Preface
Purāṇas have been a valuable source of information for understanding the cultural and social traditions of India from ancient times to the medieval times. The Purānic tradition got established as an independent tradition by the time of Śūtras and culminated in the establishment of the Śūta Tradition. Because of their popularity, Purāṇas became encyclopaedic in nature and grew into huge proportions. Indeed it became a difficult task to sieve out the original matter from the spurious material in the voluminous works that went in the name of Purāṇas. One such Purāṇa is Sk.P., which has grown over a period of six to eight centuries having abundant socio-cultural material pertaining to those centuries.

Till the beginning of the 19th Century, Purāṇas were not considered as worthy of study by the modern scholars. By the efforts of H.H. Wilson and F.E. Pargiter, Purānic study came to limelight and this study has now already a history of one hundred and fifty years.

H.H. Wilson, published Viṣṇupurāṇa with an English translation. He gave the summary of the contents and indices of other Purāṇas. F.E. Pargiter acknowledged the credibility of the Purānic chronology of the different Royal dynasties, in his work 'The dynasties of Kali Age'. This paved the way for the study of the different Purāṇas by various scholars and has opened up new avenues of approach to the rich material available in the Purāṇas. Since then many critical editions of the Purāṇas with English and other translations have come out.

I am deeply indebted to the rich line of research in the field of Purāṇas made in English.
Kannada, Hindi and other languages. The studies made by H.H. Wilson, P.B.Pargiter, Wilhelm Kirfel, George Bühler, M.Winternitz, P.V.Kane, R.C.Hazra, Gorgio Bonozoli, Dasarath Sharma, O’Flaherty, N.Gangadharan, A.B.L.Awas, V.S.Agarwala, Baladeva Upadhyaya, P.G.Lal, S.A.Dange, R.N.Mehta, A.D.Pusalkar, V.V.Mirashi, S.S.Upadhyaya, A.K.Chatterji, R.K.Siddhantha Shastree, R.G.Bhandarkar, R.N.Dandekar, and others have been my inspiring sources of information. These studies have given me the perspective and plan of study. Although R.C.Hazra, A.B.L.Awas and others have made their valuable contributions to the study of Skanda Purāṇa, they have not concentrated on the different facets of religion and philosophy and other socio-cultural ideas in Sk.P. Hence the present study is made having in view these aspects with profuse citations from Sk.P. to illustrate the points made in the study. The modern studies in English and other languages have helped me to gain insight into the rich socio-cultural material available in Sk.P. I am grateful to all these scholars. I have acknowledged the material drawn from them wherever necessary. The results of the study are placed in the hands of scholars with a sense of humility and deep reverence. Here I have made a study of Skanda Purāṇa from the socio-cultural point of view. Through this study, I have realised that there is further scope for making an attempt on the following lines of research on Sk.P.

(1) Preparation of a critical edition of Sk.P., taking into account the editions already published and the manuscripts of the different khandas that are available in the different parts of India.

I am grateful to the authorities of Bangalore University for having provided me an opportunity to work on this fascinating subject by extending the necessary library and other facilities for my study.

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