CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

"In these days when all Indologists are feeling the want of a true history of Indian life and thought of the past and our antiquarians are directing their attention and energy towards its reconstruction, it is a matter of great surprise and disappointment that very little is known and still less has yet been said about those valuable records of Indian life and thought which are known as Upapurānas (or secondary Purānas)." ¹

This study of Srimāla Purāṇa shows that the above remark of Dr. R.C. Hazra is correct.

The Srimāla Purāṇa as it is called by the author Srimāla Mahātmya narrates the records of the Srimāla city and Keśtra with its castes.

The area covered by the Purāṇa had Mountain Abu in the South-East, Saukandhika in the South and Mountain Savarangiri in the North. The geographical data of the above Keśtra of ancient and medieval period have been traced and compared to the present through this study. A map has been prepared and the actual Keśtra Srimāla as mentioned in the Srimāla Purāṇa is drawn.

¹ Dr. R.C. Hazra, Studies in the Upapurānas, Vol. I, p. 1
1. Geography: Śrīmālā Purāṇa is a tīrtha Mahātmya also and in it are described many tīrthas belonging to brahmanical sect. They require identification on the basis of traditions and further studies in the archaeological field-work for better understanding. It was conducted through the help of the study of the Purāṇa and location of the Tīrthas has been shown in the map of the Ksetra with the photographs of some tīrthas and their idols.

2. Caste Structure: The caste of Śrīmālī brahmanas, their gotras and Kuldevis; Vanikas, their gotras, Kuldevis and avatankas and origin of other castes related to Śrīmālī have been traced with their original history. The tables of the gotras and avatankas of Śrīmālī brahmanas and Vanikas have been prepared to identify the avatankas easily.

3. Social Customs: The social pattern of social groups of Śrīmālā with their customs and ceremonial function of marriages and death are recorded through the study of Śrīmālā Purāṇa. The social structure of the social tradition prevailing at the time of the writing of the Śrīmālā Purāṇa are noted and recorded with their functions.

4. Religion: The religion prevailing at the time Śrīmālā Purāṇa have been traced out and religious conflict with the causes and result given in Śrīmālā Purāṇa is traced through this critical study.

1 Śrīmālā Purāṇa, II 4, 7, 22, LXIX, LXX, LXXI
5. Economy: The socio-economic basis of the society of Śrīmāla Purāṇa is traced and it is found that society was based on sound footings and castes were formed to maintain the socio-economic structures better so that the society ran its course smoothly.

The Agriculture, Pastures and Animal Husbandry and Forest resources have been known through the study and craftsmanship and other activities like painting and cloth weaving prevailing at the time of the Purāṇa composing are traced out.

The Śrīmāla Purāṇa is a religious work so a description of the political situation was not the aim of the author. An attempt is made to trace the political status of Śrīmāla through the study of the Purāṇa.

This study of Śrīmāla Purāṇa clarified the fact that religious conflict, the downfall of cities and empire can be traced out through the Purānic and Upapurānic studies. As it is seen that in Samvatsa 1203, Śrīmāla got downfall and Śrī came to Gujarāṭa. It is the historical fact of Mediaeval Gujarāṭa that the great Solankis extended their region upto Mērwar or present West Rajasthan. The fact is traced through Purānic history of Śrīmāla Purāṇa also.

To study the Śrīmāla Purāṇa which is an Sthala Mahatmya a special method and archaeological study was necessary.

The method adopted by Dr. R. N. Mehta to study Kāmarikakhaṇḍa was found beneficial and it helped in the study of Śrīmāla.
Purāṇa. The method is most effective for the study of Sthala Mahatmyas.

Much of the history and culture of ancient India have been traced by the eminent scholars like Pargiter, Wilson, Hara Prasad Sastry, Kane, Hazra, Dikshita, Awasthi, Dr. P.J. Shah, and Dr. S.G. Kantawala through the studies of Purāṇas and Uapāpurāṇas.

This study of the Śrīmala Purāṇa discloses the fact that the work on Purāṇas and Uapāpurāṇas is not still over, but it requires further study to unearth the ancient Indian cultural data embedded in it. Dr. R.C. Hazra and H.H. Wilson rightly say that "the work done by scholars on Uapāpurāṇas is very meagre." 1

It needs special encouragement to the scholar to work on the field to search the archaeological, social, economical and political base of Sthala Purāṇa and Caste Purāṇas, without it the work becomes more difficult and sometimes it is impossible too. It needs special conditions, sympathies and atmosphere to compile and work on such problems.

Purāṇas are the religious and cultural records of Brahmanical (Hindu) religion. Śrīmala Purāṇa is also not an exception. It is found after the reading of Śrīmala Purāṇa that Purānakāra has written it in a systematic way.

The chapters I to V give the location of Srimala Ksetra. The construction of Srimala nagara is dealt in chapters VI to IX and the process of its habitation runs upto the chapter XIII of Srimala purana. The Tirtha Mahatmya starts from chapter XIV and ends in chapter LXIV narrating 50 tirthas. The Vratas, Kathas, religious and social customs and functions, the gotras, Kuladevatās, Pravaras and their avatankas are recorded in the chapters LXV to LXX of Srimala Purana. The religious conflict and down-fall of Srimala nagara is given in the last chapters LXXI to LXXV, indicating the change from Srimala to Bhinimala. One may conclude that while writing the whole Purana, the author has kept in view the geographical, social and religious practices of this area. For this the Puranakāra has used the stories of folk-lore and has used two types of them to explain the importance of different tirthas.

Once when the Purana was composed the practise of reading the Purana became prevalent and this helped in spread of Puranic notions in Srimala Ksetra to such an extent that it is still read with the same dignity of sanctity.

This seems to be keys with number of Sthala-mahatmyas and Jñati Puranas. They try to gave a semi-mythological history to the population of region as it is clear from the perusal of Dharmaranya, Nagarikhaṇḍa, Kaumarika Khanda and such other Puranas.