INTRODUCTION
Indian Philosophy can rightly boast of an immensely rich heritage. Through centuries, many systems (darsanas) have come into existence in Indian Philosophy. They are traditionally divided into two branches viz., Astikadarśanas (Metaphysical systems), and Nāstikadarśanas (Atheistic systems).

Sāmkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśesika, Pūrvamīmāṃsa and Uttaramīmāṃsa or Vedānta constitute the theistic group. Chārvāka, Buddha and Jaina constitute the Atheistic group. Theoretical conflict between these two philosophical groups has enriched Indian philosophy to a great extent. In course of time, the metaphysical systems acquired prominence in the sphere of Indian Philosophy. Of the six systems of Āstika Philosophy, Vedānta occupies the most important position. Some have even gone to the extent of terming Vedānta the quintessence of Indian Philosophy.

The chief exponent of the Vedānta is Śrī
Śaṅkara. He propagated the Philosophy of Vedānta through his Advaita Siddhānta. Śaṅkara had travelled all over India and founded various Maths at different places. Padmapāda, the first great disciple of Śaṅkara is the author of the Pañcapādikā. It is a gloss on the first four Sūtras of Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhaṣya. Though this treatise is a significant and substantial contribution to the Vedānta Philosophy no serious study of it has been done hitherto. Hence this attempt to highlight the different aspects and the significant message of this valuable treatise. Pañcapādikā is the foremost of the Śāstragranthas on the philosophy of the Advaita Vedānta. It sets forth the fundamental doctrines of the Vedānta system. Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa of Prakāśatman is a commentary on the Pañcapādikā.

The present thesis consists of seven chapters.
The first chapter has the biographical details concerning Padmapāda, and a catalogue of his known works. Padmapāda's earlier name was Sanandana and how he came to be known as Padmapāda is described in the opening chapter. After examining the various views regarding the date of Padmapāda, a reasonably accurate conjecture has been made in this chapter. His first and most important work is the Pañcapādikā. The others being Atmabodhavyākhya, Prapañcasāravivaraṇa, Nṛsimhāṣṭaka and Vijñānadīpika. All these are briefly discussed in this first chapter.

The second chapter is devoted to the study of the Pañcapādikā. An in-depth study of all the subjects dealt within the Pañcapādikā has been attempted here. It explains the adhyāśabhaṣya and the first four Sūtras of Brahmasūtra.

The third chapter describes the commentaries
on Brahmasūtra. The important commentators from Śaṅkara to Pañcānana Tarkaratna Bhattācāryya, their time and their commentaries are discussed here.

The contemporaries of Padmapāda are detailed in the fourth chapter. Besides Śaṅkara, Sureśwara, Hastāmalaka and Toṭaka, the three other disciples of Śaṅkara, Maṇḍanamiśra and Vācaspatimiśra are the important contemporaries. The main contribution of each of them is also discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter contains the contribution of Padmapāda to Vedānta Philosophy. His definition of adhyāsa, the necessity of the adhyāsabhāsya, Anirvacaniyakhyātivāda, Pratibimbavāda etc. are dealt with here.

The sixth chapter explains the place of Pañcapādika in the sphere of Advaita Vedānta Philosophy. Superimposition in the Pañcapādika, the Philosophy of
the Pañcapādikā, its characteristics etc., are examined here. The last chapter forms the Conclusion. It explains briefly the subjects dealt within the foregoing chapters and the findings thereon.