The present dissertation, i.e. 'Kāmakumāraharaṇa: A Critical Study', embodies the results of a research work carried on by me under the guidance of Dr. Laksahira Gogai-Chutia, Reader in the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University.

The Kāmakumāraharaṇa of Kavicandra Dvija is a Sanskrit drama based on a mythological theme, culled mainly from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and the Harivarṇa, a khila of the Mahābhārata, besides others. The present text of the drama is available in two forms: one in a solitary sāṅcīpat manuscript preserved in the Library of the Kāmarūpa Sañjivanī Sabha, Nalbari, Assam, while the other is available in printed form based on the same manuscript. The printed edition is included in the Rūpakatrayam, ed. by Professor S. N. Sarma and published by the Asom Sahitya Sabha in 1962. This work has been taken up with a view to throwing some light on a less-known corner of the vast field of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

The drama is composed in a characteristic style combining in it the dramatic techniques of both Sanskrit dramas and Aṅkiyā-nāṭaka introduced by Śrī Śaṅkaradeva (A.D. 1449-1568), the great Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam, whom our author seems to have followed in many respects as may be seen in the body of the present dissertation. Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, a doyen of Sanskrit scholarship, has made significant contribution to both Sanskrit and Assamese literature. One of his most notable contribution is his Brajāvalī dramas, popularly called the Aṅkiyā-nāṭa, noted for its unique style. He composed these plays with themes derived mainly from the epics and the purāṇas, specially
from the the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which are related to Kṛṣṇa, Rāma or Viṣṇu with a view to propagating the neo-Vaiṣṇava faith in North-eastern India. He staged those plays in different places for popularising his new faith among the masses. At his instance and, being influenced by him, many of his followers started composing plays with the same new technique. Some Sanskrit scholars hailing from this part of India also adopted the new technique in composing Sanskrit dramas. Our author, Kavicandra, is the forerunner in this respect. The *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* composed by him is one of such Sanskrit dramas.

In spite of being composed with a combined dramatic technique, the present drama is found to be endowed with the basic elements of a classical Sanskrit drama. Apart from the regular features, the drama contains certain fascinating features. The most significant contribution of this drama to the field of Sanskrit literature is the use of Assamese metre in a Sanskrit composition, particularly in Sanskrit verses. *Rāga*-music, i.e. songs set into classical *rāgas* and *tālas*, is employed which is sung in chorus led by the Śūtradhāra,—a technique innovated by Śrī Śaṅkaradeva in his Brajavalī. Folk-songs, like the Assamese marriage songs are introduced in the drama. The all-comprehensive role of the Śūtradhāra, which is a regular feature of the *Āṅkīya-nāṭa*, is also deployed in the present drama under study.

The present dissertation is divided into two parts: Part-A and Part-B. The first Part is introductory, whereas the second Part is analytical and critical, as may be seen in the body.

With these few prefatory words, I now humbly present this work for its assessment, for, I cannot be sure of its merits so long as it is not endorsed by the authorities concerned.