotomies of individual versus community or freedom of expression versus coercion. It is also necessary to rethink the 'commonsensical' perceptions of literature as imaginative and creative in order to have a better explanation of literary controversies in relation to the wider social processes. This is inevitable because the framework of comparative perspective in the discipline of Comparative Literature is found inadequate to analyse the issues opened up by the
literary controversies. Indeed, the perceptual bases of literary controversies and their complex relationship with communities today require theoretical and empirical elucidation with nuances. This dissertation is a modest effort to comprehend the socio-political dynamics of literary controversies and their significance for the contemporary culture of Karnataka. We also, probed into the question of formation of the Viraśaiva community during modern period as well as its religious avatars in the post-colonial times.

The conventional but institutionally popular text centred-approaches of 'Literary Criticism' privilege the literary form and it is interested only in fixing the meaning of the literary text. They consider literary text as an autonomous entity that has its own constitutive elements. They resist the use of any 'predetermined' theory in the reading of the literary text. They refuse to consider the social milieu in which the text itself is being written and they dehistoricise meanings. Therefore, we have formulated our questions bringing together the insights drawn from cultural studies, postcolonial studies, post structuralism and critical theory.

We began with the theoretical formulations of the four scholars who discussed literary controversies from different perspectives as a point of departure. We attempted to develop, extend and modify the framework provided by them so that literary controversies can be studied productively. We accepted the meaningful insights provided by them and furthered the discussion by way of providing a critique for their theoretical understanding. The purpose of bringing in these four thinkers is to confirm our assumption that a literary text per se is not solely responsible for a literary controversy. The contents or descriptions in a literary text were merely used to raise larger questions of narratives, communities, democracy and citizenship.

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1 The term Literary Criticism as it is used here refers to all formalistic approaches to literature that are interested only in textual analysis of literary works and those theories which, do not consider the social, the historical and the political aspects of writing. Most of these theories come from the Anglo-Saxon anti theoretical traditions such as New Criticism, Practical Criticism, and the Chicago School, etc.
Language, Identity and Literary Controversies

Literary controversies include several aspects. In the context of Karnataka at least two aspects are significant among the many. They are related to the formation of the Viraśaiva community during the colonial period and its efforts to maintain the identity of the community in the colonial and postcolonial contexts. Secondly, the Kannada literary controversies represent the attempts of the upper castes of the Viraśaiva community for domination and the lower caste groups' struggle for existence and their resistance to domination. In our view the community's identity took specific shape in the tension between those who dominate and the dominated. Apart from this, other communities adjacent to the Viraśaiva community also determined and continue to determine the identity of the Viraśaiva community. All through the dissertation we grappled with this complex issue. Hence, if the literary controversies constitute our main text, formation of caste identities and their relationship to narratives and the state are sub-texts running through the thesis as we have pursued it.

As indicated earlier the Shubhodaya controversy provided a context for the Viraśaivas to rethink their "social identities" (Saberwal and Jayaram, 2003: 546), while Maarga, Mahachaitra, Vacana Deepti and Dharmakarana controversies demonstrated the community's dominance over the emerging social forces and its resistance to any interference into its 'internal' domain. Assertion of an identity inevitably involved both domination as well as resistance. The double-edged identity politics of the community may be explained as follows.

While consolidating the community identity, the Viraśaivas have “reaffirm[ed] and renew[ed] the boundaries” (ibid: 548) of the community. Renewal of social boundaries implied excluding or including certain social groups from the mainstream cultural domain in which the Viraśaiva community occupy a dominant place. In the third chapter we have demonstrated that the upper caste/class Viraśaivas were very reluctant to accommodate Hajams and Dhojis because they belonged to lower strata of the society. Not only that, the upper caste/class Viraśaivas even invoked the dharmashastras to claim Brahminhood for themselves. Sanskrit heritage of the community was conveniently
invoked to draw the social boundaries between them and the Brahmins on one the hand and the lower caste Viraśaivas on the other. This fact of inclusion and exclusion also applies to the post-colonial period. Therefore, the simultaneous assertion of identity as opposed to Brahmins and the will to dominate the subaltern social groups within the Viraśaiva community is a crucial factor in the politics of identity of the Viraśaiva community in Karnataka. If we go beyond the obvious binaries we soon realise how the upper caste groups desire to dominate the rest in the community presents a complicated picture of the formation of the community identity in the early twentieth century. No doubt anti-Brahmanism played a pivotal role in the shaping of the community. But we cannot ignore the other differential social signifiers. The elite/upper class Viraśaivas and the mainstream religious heads used the literary controversies to mask several contentious issues such as caste discrimination, conservatism and elitism within the community in the name of so called 'larger' and 'common' interests of the Viraśaivas. The Viraśaivas, who contested the Brahmanism, tried to address their own pro-caste practices within the framework of Hindu religion. Their anti-Brahmin position was to hide their own pro-casteist practices within the framework of the Varna system.

The formation of identity of the Viraśaiva community is a dialectical process. The ‘coming together’ of and the 'tension' between the insiders and the outsiders of the community is a process through which, the community identity gets established. To put it differently, the question of identity involves two cultural understandings. One is the imagination of its members from inside and second, what it looked from outside to others. While the elite Viraśaivas constitute the so-called inside force, the non-Viraśaivas are considered as the external forces. The encounter between these two forces has to be worked out in the Kannada public sphere. One cannot brand these forces in terms of conservative and avant-garde.

The fourth chapter reveals the discursive realm of the above-mentioned process. Both the Viraśaivas and Brahmins intellectuals participated in the act of imagining the

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2 The dichotomy of inside and outside is imagined by the Viraśaivas. It is the consequence of an imagination of "who are our friends, who are with us, and who are our foes, who are against us" (Saberwal and Jayaram, 2003: 546). Such imagination is also a part of the process of reaffirming and redrawing the caste boundaries.
'Viraśaiva identity' by re-writing the Viraśaiva past and literature in the colonial period but for different purposes. It is very clear from the actions as well as the writings of the mainstream Viraśaivas that they did not like any interference of others including the lower caste Viraśaivas into the internal matters of the community. The defining castes of the Viraśaiva community obviously belonged to the upper strata of the community. No other castes in Karnataka indeed, wanted to interfere in the internal matters of Viraśaivas, but the problem is arisen due to the 'double' belonging of the community narratives especially of vacanas. They are on one hand belong to all; the people of Karnataka, a fact in which the community takes pride-yet they are the exclusive treasure of the community. Hence, the spokespersons of the Viraśaiva religion insist on their interpretations and meanings. The community leaders take pride in projecting the vacanas and the great mystic saints of twelfth century Viraśaiva movement as belonging to Karnataka; but they also claim that the saints belong to 'us' too. Therefore, no one has right to interpret them the way they want it. While interpreting the vacanas and the Viraśaiva history one must consider the feelings of the majority in the community for they allowed others to have access to vacanas. Roughly this is the point the community leaders were making in the context of literary controversies. Literary controversies have provided ample opportunities for them to continue the hegemony over several Viraśaiva sects as well as homogenize the community in the modern period that is crucial for the democratic politics. The 'anti-Brahmin and pro-subaltern' identity of the Viraśaiva religion is produced and reproduced time and again to galvanise community. This cannot be said as either revival or continuation of the twelfth century legacy. Instead, the past images, metaphors and tropes were selectively put to a new use in the context of literary controversies.

We argue that the Viraśaivas like to sustain their anti-Brahmin discourse through the literary narratives. Though the Brahmins are not in direct confrontation with the Viraśaivas in the post-colonial Karnataka, the anti-Brahmin discourse is necessary to continue their 'traditional' leadership of the suppressed social forces. The opposition of the Viraśaivas to Brahmanism is also intended to deny the Brahmins' right to influence the 'inside'.

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The changing nature of the Viraśaiva identity becomes clear in the differing responses of the community to Brahmanism. The anti-Brahmin discourse of the Viraśaivas of the post-colonial period shares similarities and dissimilarities with that of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The Viraśaivas claimed Brahminhood in the early twentieth century in their effort to contest the Brahmin hegemony. Any reference to the subaltern sections was conspicuously absent in their claim. They even prevented certain caste groups from identifying with the upper caste Viraśaivas. As we have already seen the caste practices and socialisation patterns were clearly incommensurable\(^3\). But the post-colonial situation renders a different picture. The nationalist moorings of the Viraśaiva scholars in the late colonial period forced them to establish and institutionalise Viraśaivism as secular, egalitarian and casteless and they did it by way of inventing the twelfth century vacana movement and projecting the idiomatic expressions of the mystic Sharanas of the time as vacana literature. From then on the majority of Karnataka has seen the Viraśaiva tradition as a progressive religion, sensitive to social, caste and gender discriminations. The Bandaya, the Dalit and the women writers have been quite at home with the Viraśaiva religion. The postcolonial response to Brahmanism stems from the above mentioned context. The issue of caste system figures prominently in this anti- Brahmin discourse of Viraśaivism.

While delineating the invention of tradition by the Viraśaivas in the colonial period, we confined our study to illustrate the Brahmin-Viraśaiva rivalry. We did not look into the relationship of the Viraśaiva community to communities other than Brahman community in detail. For example, Okkaligas, another non-Brahmin community that collaborated with the Viraśaivas in claiming backward class status in the colonial Mysore region, began mobilizing its community way back in 1905 with the establishment of the Okkaligara Sangha in 1905. As the demand for the unification of Karnataka arose the differences between the Okkaliga community and the Viraśaivas surfaced for they are the two majority communities of Karnataka. The bitter rivalry continued in the postcolonial period, in the vote bank politics of ‘our’ democracy. These two communities continue to have love-hate relationship in Karnataka. The tension between the Okkaligas

\(^3\) Nonaba and Hajam castes were prevented from identifying themselves with the upper caste Virasaivas.
and Viraśaivas has a history of its own and it was a significant aspect that determined the politics of Karnataka.

The post emergency developments in the early 80s affected the Viraśaiva community more or less in the same way they affected other upper caste communities in Karnataka. The decline in the political power that the Viraśaivas enjoyed for twenty years after the independence has made the community more anxious and many times the community was forced to beat a retreat. Though the community attempted in vain to come back to power it did not yield any fruits. The identity politics of the Viraśaivas could be further explored focusing on the community equations between Viraśaivas and other non-Brahmin communities for we focused only on the material relevant for our study of literary controversies. Future research could take up the whole gambit of caste formation in the modern period in Karnataka for study.

The contestations of the secular reading public, writers and the Kannada literary circles on the one hand and of the Viraśaiva leaders and monastic traditions during the literary controversies are clear examples of arbitrary and fragile relationship between narratives and communities. No community can exist without memory, history and narratives of its own, yet narratives may not 'mean the same thing' to all, a fact that turns the relationship between narratives and communities precarious. Hence, the communities plead, assert for, lay claim on, try to possess and insist on their interpretation of narratives in the fear of losing control over the narratives.

Let us not forget that literary controversies are the public articulations on the nature of democracy and citizenship. A careful examination of the debate would reveal that the communitarians and the secularists take two different positions on democratic set up of the country. If the secularists refuse to give any space for religion and communities in politics in the Kannada public sphere the communitarians resist such 'hijacking'. On the secularists' part, a crisis has set in the domain of literary criticism. They have not yet come out of the conventional notions of 'genuine' literary interpretation, authentic
experience (anubhava) and expression of creative writing, etc. Therefore, they have not yet thought of evolving a new parameter or criterion for understanding and evaluating the impact of literary controversies. In this situation the agenda of the debate gets divided into the secular and the religious or of freedom of expression and community sentiments on which the futile debates can go on for ever with out stop and with out any sort of resolution. For years, what we see in the debates over literary controversies is an impasse of meanings, an impossibility of a dialogue, a breakdown of communication between the Viraśaiva leaders and the secularists. For the above reason a new look at the literary controversies is required to set the fresh problematic for the literary controversies. To put it differently new questions need to be asked in order to arrive at productive answers.

The secularists and the media imagine and manufacture the always-already 'homogeneous Viraśaiva community'. Lack of information and adequate conceptual vocabulary could be responsible for such an imagination. However, our analysis of the literary controversies in the dissertation has clearly demonstrated that the whole Viraśaiva community did not stand against the writers and the community could not boast of a unified identity consciousness. In fact, many Viraśaivas challenged coercive mechanisms adopted by the communitarians to put pressure on the writer and the state.

Neelagunda Swamy, for instance, opposed the principle of Ganachara in the context of Dharmakarana controversy. He questioned the integrity of Vishwanathreddy Mudnal who went on hunger strike in the name of Canadian. In the context of Mahachaitra controversy also, people like Shivacharya Swamy did not agree with the coercive mechanism of MM. Several Viraśaiva writers and readers criticized the communitarians.

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4 For an analysis of crisis in Kannada literary criticism see Tejaswini Niranjana's "Whose Culture is it? Contesting the Modern" (1994).
5 Rekha Pappu has mapped the way media recorded the controversies around the Satanic Verses. She has tried to explore different moves of the media that 'fixed' the identity of 'Muslim Community' and 'Islam' (Jodhka, 1999:2962). Similar studies are available on the western production and circulation of 'Islam'. Edward Said's Covering Islam is one such significant text in this area.
6 For his views on Mudnal and the Ganachara see "Mudnalara 'Fatwa'" (Kannada—'Fatwa' of Mudnal) in Kannada Prabha (a Kannada daily) 25\textsuperscript{th}, March 1997.
7 For details on Shivacharya Swamy’s differences with MM, see chapt. 2, p.90.
That apart the degree and the level of participation of different Viraśaiva organizations also differ from controversy to controversy. These are all indications of the heterogeneous interests operating within the community. However the internal differences should not be confused as support for the secularists. The internal opposition/differences are matters of organizational or institutional differences between several mutts and the Viraśaiva Mahasabhas over the question of secularism and democracy. Any secular or liberal position of a Viraśaiva mutt, therefore, needs to be understood in terms of its relationship with other mutt traditions in Karnataka, be it Viraśaiva or non-Viraśaiva.

Authority to represent the 'concerns' of the community is grounded on the self-legitimacy accorded to the actions of the communitarians. The self-legitimacy of the communitarians is validated invoking the idea of a need for 'community integration', in the face of misrepresentation of the narratives of the community. This explains the deployment of religious vocabulary and images to mobilise people from within. For an instance, MM's theory of ishtalinga and the ABVM's anti-Brahmin feelings in the Dharmakarana controversy are some of discourses that are foregrounded in defence of their actions. The strategic use of mass force to pressurize the state government is also a program intended towards integrating the divided community and securing the much-needed agreement for a coordinated activity in future. Crucial in such efforts are the Viraśaiva concepts and ideas, which specify how one should act and define the course of action and dictate interpretive norms.

As a matter of fact both the secularists and the communitarians think similarly on many ideas of language and literature. Both use the same worn-out, outdated but institutionally powerful and established ways of reading. The differences show up on the twin questions of creative freedom and historical truth. The communitarians refuse to believe that narratives are not history whereas the creative writers insist that creative writing goes beyond the factual truth of history. In our opinion, this fact opens up several possibilities for future research, especially, from the perspective of New Historicism.
While analysing the conflicts, we were not able to collate information on the involvement of several small literary societies, reader's clubs, amateur theatre groups, art circles, groups of social activism, and the Viraśaiva social/community organizations that raised the temperature of debates. The material is scattered in various places and we leave this very interesting task to future researchers.

Efforts to integrate and defuse the crisis in the community, as shown in the previous chapters, are not individualist but have involved institutions. The Viraśaiva politicians, scholars, readers, religious heads and community elders played a significant role in this regard. The mutts, educational institutions and several civil organizations also participated in the debates and agitations around controversies with enthusiasm. The efforts have proved to be futile since the community is constituted of several social groups whose interests and ideologies differ and clash with each other. Symbols, images, legends, myths and the folklore of the community, nevertheless the claims of being part of a common heritage and history, are not uniformly internalised among all members of the community. The lack of unified internalisation corroborates with the heterogeneity of the community, which has rendered the controversies a web of complexities. Our study is an endeavour to explore some of these complexities.

While discussing the community formation in the colonial as well as in the post-colonial period, we concentrated on the narratives of Viraśaivism. It may give a feeling that we have reduced social transformation of the Viraśaiva community to the level of narratives. We are very much aware of the other crucial factors, which played a crucial role in the formation of the community identity in the modern period. One such important factor is religious practices of the Viraśaivas and the religious observances. The religious practices such as initiation ceremony, rites of worshipping, marriage rituals, local fairs, etc. play a crucial role in marking the differences between the Viraśaivas and the other communities. The religious practices have some sort of institutional and organizational legitimacy. The main centres of the religious practices are Viraśaiva mutts. There are about 1089 Viraśaiva mutts existing in the contemporary Karnataka spread across twenty-seven districts (Naranapura: 2002). These mutts have their own variations of
religious practices due the influence of local culture, as well as the locally shaped doctrines of the mutt tradition.

Our study like any other would be is limited by its focus on the 'contexts' of literary controversies. We did not discuss how the Viraśaiva community might behave in other contexts as a community. The assumption here is that the hypotheses arrived at the internal and external tensions that shape the community identity and that give meanings to it may hold good and help in the analysis of the Viraśaiva community on the whole. For example, census enumeration is still a contentious issue for the community for it has triggered off controversies whether the Viraśaivas are Hindus or they constitute a non-Hindu minority. Some sections of the community like MM and her followers strongly argue that Lingayathism is a minority religion of Karnataka like the Sikhism and the Jainism. Many others in the community feel that it is detrimental to the interests of the community to disassociate from the Hindu religion. The claims and the counter-claims around the census enumeration have led to re-visiting the narratives of Viraśaivism around history, literature and religion. The best example that testifies this point is a recent work by Chidanandamurthy Viraśaiva Dharma: Bharateeya Samskriti (2000)*. We can draw a parallel for the census controversy in the colonial period also. As we have discussed in the first chapter, the census inventory in the late nineteenth century turned out to be an historical opportunity for the Viraśaivas to seek equality on par with the Brahmins in the modern period and they sought to achieve equality by claiming the status of Brahminhood. One of the avenues in which they could achieve equality was the domain of tradition.

Interestingly, as if history takes a full turn, the kind of rivalry between the Viraśaiva community and the Brahmin community seen and repeatedly invoked at the discursive level in the early twentieth century is conspicuously absent in the late twentieth century. Now it is the rivalry between the Viraśaiva community and the new subaltern forces, which occupies the major part of our analysis in the firth chapter. The
new social energy released by the subaltern groups has staked claims in all spheres of the public domain. The subaltern construction of Viraśaivism has been largely responsible for the anxiety of the upper caste/class Viraśaivas. The democratic participation of the new social forces in the public domain, so far the monopoly of the uppers castes, has challenged their secular claims. However the latter has either conveniently ignored or confronted such challenges. Therefore, it would be revealing to probe why the Viraśaivas struggle to hold on to the anti-Brahmin discourses and conveniently ignore the democratic claims of the subaltern sections in the globalisation period.

All through the study, we consider the Viraśaiva community as located in a specific 'region' (Karnataka). Therefore, our analysis of literary controversies is microscopic in its scope. However, the self-fashioning of the Viraśaiva community in our opinion, is a local as well as a global event. In other words, we need to explore the impact of globalisation (that in a way started with colonialism) on the perceptions of Viraśaivism and the changing nature of the community identity. The Viraśaivas are exposed to the larger dynamics of urbanisation, secularisation, and corporatisation. Besides the "net effect" (Satish Deshpande, 1998:277) of these larger dynamics on identity politics, there are at least five other factors that seem to be crucial in influencing the community. Satish Deshpande, while examining communalism, lists five crucial factors, which are having a large-scale impact on reshaping communalism. These five factors can also be extended to understand the behaviour of the Viraśaivas in the post-colonial period. These five factors are: new Economic Policy since 1991, globalisation, realignments of caste-ethnicity axes, the emergence of the ‘new middle classes’ (probably he meant Dalit middle classes) with a transformed socio-political profile and a new rationalisation of the Indian nation-space. Though we considered these five factors to analyse the formation of the Viraśaiva community in the context of the colonial period, we have yet to assess the impact of them in the contemporary period or to explain the present.

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8 This book contains fascinating accounts of history of the Viraśaiva religion in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. The author brings together several narratives of the Viraśaivas to prove that the
State, Religion and Literary Controversies

It is not our contention in this dissertation that literary controversies are mere symptoms of religious, literary or political crisis alone. The intervention of the state in resolving the clash between the secularists and the communities is no less important. However, in the dissertation, we could not concentrate upon the relationship between the communitarians, the secularists and the state. There are many studies in the social sciences to understand and theorise the community conflicts with focus on their religious aspect and their relationship to state. These studies have raised the question of state, its role in representing the religions and communities and in responding to the community conflicts. Let us summarise some of the arguments put forward by Ashish Nandy and confirm if his arguments can be handy to us in addressing the problems of communities confronting the state in the context of literary controversies.

Ashish Nandy, in an article "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance" (1992), splits religion into two categories: faith and ideology. He defines faith as such,

By faith I mean religion as a way of life, a tradition which is definitionally non-monolithic and operationally plural (Nandy, 1992: 70).

He continues,

By ideology I mean religion as a sub-national, national or cross national identifier or populations contesting for or protecting non-religious, usually political or socio-economic, interests (ibid).

According to him, the modern state always prefers to deal with religious ideologies rather than with faiths. He sees religious ideology and secularism as opposed but kindred ideologies of the modern world, whereas faith is an Indian worldview in which tolerance and a fluid definition of the self provide an alternative to the boundedness of these ideologies. What Nandy does here is to develop a neat binary opposition of faith and ideology and the state's partial engagement with ideology at the expense of plurality. It is very clear that he favours faith rather than ideology and feels that the reasons for state

Viraśaivas were Hindus in the past and remain Hindus in future.
failure in combating communalism lies in its refusal to engage with faith which is tolerant to other faiths.

But the above conceptualisation of religion assumes that faith is not at all influenced by religious ideologies and survives without being affected by history. Such kind of conceptualisation is contradicted by the very efforts of MM who mobilised the Viraśaivas and lower castes from both urban and rural areas to demand ban on Mahachaitra. It is not acceptable, for at the level of religious organisation at least in Karnataka, the Viraśaiva mutts, in context of the four controversies from 1989 to 1997, have been able to 'manufacture consent' among major religious leaders and political activists from different parts of Karnataka. Nevertheless, the 'less-known' and the 'less-hegemonic' Viraśaiva mutts of different regions and of different social practices, have not participated in the process of 'manufacturing the consent' blindly. They have also contested the major religious mutts and their traditions. The fifth chapter has borne ample evidences to this effect. In the context of Vacana Deepti controversy, different faiths of the Viraśaiva religion, have opposed the religious ideology of MM. Therefore, we cannot study the controversies, having religious connotations, and the social problems that they generate within the framework of state versus community dichotomy. The fifth chapter has given us ample accounts to show that despite the fact that many controversies arose simultaneously with the state recognition to a particular work of art, it is not the only reason, which may cause a controversy. The Vacana Deepti controversy is a clear indication to this fact. The controversy revealed that community conflicts or mobilisations are also expressions of contestation and negotiation among communities and different faiths. In this controversy, the main contention of the opponents of the book was directed against the efforts to hegemonies other views and opinions of other sub sects of the Lingayath community by MM who possesses certain institutional/organisational powers. For this reason, we decided to explore more on the complex ways in which the narratives of community and state intersect and deviate. We need to sufficiently account for the different conceptions of the state about Virasaivism and the Viraśaiva community before embarking on the state-community confrontation.

Given the number of controversies related to narratives of Viṇṇāsaivism, as discussed in the dissertation, over the last one century, the resolution of the controversies seems to be temporary in nature. The manipulation of literary works, institutionalisation of literary conventions, strengthening of religious identities and the questions of representation, knowledge and power continue to haunt the Kannada society and culture. The dissertation presented so far is a step towards addressing a few of these issues. We hope ours is a small help in understanding the literary controversies that may arise else where in future.

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