

Influence of *Skanda Purāṇa* in Sri Lankan Hindu Tradition

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Purāṇas are a genre of *Smṛiti* literature in Sanskrit; it is called as fifth Veda. The *Purāṇa* means an event of the past; an ancient tale or legend; old traditional history. *Mahā Purāṇas* are eighteen, which were compiled by *Veda Vyāsa*. *Skanda Purāṇa* is the largest of the major eighteen *Purāṇas*. It consists of 88100 verses and is divided into seven parts. *Skanda Purāṇa* got its name from *Skanda*, the son of Lord *Siva*. The advent of *Kumāra (Skanda)* has been celebrated by poet *Kalidāsa* in *Kumārasambava* and *paṇini's Vyākaraṇa Sūtra* speaks of his forms, the *Saiva Agamas* and *Kumāra Tantra* deal mainly with the ceremonial worship of *Skanda*. He plays a prominent role in South Indian Religion. His most popular Tamil name is Muruga. *Kantha Purāṇa* in Tamil of Kachiappasivachariar is a prolific work adopted from Sanskrit *Skanda Purāṇa* in 12th century. The cult of the Gods in Sri Lanka has been influenced by Hinduism of India throughout the centuries. The Muruga (*Skanda*) cult is one such thing. Kataragama is one of the identification places of Muruga, which has a pre-historical connection with the history of *Kantha Purāṇa* tradition. Kataragama is a place where people of all religion come together and pray for their common requests. Lord *Skanda* is mostly worshiped by Tamil Hindus referring him as the Tamil God. Tamil ***Kantha Purāṇam*** is holding a prestigious place particularly among the Tamils of Jaffna. The culture of *Kanthapuram* called as “*Kanthapurana Kalasaram*” in Tamil (Tradition of *Kantha Purana*) is the culture of the people in the North. The Hindus in the North East and elsewhere in the country consider Lord Muruga or *Kantha* as one of the primary deities of the *Saivaitee* Tamil. The historical famous Nallur temple, Selvasannathi, *Mavittapuram* are in the North, *Mandoor* is in the East and Kataragama is in the Southwest of Sri Lanka. Lord *Skanda* is considered as a war god as he killed the demon king *Tārakasura*. The war between *Skanda* and *Tāraka* is being performed in a dramatic way in the Hindu temples. This event with its moral significance of the expiration of sins is yearly celebrated by festivals and fasts in Tamil lands in the month of *Pushya* on such occasion the Tamil *Kantha Purāṇa* is read and expounded with solemnity. This research is described by Descriptive, Historical & Comparative research methodologies based on the main source in Sanskrit and secondary sources.

Keywords: *Hindu tradition, Kanda Purāṇa, Kataragama, Skanda Purāṇa*