PREFACE

Madhava Kandali Rāmāyana and Krittibasi Rāmāyana are more or less two contemporary compositions on Rāmāyana in two neighbouring states of India having influences on their surrounding areas, the original being Vālmiki Rāmāyana. But there are some deviations here and there made by both the scholars. The present research study is a comparative study on their respective stands on the original Vālmiki Rāmāyana.

The greatest contribution of Madhava Kandali is that he was one of the primogenitor of the Rāmāyan composers in regional languages of the North India. Madhava Kandali although composed seven Kāndas of Rāmāyana but the First and the last Kānda were lost. These were later composed by Sankardeva and Madhavdeva. His chief achievement is the maintenance of the human qualities of Rāma in his composition. He has abridged many chapters of Vālmiki in his compositions and where felt necessary by him he gave up. He narrated the character of Rāma and his works to provide joy to the readers. Not only that the criticism which is common to men women and even to the rakshasas has not escaped his creation. In the delineations of the beauty of Lankā although Madhava Kandali has bridged in his composition but also at the same time there is reflection of the Assamese society in the same. He is equal in delineations of both beauty and otherwise. He, in the composition, narrated the typical Assamese society including the attachment to fish eating.

Even after the lapse of five hundred years, the popularity of Krittibāsi Rāmāyana has still been intact. Still this is read by the people in mass numbers and endeared by all section of people both urban and rural.
Krittibāsa was the media of Bengali’s acquaintance with Rāmāyana. So Krittibāsa was the dear one of the Bengali people whose culture in entirety got reflected in his composition. He transformed the Rāmkathā of Vālmiki into the Rāmkathā of the Bengalis. In needs he deviated from Vālmiki and in needs he transformed the composition of Vālmiki. The folk motifs that is reflected in his composition are nothing but the exhibitions of the popular traditions of the Bengalis. Thus it appears that Krittibāsa was the national poet of Bengal. He was the best translator of Vālmiki Rāmāyan in Bengali. The Krittibāsi Rāmāyan is the immortal composition and treated as the nectar in Bengali language as the study reveals.

In the comparative assessment it is noticed that both the poets changed the original composition of Vālmiki as per the demand of the then society and time. In the description both the poets followed panchali type of compositions. In both, divine qualities were humanised. Both the poets delineated in their compositions the pictures of the then prevailing society. The Rāma of Krittibāsa is elevated to the position of devine Rāma, the shelter of the devotees; while Rāma of Mādhava Kandali was a human being with the best of human qualities, which is rare even to the gods. But there is a unique similarity, where both have projected folk culture of the respective societies.

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In doing the present research I have used the popular edition of Mādhava Kandali's Rāmāyana and Krittivāsa Rāmāyana.

While doing this research, I have consulted various books reference names of which I have given in the Bibliography. Here it needs reference that in case of some books I could not collect the facts about the number and date of the edition and in some cases the name of the publisher. In course of my research I have used the books of many reputed authors and I have expressed my gratefulness to them by referring their names in the Bibliography.

In this connection I mention that in the footnotes I have referred the name of the authors of the books and the pages only. Number and date are referred in the Bibliography. Also I used the diacritical marks in the quotations taken from Sanskrit, Bengali and Assamese. Also I have repeated some of the quotations on necessity.

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