In this work, which I am presenting as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree of Gauhati University, I have aimed at preparing a critically edited version of the four kāṇḍas of the Rāmāyaṇa of Mādhava Kandali underlining also its historical significance. It happens to be one of the earliest renderings of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa in modern Indian languages. As the text did not contain any extant autograph of the poet himself and as it was often plagiarised, the fixing of the authentic text is not only important but proves very demanding. Besides, Mādhava Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa presents a comprehensive picture of the Assamese society of his days along with its cultural mores, political ideas, food-habits, games, customs etc. etc. So, the study of the historical significance of the work is also felt to be both necessary and rewarding. Moreover, the text-critical study being a multi-disciplinary subject and as Kandali's work itself has been involved with various aspects, both socio-cultural and literary, of the Assamese society the task before me has been quite ambitious and challenging. This is my humble attempt on the subject based entirely on collated materials and I have made every attempt to be complete and exact in determining, as far as practicable, the original text of Mādhava Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa (four kāṇḍas) and the historical importance of the work has also been given the due attention it deserves.
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