

# PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE BHAKTI SKANDHA (XI SKANDHA) OF BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA

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## **Abstract**

Purāṇic texts play a very important role in framing the life and culture of Indian people and vividly describing social, political, philosophical, religious and educational systems of Indian tradition. Their main aim is to teach the common men and make them aware of ethical and religious duties on the basis of knowledge of integrated reality reflected in pluralistic universe. Among all other mahā-purāṇas, Bhāgavata Purāṇa is considered the greatest purāṇa which, as Daniel H.H. Ingalls says, “Stands out by reason of its literary excellence, the organization that it brings to its vast material, and the effect that it has had on later writers.”

The eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also known as Bhakti Skandha is significant as it teaches a doctrine of pure devotion. The Bhāgavata-māhātmya mentions bhakti, jñāna and vairāgya as the main subject of the Bhāgavata, of which bhakti alone, even if unsupported by its accessories, jñāna and vairāgya, is capable of realizing the ultimate goal, especially in the Kali age.

Some of the philosophical issues of Bhakti Skandha which will be discussed in the research paper is the description of major philosophical terms (*bhāgavata dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *śama*, *dama*, *yama*, *niyama*, *titikṣā*, *dhṛti*, *dāna*, *tapas*, *tyāga*, *yajña*, *dakṣiṇā*, *lābha* and the means of emancipation- *Karma*, *Jñāna* or *Bhakti*) of it in comparison with other Indian philosophical schools of thought.

Some of the social issues of Bhakti Skandha, expected to be discussed in the paper are classification of four *varṇas* and their duties, description of four *āśramas* and the way of life to be lead in each of them and how the salvation could be attained through the performance of *āśrama dharmas*.

Thus in this research paper the emphasis will be given on how the Bhakti Skandha differs from the other Indian philosophical schools of thought in the description of major philosophical and social issues.