CHAPTER III

THE SOURCES OF 'SRIMALA PURANA'

The author had to narrate the origin of Srimala nagara with its castes so he had two fold work. First he had to describe the Puranic history of the city and its Tirthas and secondly he had to record the origin of the Jnatis with their customs and ceremonies.

A close study of the Purana shows that chapters 1 to 9 give the Puranic account of the establishment of Srimala nagara. The origin of the castes of Srimali bramanas, Srimali surtars and Srimali vanikas is given in chapters ten to thirteen.

The Tirtha Mahatmya starts from chapter XIV and ends in chapter LXXIV.

The ceremonies, vrata, customs and social pattern of the inhabitants of Srimala are recorded with their ways of functioning in chapters LXV to LXX. Finally the Gotras, with their avatankas Kuladevis and other deities are given in chapters LXVII to LXX, with special details.

The chapters LXXI to LXXIV show the religious conflicts of the brahmanas and the Jains. The last chapter narrates the story how Srimala became Bhimila.

1 Srimala Purana Adhyaya IX 1-24, XII 1-26, LXXII 1-5
2 Ibid X 1-42
3 Ibid XIII 1-15 and 17-27
The religious importance of the tirthas is shown throughout. The authors had used various sources for this purpose which are summed up here.

Srimala Mahatmya as a Part of Skanda Purana:

Most of the chapters of Srimala Mahatmya (that is Purana) end with a sloka which means that it is from the Third Pariccheda of Brahma Vibhaga of Skanda Purana. It is described as an abode of Brahmanas in the Skanda Purana. It is situated in Paschima Deea as noted here. It further notes that it is a part of Kumarika Khanda. The detailed account of the Tirthas of the Ksetra is the creation of the author with the help of other sources. Though the author claims this to be a part of Skanda Purana, it does not occur in its printed version.

As the wellknown ArbudaChala Mountain, the seat of Rishi Vasistha is near Srimala to show the right geographical situation, the Rishi Vasistha gives the detailed account of this area to the King Mandhata. Rishi Gautama is supposed to be responsible for the in this region. Association

1 Srimala Purana, Adhyaya 1, 2 3 A.B.L.Awasthi, Studies in Skanda Purana and Skanda Purana, I, II, 2, 87
3 Ibid. Kumarika Khanda list
of Vasistha and Gautama is narrated beautifully. Rishi Vasistha had narrated many things which are not the sole contribution of Śrimala Purāṇa but are inserted into it by the author. These are traced to their main sources.

King Mandhata, Rishi like Kasyapa, Gautama, Devala are all Puranic ones and are connected with the Tirthas and Śrimala Ksetra by the author.

The main Devatas are very few and they have their separate Purānas against their names.

They are Viṣṇu, Śiva, Viṣṇyaka, Sun and Devis like Ghumunda, Ksemankari and Lakṣaṇī. Śrimala is called the place of Goddess Śri.

Yaksas and Nagas are also represented with their sthalas and Tirthas.

\[\begin{align*}
1 & \text{Mahābhārata, Vanaprava 127.35, Drona Parva 62,11, Rāmāyana, Uttarkānda 67.8.11, Vayu Purāṇa 88,68 and Brāhmānada Purāṇa iiii 86.87} \\
2 & \text{Mahābhārata, Adiparva 59, 17 to 20, Rāmāyana, Aranya Kanda 14-16} \\
   & \text{Vayu Purāṇa 69,59,60,68, Harivansa iiii 25,36} \\
3 & \text{Rāmāyana, Uttar Kanda 30, Bala kānda 48.49, Skanda I,ii 52} \\
   & \text{Mahābhārata, Anusasana Parva 41, Viṣṇu Purāṇa iv.v.611} \\
4 & \text{Deval Smriti} \\
5 & \text{Śrimala Purāṇa, LXXIX 58 and LXXV 23.24.}
\end{align*}\]
As Śiva, Viṣṇu, Laksāmi, Gauri, Sapatamātrikās, Vīnāyaka are worshipped with different names at different places according to the Purānic mythology, the same have been repeated in Śrīmāla Purāṇa with slight differences in the accounts in the original sources, so as to suit the local phenomenon.

The chief sources seem to be the epics, Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana. From the Mahābhārata following incidents are used:

1. Mahābhārata –

King Parīksita was a Pāṇḍavī King. He died of snake bite. The story of Nāga Taksaka and Parīksita is taken from Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The Śrīmāla Purāṇa says that the Śrīmālī brāhmaṇa named Kaśyapa, who knew the vidyā of Nāga Viṣṇa Harana, was bribed by Taksaka and he returned to Śrīmāla. The news of the King Parīksita's death grieved the brāhmaṇa. Parīksita Citrā was produced by Kaśyapa and propagated by Śrīmālī brāhmaṇas as Parīksita Kathā.

2. Rāmāyana –

The story of Gautama's curse given to Ahalyā and Indra is not mentioned only in Rāmāyana but in Mahābhārata, and Skanda Purāṇa also. The Śrīmāla Purāṇa says that Indra first saw Ahalyā in Śrīmāla in cendīsayaṭra and was attracted by her.

1 Mahābhārata, Adi Parva, 51-58, 222-34
2 Bhāgavata Purāṇa I 16-19
3 Śrīmāla Purāṇa LXVI
4 Rāmāyana, Bala Kanda 48-49, Uttarā Kanda 30, Mahābhārata Anuṣasana Parva 41, Skanda Purāṇa II 52
5 Śrīmāla Purāṇa XLVI 1-23
beauty. 'Srīmāla was previously called Gautamagrama. A kunda
named after Ahalya was also dug and Gautama loved her again.

The quarrel over Pusapaka Vimāna between Kubera and Rāvana
is mentioned in Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata also but Srīmāla
Purāṇa recorded that Kubera came from Lanka and had his Tapas
at Srīmāla's Yakṣesthala and was assured before going to
Alakāpuri that Rāvana would be killed by 'Rama'.

Sources taken from other Puranas:
Vīṣṇu Purāṇa: Laksamī, the consort of Vīṣṇu was the daughter
of Brigu. The marriage of Vīṣṇu and Laksamī is mentioned in
Vīṣṇu Purāṇa. The same marriage is narrated in two different
ways in Srīmāla Mahatmya. Laksamī married Vīṣṇu as a daughter
of Rīṣi Brigu and secondly she came out of the Sāgarmanthana
and married Lord Vīṣṇu. The same stories are taken from the
purāṇas but after marriage Laksamī came to Srīmāla Ksetra and
constructed the city Srīmāla and secondly changed its name to

1 Srīmāla Purāṇa, XLVI I 40-44, III 21-25, IV 28-52 and
VI 46-50
2 Ibid. XLVI, 48-59
3 Mahābhārata Vana Parva 275-276, Rāmāyana 15
4 Srīmāla Purāṇa, XXII
5 Vīṣṇu Purāṇa, Adhyāya VIII -X
6 Srīmāla Purāṇa, Adhyāya VII
7 Ibid. XLV 24-31 10
8 Ibid. IX 41-50, IX 1-22
These stories are given only in Śrīmāla Purāṇa. She is named with her different names in different Tirthas as Laksāmī, Yogeśvarī, Māhālaksāmī, Balgaurī, Kamaḷā in Śrīmāla Purāṇa. Agni Purāṇa and Linga Purāṇa also mentions that Laksāmī came out of Sāgarmāthana.

The fight for supremacy among the two Trinity Devatās Brahme and Viśnu is narrated in Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Lord Śiva decided that Viṣṇu was supreme and worthy to be worshipped. The same story is given in Linga Purāṇa also. The curse of Śiva that Brahme would not be worshipped was modified and made less severe after the Tapas of Brahme and Lord Śiva assured Brahme that he would be worshipped by Brahmanas and in Brahmapuri or the place where brahmanas are rulers. The linga of Śiva would have Brahme Sutra. Brahmasutralinga would be worshiped with great respect. The above story is told in Śrīmāla Purāṇa with the addition that Brahme had his Tapas in Śrīmāla on Brahme Sarovara to please the Lord Maḥādeva.

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1 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XLX 32-64
2 Ibid. VI, 20-28 and VII 1-42
3 Ibid. VIII 12-25
4 Ibid. XLV 65-66
5 Ibid. LVII 1-4, 51-64
6 Ibid. LXII 1-7, 59, 64-66
7 Viṣṇu Purāṇa
8 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XVII. 60
9 Dr. Govinda Chandra Raya, Pracina Bhārata Ma Laksāmī Pratimā
10 Ibid.
The story of the fight of Kadru the mother of Nagas and Vinata the mother of Garudas is given in Bhāgavata and Viṣṇu Purāṇas, about the colour of the tail of the horse Ucaisurva. If the colour of the tail was black Vinata was to be a slave of Kadru. It was done so by the Nagas. The Śrimāla Purāṇa says that Kadru was pleased by the act of her sons and is worshipped in Śrīmāla as Naganimata. The fight of Garudas is mentioned also in the Śrimāla Purāṇa and it says that the gold is the part of the feathers of Garuda Kapila. Nagas are related to Śrimāla in many Adhyāyās as helper of Śrimālī. The daughter of Nāga Kankola was married to Kandapa a Śrimāli brāhmaṇa. Her father Kankola gave shelter to the daughters Śrimālī and kept them at his residence.

The King Yayati and his devotion for the lord Sun is described in Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata purāṇa. Śrimāla Purāṇa narrates that Yayati performed his Tapas in Śrīmāla Vana of Śrīmāla and here the Sun was worshipped as Jagatpīyā.

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1 Bhāgavata Purāṇa VI 6, Mahābhārata Adi Parva 21-34
2 Viṣṇu Purāṇa IV 2-11
3 Śrimāla Purāṇa, XXVIII 1, 28-33
4 Ibid. XXVII 51-55
5 Ibid. XXVII 90-100, XXXVII 7, XXXIX 1 20-21, 32
6 Ibid. XXVII 51-55
7 Ibid. XXXVII 7, XXXIX 20-21, XXXVII 11-12
8 Mahābhārata Adi Parva 75-93, Bhāgavata Purāṇa IX 9-19, 19, 23
9 Śrimāla Purāṇa XLIII 2-3, 72-97
The twelve Adityāyas mentioned in Viṣṇu, in Mahābhārata and in other Puranas had their asrama in Śrīmāla.

Skanda Purāṇa: The story of Valmika Rishi and his tapas is taken from Skanda Purāṇa. The Śrīmāla Purāṇa records that Śrīmāla is the place of Valmikī's Tapas. Valmiki pleased Valmikesvara.

Vāyu Purāṇa: Kasyapa as grand son of Brahma and the originator of Vaivasvata Manvantara had his Tapas in Śrīmāla and got a Vardāna. The above story is given in Vāyu Purāṇa and Mahābhārata but the place of Tapas is not given.

Matsya Purāṇa: The story of Lord Śiva killing that Daitya Tripura is taken from Matsya Purāṇa. The Śrīmāla Purāṇa says that Lord Śiva marched against Tripura from Śrīmāla and returned after victory and was worshipped as Trimbakesvara with Devī Yogēśvari.

1 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, LXII 8-15
2 Skanda Purāṇa, V.1, 24, VII.1 - 278
3 Ibid. XLVIII. 1, 52-58
4 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XXIII, 1, 48-53
5 Mahābhārata Adi Parva LIX 17-20, Rāmāyaṇa Āranya Kanda 14-16, Harivansha Purāṇa iii, XXXV, XXXV, 6 Vāyu Purāṇa LXVII 59-60
6 Matsya Purāṇa Adīdyaya 130-39 and 145 and 261, 33.
7 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XIV 98-107
Varāha Purāṇa: The Varāhamātmya1 is taken from Varāha, Visnu and Harivānśa Purāṇas2 but it is added in Śrīmāla Purāṇa that Varāha gave Darsana in Śrīmāla and was worshipped as Naravarāha there.

Harivānśa Purāṇa: The story of the killing Madhu and Kaitabha is noted in It is told in Śrīmāla Purāṇa as Lord Krisna killed them and came to Śrīmāla. As the Lord had taken his bath in the Sarovara it was called Krisana Sarovara.

Devi Bhāgavata Purāṇa: The story of Devi Gajamūndā is from Devi Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The same is repeated in Śrīmāla Purāṇa and Gajamūndā is worshipped as Rakasthali, Canāda Mundariyā, candi and Sidhāgajamunda there.

1 Visnu Purāṇa, I. IV, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, III, XIII
2 Harivānśa Purāṇa, IX
3 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XLVII 21-30
4 Harivānśa Purāṇa, III, XIII, XXVII
5 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XVI 1
6 Devi Bhāgavata, V 21-31
7 Śrīmāla Purāṇa, XXIV, 1, 30-42
8 Ibid. XXXV, 1, 19-21
9 Ibid. XXXVI, 160
10 Ibid. LIX, 16-18
Padama Purana: The Adhikayas of Govatsalaviniyaka and Siddhavinayaka are composed with the help of Padama Purana, Siva Purana, Vinyakapura and Brahma Vaivarta Purana.

Rig Veda: Varuna is a Vedic god and it is said that Srimala Ksetra which was Gautama’srāma was known as Varunakāhana and Varun had his Tapas at Srimala Ksetra and became the master of the West.

The details and descriptions of images, Tirthas and city seem to be by observation or as composed with the help of the study of VisvaKarma Sāstra. Geography utilised as source:

The four chapters are composed to locate the situation of Srimala and geographical phenomena is used as source. The South-East is described by describing Mount Abu and Mount Saurbandhika, where Rishi Vasistha went. The North-West is presented with the help of Mount Suvarnagiri as the srāma of Jaival Rishi where Gautama went first. Flora and fauna of Srimala helped to compose some chapters.

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1 Srimala Purana, LVIII, 24-27
2 Ibid. XXXIV 1, 42-46
3 Padama Purana Sristi Khanda 111, Mahabharata Adi Parva-112
4 Srimala Purana, LXIV 1-3, 13-19
5 Ibid. IX 31-33
6 Ibid. 1 25-35
7 Ibid. II, 3-4
8 Ibid. III 5-9, IV, 1-4
Local events used as sources:

Miraculous Tales: There are in this Purāṇa a number of stories of superhuman acts. One such story is that of the brahman Kundapā who married the Nāga Kanya Laumati after penetrating into the Nāgaloka with the help of the magical power collyrium applied to his eyes1. There are supernatural helpers like Nāga Kankola2, Surbhīmala3, Sarvamangala4, and Padma devi5. They all have helped to compose the Purāṇa.

Religious stories like that of the bath in a holi river6 are the sources of certain chapters. Novella (Romantic tales) like Mukulhīmā7, Jayaśvara Mahadeva8, Atmadhāra Surya9 used as sources made the Purāṇa interesting to common mass.

1 Śrīmālā Purāṇa, XXVII 23-76
2 Ibid. XXXIX 30-38
3 Ibid. XXXVIII 6
4 Ibid. LIII 1, 27-32
5 Ibid. XXVII 97-100
6 Ibid. V 11-24
7 Ibid. XXIX 1, 88-92
8 Ibid. XXX 1, 35-37
9 Ibid. XLIV 39-44
Tales of stupid ogre, that of Uttamoja¹, Daitya Karala² and Khara Raksasa³ are used as sources to compose many chapters.

Jokes and Anecdotes: Certain events can change the entire history of society is shown through the last chapters where Gautama became Jain monk and Shrimala was termed as Phirnala. The event of replacement of Power from Phirnala to Patana and the rise of Jainism helped the author to compose the last three chapters⁴.

The Social customs and ceremonies as sources:

The Adhyaya of candisvara yatra⁵ and rolling of Brahma before Atmadhara ratha⁶ as Krata represents the social functions of Goripuja and Mandasathama. The celebration helped to compose these Adhyayas.

Many chapters only recorded the gotras, their avatankas with their originality⁷, which exist even to-day.

Kathas: The Kathas like Mahalaksami Katha⁸, Parikseita and Taksakanaga⁹ are used as source.

¹ Śrimala Purana, XXXI 41
² Ibid, XXXIX 51-52
³ Ibid, XXXIII 49-52
⁴ Ibid, LXXIII 77-78, LXXIV 45-49, 50-60 and LXXV 25-32
⁵ Ibid, XLVI 1
⁶ Ibid, XLIV 30-51
⁷ Ibid, LXVII, LXVIII, LXIX, LXX
⁸ Ibid, LXV
⁹ Ibid, LXVI
To describe the castes and their customs that is Kulaeara a few chapters are composed.1

The fame of the Ksetra is also represented through some Adhyāyas, showing the wide area of the Ksetra and the number of castes and their population.2 The magnificance of the city was also represented through some chapters.3 The above sources show that what Prof. Stith says is true: “Some motifs are practically universal and form the material out of which tales are constructed and some motifs are so specialised that they owe their very existence to the tale types of which they are part.”4

Thus it appears that the author of the Purana has used existing anecdotes, known from the epics, purāṇas and probably from folk-culture, as well as the observation of Geography, social customs, ceremonies etc. He gave local colour to most of the stories used by him and for this he has changed parts of old well-known stories.

1 Śrimāla Purāṇa, LXXI, LXXII
2 Ibid, LXXII, I
3 Ibid, IX, XI, LXXII