



Māhātmyas in Konkan

Colloquium

✿ Tuesday
14.1.2025 (online)

✿ 16:15-17:45 Hrs.

✿ **Zoom link:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82925681551?pwd=B4enhA4mH5PPB44XfUwabzuDtkuU5G.1>
Meeting ID: 829 2568 1551
Passcode: 630543



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"A scrapbook of undeserved salvation" declared Dr. Wendy Doniger in her observations on the Skandapurana. While this view has been mildly contested in the academic circles, the regional Puranas in South Asia seem to lean into "scrapbooking" as a means to elevate the regional narratives with an allegiance to the Skandapurana. However, the terms used in academic discourse, such as "undeserved salvation" remain to be systematically contested. This presentation takes a small step in that direction and maps the boundaries of such literary traditions in the pre-modern Western India. At least seven Mahatmya texts along the western coast continue to uphold a "Puranic" history of the region, while utilizing Skandapurana as the touchstone. The proposed presentation on "Mahatmyas in Konkan" offers an overview of three texts

and their fraught literary histories: *Sahyadri Khanda*, *Vyadeshwara Mahatmya* and *Sangameshwara Mahatmya*. The frame narratives and the inter-textual connections will occupy the centerstage of the discussion. The emergent commentary on the social groups in the area, and the question of salvific verses will supplement the content-based discussion in the Mahatmyas. The physical landscape in Konkan connected to the Mahatmya narratives offers an insight into an approximation of salvation for the texts in discussion. Lastly, the presentation will point to the poetic (*kavya*) style coupled with the declaration of accruing merit (*phalashruti*) as a part of performative tradition aligned with these Mahatmyas. The underlying question would then be: how do we resolve questions such as "undeserved" salvation by contrasting the emic and the etic gaze on the study of Mahatmya literature?