EPilogue

Though it is not possible to conclude a research investigation into such a sensitive, intellectual and critically valued subject, this conclusion would only mean a beginning of a new journey of my research in becoming a witness to the future of this subject. The discussion and argument on visual cultural identity here only attempt to analyse, understand and study the totality of its subjective nature and its peripherals, thus asserting the birth, life and the conscious existence of the local identity in the contextual time and space of global contemporary cosmopolitism. The historical struggle and the path of this symbolic making has not been an easy path to construct. It has, like any other struggle for an identity and freedom, made huge sacrifices, and its true activists have shed their blood and surrendered their wealth in the humble service of the Mother Goddess. In the herculean effort of ethnographers and anthropologist's ideation, conceptualization and practicallising such intellectually strategized idea, with unsurpassing emotionally connectable bonding, planned with a epistemologically linked historical evidence and hierarchically undeniable acceptance of a great kingdom, the iconography of the Kannada Mother Goddess is undoubtedly well established as the predominant deity of Kannada and the beloved daughter of Bharat Matha. This iconography is probably one of the most powerful visual tools of contemporary times, dwelling in those spaces of mind and land that no other visual symbols dared to enter. If Bharat Matha has potentially been the visual mother, the visual weapon in achieving freedom for India, by overthrowing the most powerful empire that history has witnessed, then it is the divinity and power of the local Kannada Mother Goddess Thayee Bhuvaneshwari who has brought identity and freedom to the sub-national statehood, and her glory and pride which have become a most efficient tool for the survival of the people, language and State in terms of identity and representation.
History teaches that suppression and rejection lead to the rise of a new idea as a reaction, that later revolutionises the world. "Liberty, equality and fraternity" "no Taxation without representation" "Apartheid" "Freedom & Independence" and many such revolutions have always been encountered with a medium of representation that had an independent identity and fought for the freedom. May that be the leaders or their followers, the form of representation by concept, content and presentation were clear. From Mahatma Gandhi to Theodore Roosevelt, from Nelson Mandela to Martin Luther King, or Ernesto "Che" Guevara, or nations such as the post-world-war Japan to the globally competing Singapore, the struggle to be free has been the fundamental reason for every change, relating to the present situation of Indian states, inter-state & intrastate issues such as demand for Coorg to be independent from Karnataka, Assam and North east state issues, Belgaum crisis etc or the national territorial issues such as that of India-Pakistan or Tamil-Srilanka issues, are on the quest for survival in the name of territorial freedom or claim of identity. This quest for identity has been a larger struggle for the country, state and people, but the success and the acceptance of identity has been for those who have unified the nation with a potential idea that it should unify for a better cause in making an identity — a strong, clear and structural identity that can hold the future but with positive, progressive, non-destructible purpose.

Matha, or Thayee, the synonyms of the word Mother, often used as suffix with Bharath or Kannada, has its roots from the ancient literature context. The word matha comes from the Sankrit word mathru, which, in turn, is made up of two parts, "ma" and "thru". "Ma" meaning beyond, and "Thru" meaning Trigunas (trigunas are: Satva, rajas and tamas, the classification of gunas, with guna meaning string or a single thread or strand of a cord or twine. In more abstract uses, it may mean a subdivision, species, kind, quality, or an operational principle or tendency). Thus the word matha (mathru) means beyond any merits and demerits of classifications, or qualities...
or caste or religions. This meaning is stated in Yaska Maharshi’s text on the etymological study of Sankrit: *Niruktham*. While understanding the meaning itself does not answer questions on the function of the word or the concept and its visual, realizing the inner meaning that exists within the deeper layer of the terminologies, especially in Sanskrit, is very important to aid understanding and avoid misinterpretations. Another example of such usage is the term *Bharatha*, with *bha* meaning *atma gyan, atma prakash, atma anandam* etc, and *ratha* meaning *that which guides*, thus *Bharatha* meaning the land guided by spiritual wisdom. (and so is many such terms like Dharani, Bhakti, Darshana and so on.)

Terms such as the Latin ‘Matre dei’ have the same meaning as Mathru Devi — Divine Mother. *Darshan*, from *dhruk and drishyam*, meaning the person who sees and the scene; *Drig drishyam* means the seer and the scene, are derived from Adi guru Shankaracharya’s *Drig Drushya Viveka Prakaranam*. Looking into other religious terms in similar contexts,

Mary Immaculate means “Virgin Mary” the Sacred Mother of God: Jesus.

Similarly, in the term Adi Parashakti, ‘adi’ means from time immemorial, ‘para’ means beyond intellectual comprehension, ‘Shakthi’ means infinite magnetic energy that is the embodiment of consciousness.

Another highly misinterpreted visual icon is the Shiva linga or lingam. Shiva means auspicious (or that which entertains everybody or all). Lingam comes from *lim + gam*. ‘Lim’ means dissolve into unperceiveable by the sense organs. (‘Indraya agocharam’)

‘Gam’ means to expand. (Up to a limit expand and contract and dissolve into unmanifested energy.) The universe expands to a great extent and contracts and dissolves into unmanifested infinite energy which is consciousness. This is the symbolic representation. All living beings enjoy the marvel of creation upon the manifested...
expanded universe with the Lingam and enjoy being in the dissolved state in unmanifested energy, that is pure consciousness.

'Na' means unmanifested 'ni' means energy thus 'Ni' means unmanifested energy. That which is unmanifested energy means 'yoni'. Linga yoni. 'Yo' means that which is. These two vital terms of tantra, represent the whole phenomenon of the universe. Thus the Symbolic awareness in the form of Shiva Linga. This is explained in Vedanta as 'drig drushya' and in modern science as matter and energy.

Matter and energy. Matter is a temporary visible form of energy, thus oneness concept known as advaitha — the non-dual form. All manifestation sprouts from consciousness, like dreams from the mind, says Advaitha philosophy. The extrinsic mobile entity expresses the inherent qualities and the intrinsic immobile entity of the same energy remains as the witnessing consciousness, unaffected by the scenes, therefore being free to enjoy the marvels of creation, the ultimate aim of life.

This concept is evidently explained with the inner meaning in all religious texts. For example, in Tantra: Shiva-Shakthi (linga-yoni), in Vedanta: drig drushya and in Science: matter and energy. In the Quran: nafsmuthumyinu, with nafs meaning state (state of permanent peace, balanced state of consciousness), and muthumyiu meaning peace. In the Bible: joy of salvation, which means a state of being free from time, space, I and mine. In Hinduism: Nirvikalpa Samadhi: a state of mind free from time, space, I and mine. In Buddhism: Surangamasamadhi (Zen). The same concept is explained as 'Chan' in China and as 'Tao' in Taoism, similar to the 'Tao' of Shinto and Confucianism. In Jainism: 'Shvetambara and Digambara'. The being is characterized by the embodiment of bliss, knowledge and freedom.

The term 'religion' is known as 'religre' in Latin, meaning 'go back to the state of absolute freedom'. These concepts have been explained in scientific terms by many
scientists such as Max Planck (the father of quantum physics), who said, “energy is consciousness”.

These derivations and meanings are presented here as my perception, not to contradict any theory or drift away from the central core of the subject research, but to illustrate how the complex thinking of humans interprets, misinterprets and complicates the concept from its original purpose and function. As J. Krishnamurthy said: “If you can look at something beyond comparison, contradiction, evaluation and judgement, then only you are seeing the truth.” These practical philosophical perceptions are not applied here for any philosophical conclusion but to only rethink the process of thinking. The fact that these concepts are deep-rooted in the spiritual structures (here I wish to use the term ‘spiritual’ very cautiously) that have penetrated the formation of thought forms from the spoken traditional history to the embedded phenomena of the DNA in the generations of this nation as psychological impacts, are non-negatable. Thus the theory of the West cannot be applied directly in the Indian context, as the context, geography, psychology and history here are extremely different from the West.

The birth and origin of the mother goddess and her presence and purpose in the early 19th century was to unify the population divided on the basis of caste, region and religion. This purpose was fulfilled and the unification of Kannada and Karnataka was achieved along with a notion of pride and power to a large extent. But in the present contemporary context, the need for a goddess has become more of a political compulsion, a tool for individual development and regional politics.

The goddess who was incarnated for the formation of a state is now a resource and a tool for political image-making. The pride and prayer that filled the hearts of early Kannada activists is hardly there today. Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose or even
Mahatma Gandhi are reduced to mere symbols today; in fact, today in the vernacular context, 'Gandhi' symbolizes 100- and 500-rupee currency notes and not the concepts of 'ahimsa' and 'truth'! The only space where the goddess dwells is now in the political flex prints and sign boards and on auto and taxi windshields. Her images get a ritual airing once a year during the Rajyotsava day processions.

The research thus in this investigation outlines the potential power of the visual at three important levels: social, cultural and political. Besides, it has resulted in three major contributions: one, the development of a State (Kannada Desa), two, awakening a sense of pride and patriotism, and three, it has most importantly contributed to the creation of an identity as a State in the local, national and global context. The visual here was lavished attention in three forms: one as a painted and illustrated goddess, two as the sculpture of a divine deity in temples and three, in the popular visual culture as posters and films in the public domain. The characteristics of these visual representations display the influence of three major stylizations: one from the early temple architectural style, two from the Bengal school and Mysore tradition painting style and three from the popular calendar style of Ravi Varma paintings and the Bengal school style, and the resultant Sivakasi calendar style.

In the peripherals of the epicentric concept of the mother goddess and the functional flag of Kannada, the peripherals of this iconography have given birth to many other sub-iconographic images, such as those of her beloved sons, Dr Rajkumar, Shankar Nag, Vishnuvardhan and Ambareesh. The true fans ('Abhimani') and the co-existing cine stardom and fan culture adding to the image making, has thus tempted upcoming young stars to cultivate a fan club culture. On the other hand, from the non-film world, Kuvempu, Kempegowda, Basaveshwara and the Mysore Wodeyars are another set of loyal sons of the mother goddess, whose images are equally asserted in the displays in...
the public domain. The popular cultural enrichment, with such icons serving the mother goddess as franchisees in the street as well as in the minds of the public is another tool for the reaction to the urbanization of Bengaluru. In this process of the post-modern Kannada history-making in the cultural, political and social scenario, these two sets of icons play a very sensitive, representational and symbolic role, signalling the pride, power and presence of Kannada identity.

The other peripheral issues such as the masculinity in the icon-making, with a line of male dominant patriots with no female representations except for the mother herself — the beloved mother with no daughter — provoke debate. In a world where female infants do not have the freedom to take birth as freely as male infants, the role of women as social cultural leaders is blank, in spite of legends like the valorous Kitturu Rani Chennamma and the saint poetess Akkamahadevi who devoted their lives to a cause.

Another major issue to be noticed in this subject is the conflicting nature of Kannadiga versus Kannadiga, where the neglected regions of Karnataka such as the coastal Karnataka Karavali, Coorg, Belgaum and Kolar are still locked in a tussle with the state government demanding equality and development. This has also been mentioned in various contexts in the earlier chapters, especially how Mysore Kannada has been represented as the host of Karnataka and Mysore portrayed as the protagonist, with North Karnataka Kannada as the antagonist.

While these linguistic differences and inner conflicts are yet to be settled, noted linguistic scholars voicing doubts about the genuine contribution of Kannada literature to Kannada is another debatable issue. Thus, the issues of inner conflicts as in any other state or nation are reflected in details and nuances, but the argument that is debated in this investigation analyses the identity that has been asserted in the making of a State, for the local with the global development for and against the situation.
Another problem discussed pertains to the local versus global debate, with Kannada versus English (incidentally it first started as Kannada versus Sanskrit, then moved on to Kannada versus Hindi); Bangalore versus Bengaluru; localisation versus urbanisation; Kannadiga versus immigrant; Kannada versus IT-BT jobs; Bengaluru versus cosmopolitanism and finally, recent Kannada usage versus standard written Kannada. These conflicts are probably the most sensitive because of the fact that time and space are in high demand for change and thus its challenge for all in adapting with its circumstance, yet this also leads to the realization that the participation of the people in the democracy of Karnataka or Bengaluru is significant and reactive. Here we come to another question that evolves from the previous answer: what attempt has been made to resolve these problems? The essence of all issues vis-a-vis Kannada and Karnataka are regarding identity. All aspects revolve around identity: language, infrastructure, education, culture, tradition, heritage and social structure. Today almost all parts of the State are facing these crises of conflict, yet in the midst of all this, the State is on an apposite venture for change and development. Battling tumbling ministries and numerous scams, the state is on a forward march: the only question being, a march in which direction?

In India, we live on thinking that is based on a paradox, an allegorical irony and a speculated illusion rather than reality. For the rooting of any theory for an understanding — whether it be relatively minor or major — an enquiry or a methodological research, one often tends to lean on established theories or structures that may or may not be conflicting or controversial. The point that I wish to raise in the conclusion of this research as a beginning is, what path do we take? The path that western thinkers have advocated, down which many have attempted to travel in search of a standpoint, or that of the ancient native thinkers whose theories were summarily rejected after terming them as unscientific and impractical? Or if the
theories of pre- or post-modern native thinkers are to be chosen, one has to take into account that they too have carefully chosen the lines of Western inclination as a refuge. The problem that I wish to point out is the dilemma of a person who wishes to articulate, on being trapped between Western and native thinking. On the one hand his identity is deeply rooted in the structures of local thinking constructed over the concepts of ancient traditions which cannot be consciously denied, whether they be scientific or not. On the other hand he has to appeal to set global standards for his survival, as these standards are set by the world economy leaders who dictate the hierarchy of intelligence and power. At this juncture often we tend to be trapped between the Western and the native, and attempt to seek the third path which is experimental and highly risky, and for which no theory exists to support as a starting point. The confused state of mind or the path unconsciously taken is the point of view of the individual, especially belonging to a local culture such as Bangalore, or, for that matter, of any Indian. This questioning is my argument that I here wish to pause this research with. An urban individual who is born in Bengaluru today will only dream of being in the economically growing and financially secure IT-BT industry sector as a part of globalization, regardless of whether he has studied in a Kannada medium school or an English medium one! This question applies to a thinker as well as to a layman today; though he is clear about what he has to do, he is surely not clear about why and which way he should do it. This confusion is what is seen as an anxiety of the urbanization in Bengaluru, as a result its reaction and reflection through visuals, or rather it is the visuals and iconographies expressing the anxieties in making the statement of identity for the securing of their present and the future through this less read medium called 'visuals'.