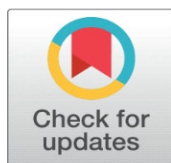


# MOTHERS OF POWER: THE SAPTAMĀTRKĀ TRADITION IN EARLY MEDIEVAL RAJASTHAN

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Received 28 October 2025  
Accepted 29 November 2025  
Published 31 December 2025

DOI  
[10.29121/ShodhSamajik.v2.i2.2025.111](https://doi.org/10.29121/ShodhSamajik.v2.i2.2025.111)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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## ABSTRACT

The cult of the Saptamātrkās—the seven mother goddesses—represents one of the most distinctive strands of Hindu goddess worship, blending local, tribal, and pan Indian traditions. Their veneration is attested from early Purāṇic texts and inscriptions, and their iconography evolved significantly between the Gupta and medieval periods. Initially depicted as fierce emanations of major deities (Brahmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, and Cāmuṇḍā), the Mātrkās were shown in group panels, often accompanied by Śiva or Vīrabhadra. Over time, their imagery became more elaborate: each goddess acquired distinct mounts, weapons, gestures, and ornaments, reflecting both sectarian affiliations and regional artistic styles. The terrifying aspects of Cāmuṇḍā and Kālī, the martial symbolism of Vārāhī, and the maternal yet protective qualities of Brahmī and Vaiṣṇavī illustrate the spectrum of divine femininity. Archaeological finds from regions such as Rajasthan demonstrate how local traditions shaped their representation, with variations in posture, attributes, and ritual context. The worship of the Mātrkās was not confined to collective cults; several, notably Cāmuṇḍā and Vārāhī, attained independent status as autonomous deities. Their iconographical development thus reflects the dynamic interplay of theology, ritual practice, and regional artistic idioms, underscoring the centrality of mother goddess worship in the evolution of Hindu religious art.

**Keywords:** Saptamātrkās, Mother Goddess Worship, Early Medieval Rajasthan, Hindu Iconography, Śākta Traditions

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the seven sister goddesses is discussed in various texts.<sup>1</sup> We get detailed information about her emergence and the iconography in Āraṇyak Parvan of Mahābhārat, Śalya Parvan of Mahābhārata, Bṛhata Samhitā, Kumārika khaṇḍa of Skand Purana, Varāha Purāṇa etc. Agni Purāṇa also discusses about the emergence of Skanda cult in association with heterogeneous Mātrkā tradition. The story of the emergence of *SaptaMātrkās* is given in *Purāṇas*. In *Markaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, about the origin of the *Sapta Mātrkās* is elaborated. The numbers of *Mātrkās* differ in various texts: sometimes these are seven, sometimes eight are mentioned. Varāha Purāṇa

<sup>1</sup> Shivaji K. Panikkar, *Saptamātrkā Worship and Sculptures* D.K. Printworld, New Delhi 1997. p.55.

additionally added Yogeśvarī in the existing number.<sup>2</sup> These seven sisters either were the 'seven mother' of the god Skanda or this was a generic term used for pre-Aryan, non-brahmanical conjoint mother goddess ancestor cults.<sup>3</sup>

All the *Mātrkā*s are to be shown seated and caring weapons appropriate to their male counterparts. They are shown seated upon *padmāsanās* in the sculptures. The images of *Aṣṭa-Mātrkā*s are found from Mandor, Kekind and Baroli. Gangadhar inscription of *Malav* Samvat 480 from Jhalawar, which talks about the *Sapt-Mātrkā*s temple is of a great historical significance.<sup>4</sup> All these *Mātrkā*s are sitting in *lalitāsana* position. These *Mātrkā*s don't have their vehicle. These *Mātrkā*s figures do not have *Gaṇeśa* or *Virabhadra* or *Śiva* in the middle in dancing form as is prescribed. In Mandor and Abaneri, the same thing can be seen. *Sapt-mātrkā* images mostly find a place in *Śiva* temple e.g. Badoli *Śiva* temple, *Śiva* temple at Maṇḍor so on.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Saptamātrkā on the Upper Left Top of the Torāṇa, Baroli Temple

**Figure 1** follows the sequence mentioned in Mayamatam and on the left to the goddess can be seen *Gaṇeśa*.<sup>6</sup> *Brahmāṇī* in **Figure 1** is four headed, with a *karandamūkuṭa*. In her upper two hands are a *Śula* and book. The lower right hand is in *Abhaya mudrā* and the lower left is taking *kamaṇḍal*. In the image of *Mahēśvarī*, face is mutilated, upper left hand is holding a snake and the lower right hand is in *abhayamudrā*, and the other two arms are broken. *Vaiṣṇavī* is depicted with *gadā*, in upper right hand and *cakra* in upper left arm, her lower right hand is in *Abhaya*

<sup>2</sup> Varāha Purāṇa

तस्य क्रोधेन महता मुखाज्ज्वाखा विनिर्ययौ ।  
तद्रूपधारिणी देवो या तां योगेश्वरी विदुः ॥  
स्वरूपधारिणी चान्या विष्णुनापि विनिर्मिता ।  
ब्रह्मणा कार्तिकेयेन इन्द्रेण च यमेन च ॥  
वराहेण च देवेन विष्णुना परमेष्ठिना ।  
पातालोद्धारणं रूपं तस्य देव्या विनिर्ममे ।  
माहेश्वरी च राजेन्द्रो इत्येता अष्ट मातरः ॥

<sup>3</sup> R.Mahhalakshmi, The Making of Goddess: Korraivai-Durgā in the Tamil Traditions, Penguin Books, 2011, p 79.

<sup>4</sup> J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Gupta Kings and their Successors*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. III. (Calcutta, 1888), pp. 76-78

<sup>5</sup> This also has been observed by R.Mahalakshmi that Saptamātrkā concept in the eighth century in the region continued to find place in the Śiva temple. R.Mahalakshmi, *The Making of Goddess* p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> Mayamatam,

मातृणां लक्षणं वक्ष्ये स्थापनं स्थानमेव च ।  
ब्राह्मी माहेश्वरी चैव कौमारी वैष्णवी तथा ॥  
वाराही च तथेन्द्राणी काली चाप्यन्तगामिनी ।  
दक्षिणेतरपार्श्वस्थौ वीरभद्रविनायकौ ॥

*mudrā* and lower left has *Kamṇḍala*. *Kaumārī* is depicted with four heads in her upper two hands holds a *Śakti* and *kukuṭa*. Her lower right arm is in *abhayamudrā* and lower left has *Kamaṇḍal*. *Indrāṇī* is engraved with *ankuśa* in upper left and *vajra* in the upper right. The lower right hand is in *abhayamudrā* and left is having *Kamaṇḍal*. *Vārāhī* is holding *gadā* in her upper right hand and lower left holds *Kamaṇḍa*, remaining two arms are broken. The last goddess is *Kankālī Āmuṇḍā*. Her upper right hand's weapon is broken; she holds *kapāla* in her lower left hand and sucking blood with her upper left hand. Her bones and veins are visible beneath the skin, and she is depicted with a sunken belly. To her left stands Gaṇapati, shown with four arms. During the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century CE, the images of Mātṛkā and Navagraha were simultaneously carved on the lintel of entrance gates.

### 1) Brahmāṇī

According to Matsyapurāṇa, she, resembling Brahmā, is four-faced and four-armed. She is to be depicted seated upon a swan, holding rosary and Kamaṇḍal.<sup>7</sup> Rao points out that as per *Amsumadbhēdāgama*, in the back right and left hands carries a *śūla* and *akṣamālā* respectively; the front right and left hand are in the *abhaya* and *varada* pose<sup>8</sup>.

According to *Mayamattam*, She has four heads, large eyes and her complexion is molten gold. She has four arms, bearing the gesture of Varad (boon giving) and Abhaya (fearlessness), along with a trident and a rosary. Seated upon a red lotus, she has swan as her mount and emblem. She portrayed in the likeness of *Brahmā* and dressed in a tiger skin.<sup>9</sup> According to *Agni Purāṇa*, *Brahmāṇī* is to be represented in a fair complexion, riding swan and carrying in her hands rosary, water pot, *rosary* and one hand with auspicious symbol.<sup>10</sup>

According to Rupamaṇḍana, she is seated upon a swan and in her hands carries a rosary, water pot, a scripture, a book and in her two uplifted hands she holds auspicious objects.<sup>11</sup> Figure 2 & Figure 3 both are the form of goddess *Brahmāṇī* depicting her with four heads and four hands but varies as per the icon holding in her hand. In Figure 2, she holds *ṣruka* and scripture in her upper right and left hand respectively. She holds *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* in her lower right and left hand respectively. In Figure 3, she is holding *śūla* and *akṣamālā* in her upper and lower right arm respectively and holding child with lower left hand and holding *kamaṇḍalu* in the upper left hand.

<sup>7</sup> Matsyapurāṇa, Geeta Press Gorakhpur, p. 1003

ब्रह्माणी ब्रह्मसदृशी चतुर्वक्त्रा चतुर्भुजा ।  
हंसाधिरूढा कर्तव्या साक्षसूत्रकमण्डलुः ।

<sup>8</sup> T.A.Gopinath Rao, Elements of Hinu Iconography, Vol 1, Part II, 1914, p 384.

<sup>9</sup> *Mayamatam*

चतुर्वक्त्रा विशालाक्षी तप्तकाञ्चनसन्निभा ।  
वरदाभयशूलाक्षमालाधरचतुर्भुजा ॥  
रक्तपद्मासनासीना हंसवाहनकेतुका ।  
ब्रह्माणी ब्रह्मवत्कार्या व्याघ्रचर्मसमाश्रिता

<sup>10</sup> *Agni Purāṇa*

गौरी चतुर्मुखी ब्राह्मी अक्षमालासतुगन्विता ।  
कुण्डाक्षपात्रिणी वामे हंसगा

<sup>11</sup> Rupamaṇḍana

हंसारूढा प्रकर्तव्या साक्षसूत्रकमण्डलुः ।  
स्तुबं च पुस्तकं धत्ते ऊर्ध्वहस्तद्वये शुभा ॥

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** Brahmāṇī, 8th-11th century, Chandrawati

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Brahmāṇī, 10th-11th Century CE, from Mungathala at present in Ajmer Museum

## 2) Vaiṣṇavī

According to Matsya Purāṇa, Vaiṣṇavī resembles Viṣṇu seated upon Garuḍa. She is four armed and bestows boons and holding conch, discus and mace. She also can be shown accompanied by a child.<sup>12</sup> According to Mayamatam, she holds a conch and discus and makes the gesture of *Varada* and *Abhaya*. She has beautiful eyes with black complexion. She is associated with Pippala tree, Garuḍa is her emblem and her

<sup>12</sup> Matsya Purāṇa

वैष्णवी विष्णुसदृशी गरुडे समुपस्थिता ॥

चतुर्बाहुश्च वरदा शङ्खचक्रगदाधरा।

सिंहासनगता वापि बालकेन समन्विता ॥

mount. She is adorned with Viṣṇu's ornaments.<sup>13</sup> According to Rupamaṇḍana, out of her four arms, she grants boon with one hand and holds conch, discus and mace in the others.<sup>14</sup> As per Agni Purāṇa, in her right hands she holds conch and discus and in the left hand bears the mace and lotus.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Vaiṣṇavī, 8th-11th century CE, Chandravati

In **Figure 4**, she is depicted with four arms. She holds in her hand gadā, cakra, rosary with varada mudrā and kamaṇḍala. It was a part of three Mātṛkā panel at the ruin temple of Candrāvati. In **Figure 5**, she is depicted with four arms, her upper right hand is broken and in the upper left hand she holds lotus. In her right and left lower hands, she holds rosary with varada mudrā and kamaṇḍala.

<sup>13</sup>Mayamatam

शङ्खचक्रधरां देवीं वरदाभयपाणिकाम् ।  
सुस्थानां श्यामवर्णां तां पीताम्बरसुलोचनाम् ॥  
पिप्पलद्रुमसंयुक्तां गरुडध्वजवाहिनीम् ।  
वैष्णवीं कारयेद् विद्वान् विष्णुभूषणभूषिताम् ॥

<sup>14</sup> Rupamaṇḍana,

वैष्णवी विष्णुसदृशी गरूडोपरि संस्थिता ।  
चतुर्बाहुश्च वरदा शङ्खचक्रगदाधरा ॥

<sup>15</sup> Agni Purāṇa,

शङ्खचक्रधरा सव्ये वामे लक्ष्मीर्गदाब्जधृक् ।

Figure 5



Figure 5 Vaiṣṇavī, 8th-11th century CE, Chandravati

### 3) Indrāṇī

According to Matsya Purāṇa she holds vajra, trident, and mace and seated upon elephant and having thousand eyes.<sup>16</sup> Rao while quoting *Devī- Purāṇa* points out that she carries the *ankuśa* and the *vajra* only.<sup>17</sup> *Mayamatam* states that she shines with the radiance of the moon color and wears a tiara. She holds a noose and the lotus. She is associated with Kalpadruma tree.<sup>18</sup> According to *Agni Purāṇa*, *Indrāṇī* should be represented as having a thousand eyes and holding the *vajra* in her hands.<sup>19</sup> In [Figure 6](#), she holds, Ankuśa and Vajra in her upper left and right hands respectively. In her right and left lower hands, she holds rosary with varada mudrā and kamaṇḍala.

<sup>16</sup> Matsya Purāṇa

इन्द्राणीमिन्द्रसदशीं वज्रशूलगदाधराम् ॥  
गजासनगतां देवीं लोचनैर्बहुभिर्वृताम् ।  
तप्तकाञ्चनवर्णाभां दिव्याभरणभूषिताम् ॥

<sup>17</sup> Rao op cit.

<sup>18</sup> Mayamatam

किरीटमकुटां देवीं सर्वाभरणभूषिताम् ।  
वरदाभयपाशाब्जपाणिकामिन्दुसन्निभाम् ।  
कल्पकद्रुमसंयुक्तामिन्द्राणीं कारयेद् बुधः ॥

<sup>19</sup> Agni Purāṇa

ऐंद्री गजे वज्रहस्ता सहस्राक्षी तु सिद्धये ।

Figure 6



Figure 6 Indrāṇī, 8th-11th century CE, Chandravati

#### 4) Māheśvarī

According to Matsya Purāṇa, Māheśvarī is in the form of Maheśvara, she is adorned with crowned with matted locks and bears the crescent moon, she rides upon a bull. With her four arms she carries skull, trident, club and with gesture of boon giving.<sup>20</sup> According to *Mayamatam*, she is depicted with three eyes and a radiant red complexion. Her emblem is bull and her hair is coiled into a crown. She holds trident and rosary of beads. She is associated with sandalwood tree and mounted on the bull.<sup>21</sup> According to *Agni Purāṇa*, Śankarī is to be represented as seated on a bull, carrying bow and arrow in her right hand and a *cakra* and bow in her left hand.<sup>22</sup> According to Rupamaṇḍana, she is mounted on the bull, four armed, holding a skull, trident, club and one hand in the *varad* gesture.<sup>23</sup> Figure 7 depicts her with four hands and holding trident and snake in the upper right and left hand

<sup>20</sup> Matsya Purāṇa

महेश्वरस्य रूपेण तथा माहेश्वरी मता ॥  
जटामुकुटसंयुक्ता वृषस्था चन्द्रशेखरा ।  
कपालशूलखट्वाङ्गवरदाढ्या चतुर्भुजा ॥

<sup>21</sup> Mayamatam

त्रिनेत्रां रक्तवर्णां च शूलपाणिं वृषध्वजाम् ।  
वरदाभयहस्तां तामक्षमालासमन्विताम् ॥  
जटामकुटिनी शम्भोर्भूषणीं तु महेश्वरीम् ।  
चन्दनद्रुमसंयुक्तां कारयेद् वृषवाहिनीम् ॥

<sup>22</sup> Agni Purāṇa

शाङ्करी सिता ।  
शरचापौ दक्षिणेऽस्या वामे चकं धनुर्वृषौ ॥

<sup>23</sup> Rupamaṇḍana

माहेश्वरी प्रकर्तव्या वृषभासनसंस्थिता ।  
कपालशूलखट्वाङ्गवरदा च चतुर्भुजा ॥

respectively. In her right and left lower hands, she holds rosary with varada mudrā and kamaṇḍala.

**Figure 7**



**Figure 7** Māheśvarī, 8th-11th century CE, Chandravati

### 5) *Kaumārī*

According to Matsya Purāṇa, *Kaumārī* is depicted riding the peacock and in the form of *Kumāra*. She holds trident and spear.<sup>24</sup> According to *Rupamaṇḍan*, she looks like *Kumāra* and rides a peacock. She wears red garments and holds *śūla*, *śakti* and *gadā*.<sup>25</sup>

According to *Aparājitapṛccha*, *Kumārī* is six faced and sits on the peacock. She holds the *akṣamālā*, *śakti*, *kukkura* and *kamaṇḍalu*.<sup>26</sup> According to *Mayamatam*, her complexion is red and emblem peacock. Her hair is tied with ornaments and she holds a spear and cock. She is associated with *udumbara* (Gular) tree.<sup>27</sup> According to *Agni Purāṇa*, she is two armed and holds a spear in her hand. She rides peacock

<sup>24</sup> Matsya Purāṇa

कुमाररूपा कौमारी मयूरवरवाहना ।  
रक्तवस्त्रधरा तद्वच्छूलशक्तिधरा मता ॥  
हारकेयूरसम्पनना कृकवाकुधरा तथा ।

<sup>25</sup> Rupamaṇḍan

कुमाररूपा कौमारी मयूरवरवाहना ।  
रक्तवस्त्रधरा तद्वच्छूलशक्तिगदाधरा ॥

<sup>26</sup> S.K.Panikkar, *Saptmātrkā worship and sculpture*, p 66

<sup>27</sup> Mayamatam

वासिकाबद्धमकुटा शक्तिकुकुटधारिणी ।  
रक्तवर्णा महावीर्या हारकेयूर भूषिता ॥  
वरदाभयहस्ता च कुङ्कुमप्रभसन्निभा ।  
सर्वाभरणसंयुक्ता मयूरध्वजवाहिनी ।  
उदुम्बराश्रितां देवीं कौमारीं कारयेत् सुधीः ॥

and dressed in red garments.<sup>28</sup> In **Figure 8**, Kaumārī is depicted with four hands. She holds spear in upper right hand and Kukkura in her upper left hand. In her right and left lower hands, she holds rosary with varada mudrā and kamaṇḍala.

**Figure 8**



**Figure 8** Kaumārī, 8th-11th century CE, Chandravati

## 6) Varāhī

According to *Matsya Purāṇa*, Varāhī is seated upon a buffalo and resembles *Varāha* she bears fly whisk, mace and discus and the destroyer of the lord of demons.<sup>29</sup> According to *Rūpamaṇḍan*, Varāhī should look like *Varāha*. She sits on a buffalo, strikes the bell and holds flywhisk. She holds *gadā* and *cakra* and for the welfare of the worlds, she annihilates all disease.<sup>30</sup> According to *Agni Purāṇa*, she is seated upon a buffalo and holds danḍa (staff), conch, and mace for subduing enemies.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Agni Purāṇa

कौमारी शिखिगा रक्ता शक्तिहस्ता द्विबाहुका ॥

<sup>29</sup> Matsya Purāṇa

वाराही च प्रवक्ष्यामि महिषोपरि संस्थिताम् ।  
वराहसदृशी देवी शिरश्चामरधारिणी ॥  
गदाचक्रधरा तद्वद् दानवेन्द्रविनाशिनी ।

<sup>30</sup> Rupamaṇḍan

वाराही तु प्रवक्ष्यामि महिषोपरि संस्थिताम् ।  
वाराहसदृशी घण्टानादा चामरधारिणी ॥  
गदा चक्रगदा तद्वद्दानवेन्द्रविधातिनी ।  
लोकानाञ्च हितार्थाय सर्वव्याधिविनाशिनी

<sup>31</sup> Agni Purāṇa

शङ्खचक्रधरा सव्ये वामे लक्ष्मीर्गदाब्जधृक् ।  
दण्डशङ्खारिगदया वाराही महिषस्थिता ॥

According to *Mayamatam*, *Varāhī* is dark in hue and display the gesture of *varada* and *Abhaya* She holds plough and club. She is tusked, broad bodied, dressed in black garment and buffalo is her mount.<sup>32</sup> According to *Aparājitapraccha*, *Varāhī* is described as boar faced and riding on a buffalo. She holds *akṣamālā*, *khaḍaga*, *ghantā*, and *kamaṇḍalu*.<sup>33</sup> *Varāhī* in [Figure 9](#) has been dated around 10-12<sup>th</sup> century. It is found from Mungthala in Sirohi. She is sitting upon a buffalo and in her four arms are holding gadā, śankha, cakra and holding child with one hand. [Figure 10](#) is from Chandravati. Her face resembles to *Varāha* and has four hands. She holds a hala, khapar, *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*.

**Figure 9**



**Figure 9** Varāhī from Mungathala, at Present in Ajmer Museum

<sup>32</sup> *Mayamatam*

वरदाभयहस्ता वा वाराही कृष्णसन्निभा ।  
हलं मुसलकं धृत्वा चर्मवासः समन्विता ॥  
शङ्खवर्णा च वरदाभयदण्डकरान्विता ।  
सदंष्ट्रां तु महाकाण्डां किरीटमकुटोज्ज्वलाम् ॥  
कृष्णाम्बरधरां देवीं सर्वाभरणभूषिताम् ।  
करञ्जद्रुमसंयुक्तां महिषध्वजवाहनीम् ।

<sup>33</sup> Shivaji k. Pannikar, *Saptmārkā Worship and Sculptur*, D.K.Printworld, 1997, p. 66.

Figure 10



Figure 10 Image of Varāhī from ruins of Chandravati temple

### 7) Cāmuṇḍā

According to Matsya Purāṇa, She holds a sharp sword, long tongue, hair standing upward with fragmented bones. She should be depicted with a tusked, terrifying face and wearing garlands of skulls. Skull in left hand and spear in the right hand, seated upon vulture or crow. Cāmuṇḍā is clad in tiger's skin, Kālī is naked and Kapālinī rides a donkey<sup>34</sup>

According to *Mayamatam*, she holds a skull and trident, hands in *varad* and *abhaya* gesture. She is eight-armed, bearing trident and skull. In her left hand she carries staff, bow, sword, shield, noose, and arrows; also, a drum and trident. mace, bow, sword, shield, noose and arrow. Her emblem is the vulture. She possesses three eyes, all completely red. She wears garlands of heads as sacrificial thread. Her mount is a corpse. Her other features: thin-bellied, fleshless-faced, skeletal mouth is wide open, tongue is long, clad in tiger skin, with flaming hair and serpent as her ornaments, she is kālī-emaciated, dark complexioned and dwells beneath banyan tree and her face is terrifying and tusked.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Matsya Purāṇa,

तीक्ष्णखड्गधरां तद्वद् वध्ये योगेश्वरीमिमाम्।  
दीर्घजिह्वामूर्ध्वकेशीमस्थिखण्डेश्च मण्डिताम् ॥  
दंष्ट्राकरालवदनां कुर्याच्चैव कृशोदरीम्।  
कपालमालिनीं देवीं मुण्डमालाविभूषिताम्॥  
कपालं वामहस्ते तु मांसशोणितपूरितम्।  
मस्तिष्काक्तं च बिभ्राणां शक्तिकां दक्षिणे करे ॥  
गृध्रस्था वायसस्था वा निर्मासा विनतोदरी।  
करालवदना तद्वत् कर्तव्या सा त्रिलोचना ॥  
चामुण्डा बद्धघण्टा वा द्वीपिचर्मधरा शुभा।  
दिग्वासाः कालिका तद्वद् रासभस्था कपालिनी ॥  
सुरक्तपुष्पाभरणा वर्धनीध्वजसंयुता

<sup>35</sup> *Mayamatam*

According to *Agni Purāṇa*, *Cāmuṇḍa* is depicted with hollow eyes, fleshless, three eyed, skeletal in essence, with hair standing upwards and a thin belly. She wears a tiger's skin, and in her left hand she holds a skull and spear.<sup>36</sup> According to Rupamaṇḍan, she appears dreadful, with tusks, an emaciated body and hollow eyes. Her arms extended in all directions, a thin belly and bears weapons such as club, discus, arrow, elephant goad, sword, shield, noose, bow, staff and axe. She moves among corpses, red-hued with deformed face, fierce in nature.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 11 of *Cāmuṇḍa* from Chandravati belongs to 11-12 century. This is a white marble image. It has eight arms and three eyes. In her right four arms, she holds a triśula, ḍamru, akṣamālā, and khaḍaga; in the four left arms she holds cup of skulls, khaṭwāṅga, skull and sucking blood with her lower finger. Corpse is shown below the image. She is wearing skull garland also. In region of Sirohi district, most of the images of the *Cāmuṇḍā* shows the goddess sucking blood with the lower finger of her left hand.

*Cāmuṇḍā* is considered one among the *saptamatṛkās* and *aṣṭamātrkās*. *Cāmuṇḍā* is one of the most venerated goddesses in all over the Rajasthan. She is not only worshipped together with the seven *mātrkā* but also venerated independently in her own right. In *Chandrāvati*, there are a number of *Cāmuṇḍā* images. They can be seen alone and also in groups. The image of *Cāmuṇḍā* can be seen in the temples of *Nilakaṇṭha-Mahādeva* at Nana, *Somanāth* in Pali, and in Belar temple.<sup>38</sup>

We have separate temples of *Cāmuṇḍā*; for example *Suṇḍā Mātā* temple is dedicated to *Cāmuṇḍā Mātā*. We have in Achalgarh many images of the goddess *Cāmuṇḍā* and a separate temple is dedicated to the goddess *Cāmuṇḍā* there too. Figure 12 is depicted on the outer wall of Kiradu temple of Badmer. As we can see, most of the sculpture is broken, but we can still see the corpse lying down at the feet

कपालिनीं शूलधरां वरदाभयपाणिकाम् ।  
अष्टहस्तं प्रकुर्वीत शूलकापालसंस्थितम् ॥  
वामे दण्डधनुः खड्गं खेटकं पाशबाणकम् ।  
एते त्वष्टभुजाः प्रोक्ता दशहस्तं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥  
डमरुं शूलकं प्रोक्तं सर्वमुक्तं प्रकीर्तितम् ।  
रक्ताक्षिकुटिकासीना स्तनबन्धफणान्विता ॥  
शिरोमालोपवीता च शवारूढा कृशोदरी ।  
निर्मासव्यावृतमुखी दीर्घजिह्वा त्रिलोचना ॥  
व्याघ्रचर्मम्बरधरा ज्वालाकेशफणीष्टदा ।  
काली कृशाडी कृष्णा च वटवृक्षसमाश्रिता ॥  
दंष्ट्राकरालवदना चामुण्डी गृध्रकेतुका

<sup>36</sup> Agni Purāṇa

चामुण्डा कोटराक्षी स्यान्निर्मासा तु त्रिलोचना ।  
निर्मासा अस्थिसारा वा ऊर्ध्वकेशी कृशोदरी ।  
द्वीपिचर्मधरा वामे कपालं पट्टिशं करे ॥

<sup>37</sup> Rupamaṇḍan

दंष्ट्राला क्षीणदेहा च गर्ताक्षा भीमरूपिणी ।  
दिग्बाहुः क्षामकुक्षिश्च मुशलं चकमार्गणो ॥  
अङ्कुशं बिभ्रती खड्गं दक्षिणेष्वथ वामतः ।  
खेटं पाशं धनुर्दण्डं कुठारं चेति बिभ्रती ॥  
चामुण्डा प्रेतगा रक्ता विकृतास्यादिमूषणा ।  
द्विभुजा वा प्रकर्तव्या कृत्तिकाकार्यरन्विता ॥

<sup>38</sup> A Progressive Report of ASI, Western Circle, March 1908, p.44.

of the goddess. [Figure 13](#) is of the goddess *Cāmuṇḍā* from the temple of Harihara II, Osian. This image depicts the war of *Cāmuṇḍā* with *Caṇḍa* and *Muṇḍā* and she is killing to the demon. She has four arms: in the upper right is a *triśūla*, and in the lower right is skull cup. The upper left holds a noose and the lower left holding the head of the demon.

**Figure 11**



**Figure 11** Cāmuṇḍā (9th-11th Century CE) Chandravati

**Figure 12**



**Figure 12** Image of Goddess Cāmuṇḍā from Kiradu Temple, Badmer

**Figure 13**



**Figure 13** The image of the goddess *Cāmuṇḍā* from the temple of Harihara II, Osian

## 2. CONCLUSION

Saptamātrkāś are known as ferocious as well as boon giver goddess. They get a very important place in the early medieval period due to the increase in tantric practices. Iconography of these goddesses reveals them as the counter part of their male deity. Sculptor has not followed strictly any particular prescriptive text while making Āyudh in their hands. In most of the figures discussed earlier, we can see that out of four hands one is engaged in holding Kamaṇḍal and other in granting boon. It is also very much evident that by the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE, planetary iconography got its standardized form holding kamaṇḍala and gesture of granting boon. Kamaṇḍala symbolize to the inner purification, spirituality and detachment. Graha and Mātrkā both got the place at the lintel of the entrance at the same time. So kamaṇḍala it is not the result of the textual prescription but of the Brahmanical approach which transform the aggressive and violent behaviour of these Mātrkā into benevolent goddess. Many trees are associated with these goddesses which again help to assimilate the tribal culture in the main stream.