

GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS IN THE SRIMALAPURANA

Abstract

Purana is a vast genre of Indian literature about a wide range of topics, particularly about legends and other traditional lore. The Puranas are known for the intricate layers of symbolism depicted within their stories. Composed originally in Sanskrit and in other Indian languages, several of these texts are named after major Hindu gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, and Adi Shakti. The Puranic genre of literature is found in both Hinduism and Jainism. The Puranic literature is encyclopedic, and it includes diverse topics such as cosmogony, cosmology, genealogies of gods, goddesses, kings, heroes, sages, and demigods, folk tales, pilgrimages, temples, medicine, astronomy, grammar, mineralogy, humor, love stories, as well as theology and philosophy. The content is highly inconsistent across the Puranas, and each Purana has survived in numerous manuscripts which are inconsistent. The Hindu Maha Puranas are traditionally attributed to "Vyasa", but many scholars considered them likely the work of many authors over the centuries; in contrast, most Jaina Puranas can be dated and their authors assigned. This chapter is a sincere effort to justify governance and politics as depicted in the Srimalapurana.

Keywords : Purana, Sanskrit, Folk tales, Cosmology, Srimalpurana.

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I. GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS IN THE SRIMALAPURANA

The Srimalpurana is known as the Sthalapurana (TirthaMahatmya) and the JatiPurana. The history of the origin of the castes in Gujarat from Srimal, the religious conflicts prevailing in the society at that time, social life and social customs are depicted in it, thus SrimalPurana has cultural historical and geographical importance. Shrimali Brahmins, Porwads and Shrimali weavers, Shrimali Soni, etc. from Shrimal can get a picture of their adyasthans, Kuldevi, ancestral profession and life philosophy from ShrimalPurana.

Manuscripts of Srimal Purana were researched by Bhabhutimal Navaji Parmar from the institution of Muni Jinvijayji (former Director, Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur). The published edition was published by Gujarat School of Medicine from Vijay Pravartak Press Ahmedabad in 1955 (AD 1899). This edition with 75 chapters was prepared by Jatashankar Leeladhar and Keshavji Vishwanath with Gujarati translation.

The author of Shrimal Purana calls it Shrimal Mahatmya. This Purana describes the town of Shrimali and its shrines and castes. A scholar named Sri R.C. Hazra has not mentioned this Purana in 'The Study in the Uppurans'. Prof. in the introduction to Mallapurana, Sandesara and Dr. RN Mehta mentions this Purana in his footnote and calls it as JatiPurana. Awasthi mentions Srimal Nagar in 'studies in the SkandPuran' 2. (Dr. Avsthi A.B.L studies in skandPuran part -1 PP. 89 ,127) Just as in DharmaranyaPurana we get information about Modha Brahmins, in Nagarkhand about Nagar Brahmins and in VayuPurana about VayadaVanikas, in SrimalaPurana we get information. Information about the Srimali castes is obtained, so the SrimalPurana describes the ancient geography, culture and social customs of Srimalnagar.

In general, since the literature is of unknown authorship, its compositional sequence remains doubtful, accordingly, to determine the compositional period of Srimalpurana, as stated in Bombay Presidency Gazetteer Volume-I, Shri A. like this. Piction notes that this Purana must have been composed about 400 years ago. 3(**Jackson A.M.P gazetteer of Bombay presidency volume-1 part-1 (History of Gujarat) under government orders printed at government place Bombay 1986**).

The political situation of the 12th century described by the author of the Srimalpurana, the information given in Chapter 75 about the departure of Mahalakshmi to Patan, the evidence of the victory of the Chalukyas of Patan over Bhinmal in the twelfth century CE, show that the Jains were more dominant in Patan during that time. Based on all these evidences, it can be inferred that the author of Srimalpurana must have been in the 12th century CE or later. Thus the Srimalapurana can be placed after the twelfth century. Thus, based on the internal and external evidence of the work, this work may have been composed after the twelfth century AD and before the 16th century AD. 4 (**manuscript 'C' numbered 10489 in the records of Oriental institute Jodhpur**) Poet Srimalnagar 5 (Srimalpurana: 9/1-24,12/1-26,72/1-5)

And it has to say about the origin of races. Its function is twofold. First, the poet has narrated the mythological history of the town and its shrines, then the fact of the origin of the castes along with the traditions and rituals at the second stage.

This revised edition of SrimalaPurana has 75 chapters. The first chapter begins with a mangalacharan in praise of Vishnu. In Chapter 1 to 9, the poet gives the mythological account of the founding of Srimal Nagar. In Chapter 10 to 13 the poet has narrated the story of the origin of castes of Srimali Brahmins, Srimali Sons, SrimaliVanikas. 6 (Srimalapurana: Chapter 13 /1-15) From chapter 14 the poet begins the description of Tirtha Mahatmya which is completed in chapter 64. In Chapters 65 to 70, the social traditions, customs, vows and rituals of the residents of Srimal have been described by the poet along with method. In chapters 67 to 70, along with the Avatankas, Kuldevis and other gods, the poet also describes the gotras. In chapters 71 to 74, the religious conflict between the Brahmins and the Jains and the fall of Srimala are depicted. In the last chapter there is a description of how Srimal came to be Bhinmal. The creator of Srimal Nagar has taken support from various sources, including the SrimalPurana in the third chapter of the Brahma section of the SkandaPurana. 51-58), epics like Ramayana and BhagavataPurana (1/16-19), Vishnu Purana (A.8-10), VayuPurana (67/59-60), MatsyaPurana (130/139,145,261/33) HarivanshaPurana (A. 49), Devi BhagavatPurana (5/21-31), Padma Purana (Srishtikhand-3) etc. Puranas are also the main base literature of Srimalpurana.

Srimalpurana, is a place Purana. It has nothing to do with political matters, so Puranakar does not directly say anything about politics and governance. The fact that the town of Srimal was built for the Brahmins and that Lord Vishnu gave it to them shows that Srimala was a Janapada and was ruled by the Brahmins themselves.8 (SrimalPurana- A.9-11) A.B. A.B.L avsthi, studies in the skand puran-1 p.84 supports this fact.9

After studying the political practices depicted in the Srimala Purana, some things become clear that the Srimala Purana had some form of political knowledge. He records that several kings came on pilgrimage and built temples. The presence of kings in the Srimala Purana shows the fact that Janapada gradually assumed the form of monarchy. Among the names of the kings who came to Srimal, a king named Sripunja became the king of Srimal and the names of the kings who rebuilt the city and the shrines are as follows:

- **Shatrujit:** When Vashishtha also came along with Saptarshi, the Chandravansi king Shatrujit came on Saugandhikmountain. 10 (Srimalpurana 1/33)
- **Kshemadhriti:** Kshemadhriti, who came on a pilgrimage to Srimala, was freed from the curse of Durvasa by Siddhivinayak. 11 (SrimalPurana: 39/2)
- **Shatadhanu:** King Shatadhanu interacted with the heretic and became a crow. 12 (ShrimalPurana: 16/10, 11, 18)
- **Sripunj:** The SrimalPurana records that Srimal, who became a deserter, became a king named Sripunj. 13 (ShrimalPurana : 37/ 2- 16, 37-39) 164 years ago. He repopulated the town by inviting the Brahmins who had left Srimal.

If we look at the city system in the state system of ShrimalPurana, the city had two forts and there was a fort within the city. Only special men were allowed into the inner fort, so Zinger could not enter. He was stopped by the gatekeeper. 14 (ShrimaLapurana: 19 /1-8) The fort had 84 gates. 74 /50) Around the fort there was a water-filled canal in which stream water flowed. Vishwakarma built the city at the command of Vishnu.17 (Srimalapurana:

9/23-1) There were many attractive dwellings with images of Lakshmi.¹⁸ (Srimalapurana 9/1-10) There were seven lakh houses.¹⁹ (Srimalapurana: 72/23 if (or this figure appears to be exaggerated) The city had 18,000 chautas intersected by straight roads on the right side.¹⁹ (Srimalapurana: 72/1-5) There were lakes all around for water sources. They were used as baths. There were many auditoriums, gardens for the public, ashrams, two lakh shops and inns for pilgrims.²⁰ (ShrimalPurana: 72/23)

If we look at the other governance system of Sriman Purana, Sripunj Raja had a prominent force for the security of the city. When needed, the king himself went to protect the people. This fact becomes evident when the Brahmin bride is taken away by Sarika.²² (Srimalapurana: A.38) The king had angels. He brought the Brahmins from Abu Parvat to Srimal Nagar.²³ (Shrimalpurana: A. 38) Sripunja Raja was very fond of deer (hunting). It was also a good target, sword, ax was used as a weapon ²⁵ (SrimalaPurana: A. 36, 38)

From the study of Srimalpura, if we talk about what kind of calamities may have happened on Srimal town.. As this town was built on the request of Sri Devi, it was called 'Shrimal'. It later became Pushpamal, Ratnamal and Bhashinmal. This alone shows that this rich city must have been destroyed many times. According to a legend called Sarika Upakhyan, 'The people of Sindh used to pick up the girls of Srimal region, so the people left 'Shrimal' and fled towards Abu. This shows that the resurgence of threat from the west at that time could be the only reason for the downfall of Srimal. The town became deserted due to the threat of Sarika and King Sripunjrepopulated the town after 164 years. This fact supports the above fact. ²⁶ (ShrimalPurana: A. 38)

According to the information found in SrimalPurana, in VikramSamvat 1203 VaishakhSudAshtamiSrimal left the town of Sri A and made it Bhinmal. The dates are as follows.1.S.V.265- 209 A.D 2.S.V. 494- 438 A.D.reconstructed in S.V.700 (643 A.D) 3.S.V.900-144 A.D reconstructed in S.V.955 (896 A.D.) 4. new construction began after 14th century. A. D .) and Lakshmi Gurjar came to Patan, the capital of the country. It is indicative of the important political changes in the town that took place after this time.

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