

P R E F A C E.

"The Purāṇas occupy a unique position in Indian literature, both sacred and secular".¹ And they are very fruitful for comparative studies in mythology, Religion, Philosophy, fables, legends etc. Over and above this they are important as aids to Vedic interpretation.² The credit of Purāṇic studies goes to Wilson and Pargiter, the pioneer workers in this branch, to bring to the notice of the Indologists the historical importance of the Purāṇas. The political data of the some purāṇas are studied by different scholars while the data on Hindu rites and customs in the Purāṇas have been studied by Dr.R.C. Hazra. The studies of individual purāṇas from a cultural point of view are very few and only cultural study of the Matsyapurāṇa by Dr. S.G. Kantawala, of the Vāyupurāṇa by Dr. D.R. Patil, of the Brahmapurāṇa by Dr.(Miss) S.H. Trivedi (unpublished Thesis, M.S. University of Baroda) and of the Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa by Dr.(Miss) N.Y. Desai are studied. But the BVP has not received that attention which it really deserves from a cultural point of view because it supplies rich and valuable cultural material of the medieval period of India especially of Bengal. Hence the BVP is taken up for an intensive and critical study of the cultural data embedded in it for the Ph.D. as especially from the point of view of the Society,

Religion and Mythology as depicted in it. It may be mentioned here that in the present work the Ānandāśrama Press edition (Poona) of the BVP has been referred to but the variant readings of the Venkateśvara edition and of the Calcutta edition have also been noticed at proper places in this thesis. Further it may also be noted the unspecified references such as 1.1.10 etc. always refer to the BVP and the first figure indicates the Part i.e. Khaṇḍa of the BVP, thus second figure indicates the chapter and the third figure indicates the Stanza.

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1. Munshi K.M. Forward to Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas
by A.D. Pusalkar, P.IX Cf. Pusalkar, A.D. Op. Cit.
Introduction P.XLIII.
 2. Itihāsa Purāṇābhyām Veda Samupabṛṃhayet...Mbh.Cr.Ed.
1.1.204.