CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Tradition of Siva Worship

The lithic art in India has a long history. It goes back to Indus Valley Civilization. But the earlier stone sculpture is few in number. However, reasonable number of stone images persists from 7th or 8th century and museums have a rich collection of such images.

Lord Siva is one of the most important deities of the Brahmanical cult. Though he is connected with the act of devastation mainly in the Hindu notion, yet a devotee of Siva meditates him as a lord of creation and protection. But the authentic Indian text, Siva Mahapurana describes Siva for performing triple functions of creation, preservation and destruction.

The people of Harappan culture worshipped Siva as the Lord of animals. Indus seals give a clear evidence about it. Generally the word Siva means the auspicious. There are manifold mentionable Sanskrit books, viz. the Matsya Purana, the Agni Purana, the Visnudharmottaram, the Kalika Purana and the Siva Purana. Besides, the Puranamic iconographic texts, the Agamic scriptures also narrate the incidents related to Lord Siva. Icon makers made images as the imitations of these episodes. Among the Agamic texts, Mahanirvana-Tantra, Kamakagama, Anusumadvedagama, Rupamandana are noticeable.

The concept and development of Siva is traced from the Indus valley civilization. In the seals of the Indus valley, we notice a figure of ascetic, (Fig.1) who may be identified as a Yogi Purusa. The figure is encircled by
some seated and standing reliefs of beasts. The fact represents Siva’s supremacy on the world of animals. In latter phase it is shown that Siva has an epithet of Pasupati. During the time of Rigveda, the previous concept of pre-historic Pasupati was changed and identified as an ascetic named Kesi in association with God Rudra. In the scriptural text of the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, the conception of Rudra is further developed and able to be elevated on a higher platform. Some different ascriptions were attributed to Siva in this age. The Upanishad literature shows the fact that the religio-philosophic idea of Rudra Siva represents the furthest apex of the development of the thought related to the god. According to the epic-pauranic character of Siva, it may be said that whenever a man conceive a desire for anything, his intention is fulfilled by the bestower god. Justifying the development of the concept of Siva, it may be deliberated that pre-Ariyan ascetic Siva was converted in a violent god during the Vedic period. In the later period of two great epics and different Puranas, the Lord was incarnated as the bestower of boon and pity. So, it is clear that belief about Siva is changed in course of time in the history of the Indian religious tradition.

**Nomenclature of Lord Siva**

In the Siva-Mahapurana, the word Siva is spelt as s, i and v, where ‘s’ means eternal happiness and ecstasy, ‘i’ means the supreme being and ‘v’ represents the idea of the power of nectar. A verse reads as follows—

> "Sm nityam sukhmaninandamikarah purusah smrtah
Vakarah saktiramrtam melanam Siva ucyate."

So, it is clear that the Siva is the Lord of benediction, joy and emancipation. The verse doubtlessly orchestrates the sublimity of Siva.
In Vedic period, Siva, in all probable, prevails as an adjective of the God Rudra. Rudra was described as Ishana, Vabhru, Vrisabha, Vajrabahu, Samhanti, Kapardi, Asutos, Pasupati, in different hymns of the Rigveda. One hundred names of Lord Rudra are enunciated in the Satarudriya text of the Sukla Yajurveda of the Vajasaneyi Samhita, of which much known names are as follows—Girisa, Giritra, Samvoo, Sankara, Pasupati, Nilaagrica, Sitikantha, Sarba, Bhava, Bjuptakesa, Sabasraka, Satadhanvan, Sipibisa, Siva, Raisma, Bastaya, Isumara, Purva, Harikesa, Mayaskara, Tura, Agra, Pratham, Jyestha, Kanista, Aparaja, Hridajya, etc. The Krishna Yajurveda also informs us about the different denominations of Rudra. In this matter, the Krishna Yajurveda coincides with the Sukla Yajurveda.

In the Atharvaveda, the names of Lord Rudra are found as follows—Bhava, Sarva, Bhutapati, and Pasupati. Asani, Ugra and Mahadeva are also accepted as the different names of Rudra in the hymns of Atharvaveda.

In the Svetasvatara Upanishad, Rudra’s appellations are mentioned as Siva, Isana, Isa, Mahadeva, Giritra and Girisanta. The fifth and sixth verses of the chapter III of this text says—

"Ya te Rudra Siva tanuraghora apapakāśīni
Taṣā nastamūba santamajā Girisantavacakādhi hi...
Yāmīsam Girisantam hasa bivarsvastave
Śiva Giritra tam kuru mā himśih purusān jagat..."*

The Sutra literature is remarkable among the six Vedangas. This latter Vedic work is very significant for describing Siva’s nomenclature. The Asvalayana Grhyasutra mentions twelve names of Rudra, viz, Mrida.

---
1 Goswami, Vijan Vihari, Yajur Veda Samhita (In Bengali), 2000, p.121.
Sarva, Hara, Siva, Bhaba, Mahadeva, Ugra, Bhima, Pasupati, Sankara and Isana. In the Apastambha and the Hiranyakesin Grhyasutra, Rudra is mentioned as Ksetrapati. The Dharmasutra of Baudhayana mentions the names of Rudra as follows—Siva, Isana, Pasupati, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Mahadeva and Bhava. Besides the Sutra literature, the later Vedic works, such as the Sankhya, Kaustaki and other Brahmana texts use the denominations, like Siva, Mahadeva, Maheswara for denoting a great god.

Magnanimity of Lord Siva was also preached in the two epics of India, viz. the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The prayer song in the Uttarkanda of the Ramayana narrates one hundred eight names of the Lord. A few notable names are as follows—Birupaksa, Pinaki, Sulapani, Kamandaladhara, Lokapala, Gupta, etc. Seventeenth chapter of Anusasana Parva in Mahabharata enumerates more than one thousand names of Siva. The description of this chapter is known as Sivasahasranama. Sanskrit books of grammar are doubtlessly noteworthy in this respect. Famous grammarian Panini refers a few names of Siva in this sutra (grammatical rule). In this connection 'Indravarunabhabasarbarudramrida' is mentionable. In the aforesaid grammatical rule we find four names of Rudra Siva. Those are Bhaba, Sarva, Rudra and Mrīḍa. Patanjali refers to Siva as well as Rudra in several times. While annotating on Panini's sutra 'Ayuhśiladantijīnihhyām thakthānau' Patanjali mentions the devotee of Siva, who carried an iron lance. Except Panini's and Patanjali's work, Nandikeshwara's Kasika bears the clear evidence about the scholastic aptitude of Lord Siva in the science of grammar. In this text, Maheswara is narrated as the pioneer of Vyakarana Sastra.

Lexicography is a store house of vocabulary. It compiles the common and popular names and synonymous word. The Amarakosa of

Amarasimha, compiled in fourth cent. A.D. mentions forty eight names of Siva. Those names are very popular to common people.

Important epigraphs bear the evidences about different names and epithets of God Siva. We find the following names of Siva in the inscriptions of Indian rulers, who create imperial unity as well as the patronage of regional king of the contemporary feudal society. Some of those names are as followings—Maheswara, Mahadeva, Sambhu, Salapani, Trilochana, Matangeswara, Vaidyanatha, Sadasiva, Sasisekhara, Ghantisha Bhairava, etc. Selected a few names, which assert the characters of Lord Siva are explained from the different points of view. The derivations, connotations and legends of those denominations are described.

**Rudra**

Yaska described elaborately about the term Rudra in his famous work *Nirukta*. In Yaska's explanation, the word Rudra may be connotated in three ways.

If it is derived from root vr, it means a person shouts loudly.

If it originates from roots vr and vdru respectively, then it manifests the meaning of roaring passer.

The word is also derived from vrudh, which means one, who makes tear of his enemies.\(^4\)

In the *Vishnupurana*, we find a different episode, which is popular in Indian tradition. This is as follows—Brahma created Rudra. After his birth, Rudra began to cry. Listening Rudra’s lamentation, Brahma asked him why he had cried. Then Rudra replied to give a name. As a result Brahma called him Rudra.

---

\(^4\) Bhattacharya, Bishnu Pada, Vaidik Devata (In Bengali), 1951, p. 33.
Sthanu

The Svetasvatara Upanisad tells us one of the ascriptions of Siva is Sthanu. According to the evidence of the Vayupurana the god practiced severe austerities standing on one foot for a whole celestial year without taking any food. In the Matsyapurana, he is identified as Sthanu for his motionlessness. In the great epic Mahabharata, he is Sthanu because he is Shitalinga. In Kalidasa's famous literary work Vikramorvasiya, the poet describe Siva as Sthanu. The grammatical derivation of the word Sthanu is as follows—stha+nu.

Pasupati

The pre-Aryan Siva is the lord of animal as well as the king of ascetic. According to J. Marshall it is seemingly in reference to this aspect of his nature that the beasts are grouped about him. Although the expression Pasupati is common occurrence in case of many other divinities of Vedic period, Rudra, the god of storm has a denomination Pasupati. In the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, Pasupati, the epithet of Rudra seems to indicate the rapprochement with the non-Aryan divinity worshipped at the Indus valley. In the post Vedic age, the term Pasupati is given a new interpretation. From the lord of cattle he is converted into the lord of all beings.

Girisanta, Girisa and Giritra

Girisanta, Girisa and Giritra, names of Lord Siva are closely related with mountain. Indian mythology tells us that the residence of the Pauranic Siva is situated upon mount Kailasa. Those three names are mentioned in the Sukta Yajurveda. Once there was the worship of many hill divinities prevalent among the hill tribes. Perhaps Rudra Siva is capable to absorb a number of anonymous mountain gods originated from the fancy of various tribal people.
**Nilkantha**

In the description of the *Kesisukta* of the *Rigveda*, we find the fundamental base about the episode related to Siva’s drinking of poison. The Satarudriya section of the Yajurveda mentions Rudra’s blue neck. According to Indian mythology, the serpent king Vasuki vomited deadly poison in time of churning ocean. The whole universe was influenced by its infernal consequence. For the solution of the problem, Mahadeva at the request of the gods, took the venom and kept it in his throat. For the effect of poison his throat is coloured blue. With the passage of time, the god is called Nilkantha.

**Mahadeva**

The denomination of Siva as Mahadeva, we find first at Atharvaveda. In this text, it is said that the seven attendants of Eka-vratya (Rudra) are Bhaba, Sarva, Passupati, Vigna, Rudra, Mahadeva and Isana respectively. Svetaswatara Upanishad says manifold names of Rudra Siva. One important of those names is Mahana.3 Mahana or Mahadeva means the highest lord of the divinities. The fact represents Siva the dominating deity among the adorable divinities. The appellation like Maheswara, which prevailed in Pauranic age, also bears the testimony of Siva’s glorification as the supreme God.

Nomenclature is an important part of study for furnishing the historical information. We are known about the different names of Lord Siva, which signify his various achievements, different aspects, many other dignities and manifold ascriptions. A huge number of Siva’s name also focus light on the increasing popularity of the god with the passage of time. In the *Rigveda*, different connotations of Rudra manifest his different characteristic features. In the Age of Yajurveda, we find proliferated idea about Rudra. The days of two great epics tell that the numbers of Saiva

---

followers were increased at that time. As a consequence more than thousand names are attributed to Siva. Besides increasing popularity of Siva different names of the god also draw the attention on the development of the worship of Siva in India. Manifold names collected from different sources prove that the non-Aryan god was the supreme Lord among the gods during the span of time. It is also noteworthy that the self realization of devotee's mind changes the general concept about Lord Siva. For the reason, it is found that the malevolent God Rudra transforms in the auspicious form of Lord Siva.

**Saiva Philosophy**

The characteristics of Siva cult are the exaltation of Siva over the gods. According to the philosophical introspection, Rudra rules this universe through his divine power and after a time span of existence he withdraws all the creations during dissolution. But human mind cannot reach the highest level of realization. So, one can easily cogitate infinite through any of his finite and concrete manifestation, represented as the form of symbol or image. Symbol or image reminds devotee the god to whom he offers his allegiance. Forms and observances help one to attain the supreme love of god.

Lord Siva is conceived as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe, who is without commencement and end. The absolutely independent god creates all that existent by the mere power of his will. The world appeared in himself, which seems to be distinct from himself. But it is not really seen so, it is like objects appearing in a mirror. The pure soul is in true sense unlimited. Being all pervading and the progenitor of pure consciousness, he is Chaitanyamaya. Creation and devastation being his sports, he is Lilamaya. Three phases of godly ability viz, tamasik, rajasik and sattvik make Siva as the incarnation of Trigunamaya. Though the tamasik phase he appears as the insentient matter, through the rajasik
phase as the material and vital power, this divinity brings the changes in the material world as also in the physical bodies of all creatures and living beings. Through the sattvik phase he works as the mind in its different functions and as the subject of experience and action in every living being.

Assessing the different streams of philosophical idea about Siva, mention may be made that the supreme authority is endowed with ascriptions of self existence, highest sanctity, intuitive wisdom, immeasurable intelligence, absolute freedom, eternal compassion and infinite bliss. For his immutability, he is called Kala. The Lord is the only cause of the universe just like the potter of the earthen objects. He operates the whole existence through his consort as his instrumental cause, which is conscious energy, the very body of god. The holy supreme being grounded in his consort has the intermediate link between pure consciousness and the unconscious matter. Supreme being in itself is Siva and the absolute soul in relation to objects is sakti or maya. She is Uma, the motive of the bondage of all things and every beings. She works as the conjoining link between the immense and the subtle, the material and the spiritual, the idea and the word. The philosophy of inter relation between God Siva and Goddess Uma is denoting monistic approach, but it has reality in its character.

Vision to the different schools of Saivism in India is as follows. Pasupata, Kashmir and Agamanatin school of Saivism are much popular in the different region of India such as Gujarat, Kashmir and South India.

**Pasupata Saivism**

The Pasupatas are the important sects of Saivas. The sect is familiar as the Lakulisa Pasupata. Lakulisa, the progeny of Kayarohono in North India, is considered as a personification of Lord Siva. The Pasupata rite is described as consisting of besmearing the initiate's body with ashes conjoining with the muttering of a hymn. By performing this vow, the worshipper of Rudra Siva has overcome the bindings and he is released
from the fetters of his individual existence. Varahamihira refers to the Pasupatas as Sabhasma-dvijas and Hiuen Tsang describes the same sect as the ash-besmeared pilgrims.6

According to Madhabacharya, the great commentator, there are five subjects in the Pasupata system, which are as followings—Kriya (effect), karana (cause), joga (meditation), vidhi (behavior) and dukkhanta (dissolution of sorrow).7

The Knowledge of pasu (individual soul), pasa (bondage) and Pati (Supreme Lord) is the ultimate object and can lead to supreme happiness. Pasu appears as many under different conditions and circumstances. Pati or Purusa, the all pervading and omniscient one is considered as the originator of both pasu and pasa. The idea of Pasupat Philosophy has a close similarity with Vedantic monism.

Sarvadarsana Sangraha says about the tenets of the Lakulisa Pasupatas as follows. A karya (effect) is defined as that, which follows a cause (karana). According to Pasupatas, all objects are effect. In consistency with this their definition of karya, they bring jivatman or pasu, which they admit as perpetual, under the category of karya because it is dependent upon the Pati (Paramatman). In persuence of the Pasupata Philosophy, the Lord Parameswara is known as the karana (cause). Jnanasakti and kriyasakti, both belong eternally with him. The Pasupatas believe in divine injunction, which has no need of the base of good or evil works of soul.

Meditation and union of the soul with Pati, may be obtained in two ways. Firstly, it is acquired by prayer, contemplation and other rituals and in the second by exercising strict control over the senses. Following the procedure of yoga (meditation), one can attain the stage of moksha (emancipation).

7 Jash, Pranabananda, History of Saivism, 1974, p.51.
Vidhi (rules) of conduct of the Pasupata is the most important part of their religion. Besmearing thrice in a day by ashes, howling like 'aha' 'aha', singing loudly the encomiums of Lord Siva, dancing, roaring like bulls, circumambulation for acknowledging homage to the divinity, all these observances are the part of their rituals.

At the end of the pain, one can reach the attainment of moksha. Moksha is of two sorts—Anatmaka moksha and satmaka moksha. The previous is explained as the absolute freedom from pain. Ascriptions of Paramapurusa on a devoted follower, is called satmakamoksha. Satmakamoksha depends on jnanasakti and kriyasakti. Perception of the subtle, well acquaintance with all the sastras, listing every kind of sound are considered as the part of jnanasakti. The fulfillment of every object is known as kriyasakti.

Xashmir School of Saivism

Kashmir is an important centre of Indian Philosophy particularly for Saiva darsana. The Pasupata form of Saivism prevailed in Kashmir from the period of remote past have a philosophy similar to that of adshuut as developed by Sankara. This school, known as the Trika system, for it also dealt with the three topics namely Pati, pasu and pasa. Kashmir school had two branches—Spanda and Pratyavijna. The Spanda school was associated with kallata and the Pratyavijna school was established by Somananda. These two branches did not put down any emphasis on disciplinary ritualism. The Spandasastra emphasized extreme contemplation for the individual aspirant. The Pratyavijna doctrine had a stress on the aid of the preceptor in helping his follower to introspect truly the identification of his own self with Supreme Lord.

According to the Spandasastra, the supreme soul does not depend on any secondary cause for creating universe. Followers of Spandasastra have the firm credence that the Lord is absolutely independent and neutral.

8 Jash, Pranabananda, History of Saivism, 1974, p. 121.
He creates the universe by his super spiritual desire. So, the created world is often nothing more than a reflectory image of omnipotence. Followers of the Spandasutra do not coincide with the Acharya Sankara's theory of illusion (Mayabada). Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir school put his view to the philosophy of the genesis of creation. In Vasugupta's realization, Lord Mahadeva delineates the portrait of universe without any implements, such as canvas, colour and crayon. Parama Siva creates material world by his individual and attentive will power.

Somananda, a believer of Vedantic monism established Pratyavijna branch to expound his introspection. Somananda established the inception of Pratyavijna scripture in his renowned work Sivadristi. Pursuers of the Pratyavijna school have the coincidence with the imitators of the Spanda school about some views of philosophical speculation. Both of those have not divergent view about the genesis of universe and the relation between the god and creatures. Albeit they annotate the unity between god and creatures by some different ways.

The power recognising an object originally known to us but which had been lost sight of for long is called pratyavijna. Doctrine of the Pratyavijna school speak that Paramatma has it's eternal existence. But sentient soul is pervaded by illusion. If one realises his own identity with the imperishable soul, he recognises the fact of unification with the Paramatman.

Agamanta Saivism

Saivism, like Hinduism in it's present form, involves a double framework, the Nigama and Agama, the Smriti, that is tradition and Sruti, that is direct relations from Siva to Parvati. The Nigama stands for the Veda and Vedanta. Although the Agamas stand for the yoga and bhakti, they are not always positively hostile to the Vedas.

Agamantins deem that the monotheistics are ineligible for receiving Siva initiation. The Agamanta Saivism has the philosophy, which stands
upon the tenets of Sankhya and Yoga. The Agamantins never resist the women, Sudras and the Pratilomas for participating religious rites. Saiva teachers of South India claim that the Agama is a science, which originated from Maheswara and expanded by the tradition of teachers (guru parampara).9

The Saiva Agamas enjoin that there are three tenets—The Lord (Pati i.e. Siva), the individual soul (pasu) and the fetters (pasa). Above mentioned those bind one to his terrestrial existence. The whole system of Agamanta Saivism has four parts, known as padas which are charya, kriya, yoga and jnana. Charya is the stage of practical piety and performance of the prescribed duties and rites, kriya consists of the confirmatory sacrament (diksa) and the five purifications associated with true worship; Yoga denotes the stage at which the individual soul attain the communion with Siva as a consequence of the observances of the yogins; and lastly jnana, the highest stage preparatory to final liberation, is that of true knowledge, which makes the individual soul pre-eminently fit for intimate union with god. Sambhudeva, one of the exponents of the school, call it the Siddhantasastra.

The great peculiarity of all the non Vedic Saivas is their initiation (diksha). In performing this ceremony they need different shaped kundas or receptacles for fire. They also worship Lord Siva in kumbhas (vessels) which filled in water. They perform various types of homas (fire oblations).

It is their belief that he, who has not been initiated in confirmatory sacrament (Saiva diksha) does not attain moksha (salvation).

All four parts of Agamanta Saivism are enjoyed by the fourfold types of devoted admirers to Lord Siva. They are the Samayis, the Putrakas, the Bhaktikis and the Naisthikis.10 Ways persued by the followers are also known by the terms dasamarga, putramarga, sahamarga and sanmarga.

Except the aforesaid important three schools of Saivism, mention may be made about the Vira Saivism and Siddhanta school of Saivism. Those are noteworthy in the history of Saivism.

**Vira Saivism**

One of the famous and popular school of South Indian Saivism is Virasaiva school. In the assessment of some scholars, the word Virasaiva means a stalwart devotee of Siva. But the evidences of Saivite Agamas do not agree with the above mentioned fact. Saiva Agamas and Siddhanta Sikhamani say that the term signifies a follower of Siva, who always delights in the supreme knowledge, related to oneness of Lord and his devotee.\(^{11}\)

The core of Vira Saiva thought seems to be as early as the Upanishads. The Sutasamhita of Skanda Purana and Kamikagama preach the philosophy related to Vira-Saivism. The Vatulatantra is also a scriptural work, which has some authentic description about the rituals of Vira Saivas.

Some regard Basava as a prophet of Vira Saivism. Basava, a brahmin from Bagewadi, karnataka was not only a spiritual personality, but a renowned social reformer. There is a controversy among scholars regarding the identity of the founder of the sect. Different opinions tell that Ekantada Ramayya was the pioneer of this sect.\(^{12}\)

Vira Saivas were believed that as soon as a Saiva dies, he immerses with Mahadeva. Bearing the phallus on human body is Vira Saiva's unavoidable ritual. The Lingayatras always carry a small phallus, encased in a silver casket. Under no circumstances one should abandon this phallus from his body.

---


On the basis of the philosophical view, mention may be made that the advice of Basaba and his followers had a strong and a moral basement. Accordance with them a firm faith on omnipotent is called bhakti. Bhakti or devotion originates from bhaba. Jnana and karma are equally important and essential with aforesaid two. So, bhakti, bhava, jnana and karma are the four necessary elements for the acquisition of highest gain.

The dogma of Vira Saivism stands on the tenet of astavaranam or the eight coverings against evil and satsatha or the six stages of emancipation. The eight fold coverings are as followings—Guru, linga, jangama, bibhuti, rudraksa, padodaka, prasada and panchaksara. The six stages of liberation are—Mahalinga, prasadalinga, charalinga, sivalinga, gurulinga and acharalinga.

Main theme of the religious philosophy of Lingayatas is as after mentioned. The unrivalled one is the honest, conscious and ever delighting. So, he is called Sivatatva by his votaries. The supreme is also benamed by the denomination Sthala. For it's own intention and internal reaction, the highest authority divided in two parts—Lingastala and angasthala. Lingastala is the adorable Rudra Siva. Angasthala is the adorer or the individual soul. Internal power of Lord Siva divided in two parts. Those are as follows—Kala (power) and bhakti (devotion). Individual souls gain the unity with the Lingasthala or Siva himself through the path of devotion.

The Siddhanta School of Saivism

The Saiva devotees, on the basis of emphasis on devotion, pursued the tenets of Pauranic scripture known as Siddhantamarga. A matured thought of the kriya, yoga and charya proves that these devotees were far moderate in their religious introspection and ritualistic practices.

Most of the Puranas related to Saivism give an elaborate description of the understanding of the supreme knowledge, which called Siva jnana. The Linga Purana takes yoga as the most important manner of
recommended path of the realization, while the Siva Purana highlights primarily on bhakti and secondarily on yoga. In this text, it is stated that devotion or bhakti is the highest spiritual success. It is not a mere penance. The text further tells that when one concentrates and meditates on the nature of Siva, one attains the state of yoga. Through the practice of yoga, one can increase the devotion and ultimately acquire the grace of god. At the end of the process the individual is emancipated and becomes Sivasama or the equal to Siva.

It is true to realise that the bhakti (devotion) is the last word of the Siddhanta Saivism. The bhakti includes three cardinal points viz. tapasya (penance), vrata (vow) and niyama (discipline). Those associate devotion with the meditation.

According to the both the Puranas, yoga is needed to bead one on the way of supreme’s realization. It is stated that ascetics prescribe eight types of yoga. Those eight are as follows—yama, nihama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

Distinction between the Sanskrit school of Saiva Siddhanta and the Tamil Saivas is not much different. In fact, the philosophy propounded by both these schools is more or less the same. J. N. Farquhar makes a distinction between aforesaid two in such a manner—"The Sanskrit school has in main a following of Brahmanas, many of them being temple ministrants. It’s basement is visistadvaita and literature is written in Sanskrit, while the following of the Tamil school is almost entirely non-Brahman, it’s Vedantic standpoint is advaita".15

Some Minor Sects of Saivism

From literary and other sources, it is found that there were some other sects of Saivism such as Kapalikas, Kalamukhas, Ardhanariswara, Hari-Hara, and Natha Panth. The aforesaid are generally followed by

people, who are not competent for Vedic wisdom. We shall now go through briefly some aspects of philosophy of these sects.

The sect of Kapalikas is also known as Kapali, Mahavratin and Somasiddhantin. The followers of this sect took human skulls in time of collecting their alms. Like all other Saiva sects, their credence formed and extended upon the concept of Lord Siva as the highest authority. They regarded moksha and purusartha of human life. But their idea of moksha is grown up on the basis of their epithet of Soma siddhantin. The term Soma indicates Siva’s intimate contact with Uma. The greatest bliss or mahasukha is the highest level of sexual happiness, which can guide one to keep pace on the path of moksha. Kapalikas revelled in makaras like madya (wine), mansa (meat) and maithuna (sexual mitigation).

Kalamukha was a branch of the Pasupata sect. They were known as Kalamukhas as they used a black line on the forehead. This sect was popular over the major part of Karnataka as well as the small area of Andhra Pradesh. Philosophical thought of Kalamukhas stands upon the concept of Lord Siva as Brahman. They emphasise the threefold activities of Siva such as creation, sustenance and destruction.

Since Pauranic time attempts have been made to combine the devotees of the powerful sects of Saivism and Vaishnavism. The philosophy behind the development of Hari Hara sect is dependent on the growing spirit of harmony between these two Hindu sects. Amalgamation of Hari and Hara or Siva and Rama or Surya and Bhairava Siva denotes the fact.

Natha Pantha seems to be influenced by Buddhist Sahajayana and Vajrayana cults. Assimilation of Buddhist concept of sunya, sahaja and Siva Sakti concept of Agamic thought probably interlinked in this cult. During 12th centaury A.D. Natha Pantha independently manifested and was respected all over India as a Saiva sect.
Tradition of Saivism in Bengal

The contents of the Hindu faith are built on fundamental truths of life, existence, soul, nature and god. They have come down to us through the scriptures from very ancient days of the Rigveda. The verification of these truths by the realisation of the seers of every age has augmented their glory. The unchangable characteristic feature of religious reality gave India strength to oppose great catastrophes. India's spiritual acquisitions supplied vivacity to increase her vitality. It is transparent to whole world that the peoples of India were enlightened by the idealism which may be considered as the heritage of moral dignity.

It is difficult to accurately ascertain the religious life of the people of ancient and early medieaval period. In the religious field Indians have a monistic uniformity in diversity. For this reason, a synchronised development of different religions and credences are revealed in India. Mention may be made that different religious sects like Sakta, Saiva, Vaisnava co-exist in the land of India as well as Bengal. In many cases particularly the people of Bengal borrowed various types of rites and rituals from the non-Aryan people of the country. In the days of yore, the religious life of ancient people was influenced by the faiths, worships and rituals of the aborigenes.

Bengal as a part of India has taken an important role to conserve the religious faith of regional people. Examining the popularity, extention and tradition of Saivite religious system, opinion may be given that the same is an important chapter of the religious history of Bengal. The concept of Saivism in Bengal was mainly based on the Pauranic scripture. According to manifold names of Siva and iconographic specimen related to Lord Siva, it is ascertained that the adoration of Siva was fully prevalent in Bengal at the Gupta period. Some definite forms and icons of Lord Siva, which popular in Pala period was discovered in the different excavated sites of
this region. In this connection, Chandrasekhara, Umamaheswara, Vrisabahana, Kalyanasundara, Sadasiva, Ardhanarishwara and Nataraja are noteworthy. During the age of Sena rulers, the influence of South Indian images was increased in the land of Bengal. As for example, we may mention the image of twelve handed Vinadhara Nataraja and Sadasiva.

Phallic worship is also familiar in Bengal. In the Pala age and the reign of Chandras it was supposed to be well known. Mukhalinga images of this period were discovered in different parts of Bengal. Mukhalingas and Swayambhu-lingas tell that phallic worship was able to get popularity through the regional worshippers.

From the days of past, local people paid their homage to Siva according to their own faith. Their idea makes the god as the personification of the power of birth and death or of change, decay and rebirth. Mainly Pasupatas and Agamantas took the vital part for extention of Saivism in Bengal. More than that, Chola king Rajendra Chola appointed a Saiva ascetic named Sadasiva Pandit to manage the recruitment of Saisacharya from the people of Gaudadesa and Aryadesa. From the connotation of Siddhantasarabali, it is known that Rajendra Chola brought some Saisacharyas to his Chola Kingdom from the coast of the Ganges. From the evidence, we can come to conclusion that the Saisa preceptors of Bengal played a vital role to spread Saivism in the Chola Empire. Achariyas (preceptors) from Gangetic coast influenced the Siva devotees of South India by their dignity and magnanimity.

Witnesses of epigraphs say that the rulers of Bengal were initiated in Saivism with the passage of time. Dynasties, like the Guptas, Palas, Senas and Khargas were devoted to the divinity of Lord Siva and dedicated their respect compiling eulogy of Siva in their different types of epigraphs. Damodarpore copper plate, Ashrafpore copper plate, Khalimpore inscription are noteworthy in this connection.

In the phase of pre-Gupta period, *Pasupata Saivism* was formed in its real shape. During Gupta period and post-Gupta period the followers of this sect were coming Bengal from the different parts of North India. *Pasupata* and *Agamanta* may be considered as the founders of *Saivism* in Bengal. Besides the advent of those two, local people primarily supported the ideology and religious practice related to *Saivism*, which brought by them. Through the chapter of religious development, the cultural relation and spiritual interaction between people of different region took vital role to make *Saivism* a popular event.