CHAPTER — VII

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters of the dissertation an endeavour has been made to give a comprehensive and critical analysis of the philosophical views of Śrīpati. A systematic approach on the life and works of Śrīpati has remained so far elusive and scattered references on Śrīpati are found in the works of the great philosophers like S.N. Dasgupta, J.N. Sinha, K.C. Pandey, M.R. Sakhare and others from which it is possible to attain an account of his life and works. Some philosophers like S.C. Nandimath, Srikumara Swamiji, C. Hayavadana Rao, M.G. Nanjundaradhya have discussed his philosophical views but all of them referred to the religious and metaphysical aspects of Śrīpati’s philosophy. However, the epistemological aspects on Śrīpati’s philosophy which is one of the important tenets of Indian philosophy remained almost untouched by different scholars. It is, therefore, imperative to study the epistemological aspects along with religious and metaphysical aspects of Śrīpati’s philosophy. In this dissertation efforts have been made to include various views of different schools of Indian philosophy to bring out a critical analysis of Śrīpati’s works in all the relevant fields.

From the discussions carried out in the preceding chapters it is revealed that Śrīpati was an exponent of Vīraśaiva philosophy. Actually, Vīraśaivism flourished prior to 12th century A.D. But, it is due to his efforts
that Vīraśaivism occupied a prominent position in the field of Indian philosophical thought. In this context it can be said that the contribution of great philosopher Śrīpati in Indian philosophy is less known to the scholars and he did not receive due recognition for his scholarship. Further, it is to be mentioned that no work so far has been done on the philosophy of Śrīpati till date. Hence, an attempt has been made through this dissertation, to highlight the philosophy of Śrīpati and his contribution towards Indian philosophy.

According to the historians the founder of Vīraśaivism is Basava, the son of Madirāja and Madālambikā. But scholars like R.G. Bhandarkar, S.C. Nandimath opine that Vīraśaivism came into existence before Basava. Actually, Basava revived and popularized this system. On the other hand, a religious tradition says that Vīraśaivism was founded long ago by the five ācāryas, namely, Revaṇārādhyā, Marulārādhyā, Ekorāmārādhyā, Paṇḍitārādhyā and Viśvārādhyā. Among the five ācāryas Paṇḍitārādhyā occupies the central position. According to tradition, Śrīpati can be identified with Paṇḍitārādhyā. Śrīpati in his bhāṣya praises Ekorāmārādhyā as his revered teacher.

Śrīpati Paṇḍita was an inhabitant of Vijayavātikā i.e. Bezwada, a city of Andhra Pradesh. He was a great scholar in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Itihāsas and the Purāṇas and the Āgamas. Śrīpati wrote on Prasthān-Traya (Āgama, Nyāya and Vedānta) besides commentaries on the ten principal Upaniṣads, Śrīmadbhagavadgītā and other works as well. But unfortunately all these are not available now.
Scholars have different views regarding the date of Śrīpati Panḍīta. Some put him in the later half of the 10th century A.D. Others put him in the 12th century A.D. and some others put him to the 15th century A.D. Some literary works in Telugu and Sanskrit and lithic records could have helped to establish the time of Śrīpati. But in most of the Telugu literary works Śrīpati’s name is only mentioned but his time is not stated. However, from the timings of the authors and the relevant dates which are mentioned by the authors in their works, Śrīpati’s date can be set down to the 14th century A.D. Further, from the internal evidence recorded in the Śrīkarabhāṣya itself, it is clear that Śrīpati is posterior to Rāmānuja, Nīlakanṭha, Bhāṭṭabhāskara and Śrīkanṭha, as Śrīpati specially refers their names in his works. Śrīpati criticizes in more than one place distinctively the dualistic philosophy of Madhvācārya (between 13th and 14th century A.D.). From these timings Śrīpati’s date can be set down approximately in the last part of the 14th century A.D. Again lithic records which are discovered from the ruined mantap at different places also help to establish the time of Śrīpati that he flourished in 14th century A.D. Thus from the discussion carried out in this dissertation, the timings of Śrīpati could be ascertained which was shrouded under controversy.

Śrīpati’s philosophy is known as Vīraśaiva philosophy and he calls his system Bhedabhedātmaka Viśeṣādvaita i.e. Advaita with qualification. He holds a middle position between bheda and abheda. In reality, Śrīpati is a strong upholder of Śiva. Śiva is the authority of creation, protection and destruction of all. According to Śrīpati bhakti is one of the important means through which a devotee can attain the state of liberation.
In the maṅgalacaraṇa sloka of the Śrīkarabhāṣya the name of the work is stated by Śrīpati as “bhāṣyaṁ śivaṁkaram.”¹ In this context C. Hayavadana Rao opines that the term Śivāṅkaraṁ seems to be set down as the equivalent of Śrīkara. On the same time he gives an argument that Śrīpati tried to impress upon the reader that he named his commentary not after his own name, but after Śrīkara or Śivakara i.e. Lord Śiva Himself. So it can be said that the commentary of Śrīpati which is popularly known as Śrīkarabhāṣya is named virtually after Śiva.

Philosophical aspects of Vīraśaiva philosophy are something different from other schools of Śaiva philosophy and also from Ṣaḍdarśana. According to Vīraśaivism, the Ultimate Reality is one without a second and is identical with Śiva. Śiva and liṅga are used as synonymous terms in this system. Liṅga stands for the integral association of Śiva and sakti. In Vīraśaiva philosophy the individual self is termed as ātman. Other terms are also used to denote individual self, viz., paśu, jīva, puruṣa, arīga, etc. The ātman is a part of Śiva and that is pure, eternal and free from all taints.

According to Vīraśaivism, God is responsible for creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world. It accepts thirty-six tattvas and traces the origin of these tattvas back to the Ultimate Reality. There are three-fold classification of these tattvas – śivatattva, vidyātattva and ātmatattva. Śivatattva emerges from the Absolute (niṣkalaliṅga). The five saktis (parā, ādi, icchā, jñāna and kriyā) and the five sādākhyas are termed as vidyātattva. The five gross elements, the five organs of knowledge, five organs of actions, five vital breath, four internal organs and the self are

1. sutravṛttīṁ samālokaṁ kṛtaṁ bhāṣyaṁ śivaṁkaraṁ. SRBS, 1.1.1.
termed ātmatattva. Viśraṣaivism advocates the theory of changeless transformation (avikṛtaparīṇāmavāda). Śiva creates the world by His mere will through His parāmarśāsaṅkta, Himself undergoing no change. Viśraṣaivism also accepts that the world which is created is real.

According to Viśraṣaivism purification of mind is essential for an individual in his spiritual pursuits. Viśraṣaivism prescribes certain rites, disciplines and aids which are helpful for purification of mind. These are dīkṣā, i.e. initiation (vedhā, mantra and kriyā), aṣṭāvaraṇa i.e. eight aids (guru, liṅga, jaṅgama, pādodaka, prasāda, bhasma, rudrākṣa and mantra) and paṇcācāra i.e. five code of conduct (liṅgacāra, sadācāra, śivācāra, bhṛtyācāra and gaṇācāra). Further, Viśraṣaivism advocates ṣaṣṭhāla (bhakta, maheśa, prasādi, prāṇaliṅgi, śaraṇa, and aikya) as an important step in the self’s spiritual journey. Viśraṣaivism gives equal importance to bhakti, jñāna and kriyā. In other words it can be said that in Viśraṣaivism, aṣṭāvaraṇa, paṇcācāra, ṣaṣṭhāla and the integral association of bhakti, jñāna and kriyā—all are helpful for a devotee in his search for truth. Another important factor is that, according to Viśraṣaivism one need not renounce the world for attaining liberation. Viśraṣaivism advocates both jīvanmukti and videhamukti.

Śaiva philosophy is classified by different philosophers according to their own thought. In reality Śaiva systems are classified according to different form of Śiva worship and the ritualistic performances followed. There are mainly five well known systems of Śaivism, viz., 1) Pāṣupata Śaivism, 2) Śaiva-Siddhānta, 3) Śrīkaṇṭha’s philosophy, 4) Viśraṣaivism and 5) Pratybhijñā Śaivism.
Śaiva philosophical views are something different from that of the Śaḍdaṛśana. Moreover, there are some differences in philosophical views among the Śaiva schools also. Hence, in this dissertation different philosophical views like theory of knowledge, concept of Brahman, jīva, jagat, liberation etc are discussed in the light of Śaḍdaṛśana and different schools of Śaivism.

Generally in the schools of Śaivism the discussion on the studies on epistemology is limited. Epistemology is an important part of Indian philosophy which deals with the theory or science of knowledge. In Śrīpati’s Vīraśaivism also we find little discussion on epistemology. In this dissertation efforts have been made to bring out a detailed discussion on epistemological aspects in Śrīpati’s philosophy through a comparative analysis of different schools of Śaivism and different schools of Śaḍdaṛśana.

Regarding the discussion on Brahman it can be said that most of the Indian philosophical systems accept Brahman i.e. Ultimate Reality as the creator, sustainer and preserver of the world. Brahman is the cause of self’s bondage and liberation. But regarding the nature of Brahman they differ from each other. Among the schools of Śaḍdaṛśana, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accepts saguṇa Brahman i.e. Īśvara who is the lord of the Universe. Sāṁkhya system is atheistic. Yoga philosophy accepts Īśvara as a special kind of puruṣa. But Īśvara is not directly connected with world-process. In reality, Sāṁkhya and Yoga systems explain the world-process only with the concept of prakṛti and puruṣa. According to Advaita-Vedānta, Brahman is differenceless, qualityless and indeterminate one. Advaita-Vedānta accepts both nirguṇa Brahman (indeterminate Brahman) and saguṇa
Brahman (determinate Brahman). Brahman endowed with the power of māyā manifest itself as Īśvara, the lord of the Universe. On the other hand, the Mīmāṁsā philosophy denies a creator for the Universe. In the course of discussion about the concept of Brahman it is found that Śaivism accepts Śiva as the Ultimate Reality and He is the creator, sustainer and preserver of the whole Universe. According to Śaiva philosophy Ultimate Reality is termed as Pati. In Śrīpati’s Vīraśaivism it is found that Śiva is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the world. Śrīpati accepts that Śiva is endowed with infinite power, i.e. śakti. Śiva endowed with śakti performs the act of all creations. Śrīpati accepts determinate Brahman. He refutes the Advaita’s concept of differenceless, qualityless and indeterminate Brahman. Śrīpati firmly refutes that indeterminate Brahman cannot be proved by any means of knowledge. In this dissertation an independent view of Śrīpati on the concept of Brahman is highlighted which is different from other schools of Indian philosophy.

The concept of individual self (jīva) is common to all the orthodox Indian philosophical systems. But, it is a fact that regarding the nature of jīva they differ from each other. The schools of Śāḍḍharśana opine that in its real nature the jīva is pure consciousness and pure bliss. It is divine in origin. But in the empirical level the real nature of the jīva is not revealed. In this level the jīva is limited by time, space and matter or mind-body complex. According to Sāṁkhya-Yoga philosophy, the puruṣa or self with ahaṁkāra is the jīva and not puruṣa itself. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika uses the term ātman to denote jīva and this system adopts a realistic view of the jīva. The Mīmāṁsakas hold that the self is self-existent and self-guided.
It is a real substance endowed with the attributes of knowledge, action and feeling. According to Advaita-Vedānta the jīva is identical with Brahman and it is in essence existence, consciousness and bliss.

In the schools of Śaivism the term ‘paśu’ is used to denote individual self (jīva). They opine that the jīva is a part of Śiva and it is pure, eternal and free from all blemishes. In the view of Śrīpati’s philosophy, Brahman or Śiva is the source of the jīva and jīva is nothing but Śiva under the limitation of avidyā. Jīva or paśu is also called anāga-sthala. The jīva is both different from and identical with Śiva. The comparative study of Śrīpati’s philosophy with the other schools of Śaivism and Advaita-Vedānta makes it clear that Śrīpati’s concept of jīva is something different from Pāśupata-Śaivism, Śrīkaṇṭha’s philosophy and Advaita-Vedānta. Pāśupata-Śaivism advocates that the jīva is an effect of Śiva because they are bound by God. According to Śrīkaṇṭha the jīva is an attribute (viṣeṣaṇa) and that Śiva is the viṣeṣya. Advaita-Vedānta accepts that due to māyā, the cosmic nescience, Brahman appears as the empirical selves.

In this dissertation Śrīpati’s interpretation on the concept of jīva is highlighted which is something different from other schools of Indian philosophy, Pāśupata-Śaivism and Śrīkaṇṭha’s philosophy.

The concept of Jagat is common to all the orthodox Indian philosophical systems. But different systems differ widely in their opinion of the nature of the world. Most of the āstika schools accept an ultimate cause behind the creation process of the world. Sāṁkhya-Yoga philosophy holds that prakṛti is the ultimate cause of the world. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system, the process of creation or destruction is the will of the
Supreme Lord, i.e. *Mahēśvara*. According to Vedānta philosophy *saguṇa* Brahman or *Īśvara* is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. All the schools of Śaivism accept Śiva i.e. Ultimate Reality as the creator, preserver and sustainer of the world. In their view the world is real. It is both different and non-different from the Ultimate Reality. In the view of Śrīpati’s Vīraśaivism the world is a real one and Brahman i.e. Śiva is the creator, sustainer and preserver of the world (*jagat*). Paramaśiva creates the world through His power i.e. *śakti*. The comparative study of Śrīpati’s philosophy with the other schools of Śaivism and Advaita-Vedānta makes it clear that Śrīpati’s concept of *jagat* is something different from Pasupata-Śaivism and Advaita-Vedānta. Paśupata system denies the material causality of Brahman. This system accepts *prakṛti* as the modifiable material cause of the world. Again though both the philosophers Śrīpati and Śaṅkara explain their philosophy on the basis of *Brahmasūtra*, their views about *jagat* is something different from each other. To explain the creation process of the world Śaṅkara mentions the concept of *māyā*, but *māyā* is *mithyā* and thus the world is also non-existent. In this context Śrīpati accepts the realistic view. Śrīpati regards *māyā* as a phase of *śakti* and this *śakti* is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Śiva. According to Śrīpati *māyā* is not false entity. He refutes the Śaṅkara’s view that Brahman cannot be reflected in *māyā*. Brahman is formless and colourless. On the other hand, *māyā* has no ontological reality. If it were possible for Brahman to be reflected in *māyā* then incorporeal and formless air could be reflected in water. If *māyā* be a false appearance then *Īśvara* or *saguṇa* Brahman
also will have to be regarded as a false appearance, and false Isvara cannot be set forth as an ideal.

Śrīpati firmly opines that the world is a real entity, since it fulfils our practical purposes and gives scope for our actions. The world is beginningless and its past, present and future cannot be denied. The world produces our pleasure and sufferings and at present it exists in Brahman in a subtle state even during the dissolution. Regarding the reality of the world Śrīpati mentions that the world is not non-existent, because it is perceived, it is not false like dreams, because of dissimilarity. In this dissertation Śrīpati’s interpretation towards jagat is highlighted which is something very different from Śaṅkara’s Advaita-Vedānta though both the philosophers interpreted their philosophy on the basis of Brahmāsūtra.

Like all the systems of Indian philosophy Śrīpati also accepts the idea of liberation as the highest end of life. Śrīpati admits that an individual is subjected to sufferings arising out of the process of birth, death and rebirth and considers the termination of this process as liberation. From the very ancient times Indian seers have suggested four principal paths as capable of arousing in men the knowledge of the self or Absolute. These four paths are i) jñāna or knowledge based on mainly on mental speculation and meditation, ii) yoga or concentration based on mental and physical practices, iii) karma or action performed without an eye to the fruits and iv) bhakti or devotion. It has been suggested by the sages that the summum bonum of human life can be attained by pursuing any of these paths. The Śaḍdarśana, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism hold the same view in this regard.
Out of these four paths, Śrīpati accepts the path of devotion as the chief means for the attainment of liberation. He also accepts the path of action and knowledge as necessary pre-requisites for attainment of liberation. The path of bhakti is the attainment of God in some personal form and maintenance of a sweet relation with Him. Śrīpati holds that the performance of Vedic duties without any desire purifies the mind. When the mind is purified devotion to God arises. Continuous devotion to God produces the knowledge of God, which destroys nescience. According to Śrīpati all sins are washed away by the flood of devotion.

The path of attaining liberation in the view of Śrīpati seems to be easy. Because, the persons who are in distress and sickness are also eligible for acquiring the knowledge of God through the ways of devotion. Many ways of devotion are recommended by Śrīpati for a devotee or householder. These are – muttering the name of God, listening to scripture, meditation, surrender to God, go on pilgrimage to holy places etc. Actually Śrīpati tries to build up a philosophy of karma based on jñāna and supported by bhakti in a beautiful manner. According to Śrīpati karma and jñāna are subsidiary to bhakti, which alone brings liberation. Jñāna of the self and karma or religious observances such as sacrifices are not meant for all. For example, śudras and women are excluded from the study of the Vedas. But there is no such restriction in the case of devotion. Bhakti is open to all. It is catholic and universal. In the chapter of liberation it is observed that Śrīpati’s concept of liberation and means of attaining it is completely different from other schools of Indian philosophy which is highlighted in the dissertation.
In conclusion it can be said that the dissertation presents a comprehensive idea of the philosophy of Śrīpati by examining in detail specific representative works including Śrīkarabhāṣya of Śrīpati and other schools of Indian philosophy. The work delves into various philosophical aspects like Brahman, jīva, jagat, liberation etc. as understood by Śrīpati’s works and examines these concepts from the viewpoints of other philosophical schools as well. So it is clear from this study that Śrīpati’s philosophy occupies an important position in the field of Indian philosophical system and contributed enormously in enriching ancient Indian thought.

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