I had the pleasure and privilege of studying Bāṇabhaṭṭa's Kādambarī in my Degree class and in the Post-graduate class. There developed, at that time, a keen interest in me for studying the Kādambarī intensively. As a result, a humble attempt has been made here to present a dissertation on Kādambarī in its socio-cultural perspective.

Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the greatest prose-writer of Sanskrit literature, is one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of Sanskrit poets, who flourished in the first half of the seventh century A.D. He was the court-poet of King Harsavardhana of Thaneswar (606 A.D. - 648 A.D.). The Harṣacaritāmā, an ākhyāyikā and the Kādambarī, a kathā, are the two outstanding prose works of Bāṇabhaṭṭa. Both the prose works are highly praised by scholars for their undisputed literary merits.

Bāṇabhaṭṭa's Kādambarī is an out-and-out prose-romance. The love-episode of Mahāsvetā and Puṇḍarīka and the love-episode of Kādambarī and Candrapīḍa are the main theme of this work. The Kādambarī has received a great deal of attention of the eminent scholars of India and abroad. Its celebrity is due to more than one reason. It combines within itself the excellence of the epic as well as the drama and deals with the universal emotion of love in its various phases. Besides these, Kādambarī reveals its importance from the viewpoint of socio-cultural history of India in the seventh century A.D. A full and graphic picture of the then Indian society is depicted in this work. Bāṇabhaṭṭa was an observer and therefore, in his work he was able to portray valuable information about the life and society of the people of the seventh century A.D. It is full of information of subjects like social, religious, political...
geographical aspect of ancient India. It is considered, therefore, purposeful to present a socio-cultural study on the Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa.

To the main body of this dissertation consisting of eight chapters has been prefixed an Introduction. The Introductory chapter deals with the history of Sanskrit prose-literature. The original development of prose-literature has been thoroughly discussed in this chapter. A brief account of the life and the outstanding works of Bāṇabhaṭṭa is noted in the First chapter. In the Second chapter, the source and deviation of the Kādambarī and its excellence as a prose work have been discussed. The chapters from Third to Seventh throw light on the various aspects like social, religious, popular beliefs and practices, political and geographical information of India of the seventh century A.D. An overall idea of the Kādambarī which abounds in the socio-cultural aspect of the then Indian society is analysed in the Eighth, i.e., in the concluding chapter of the thesis.


It is needless to say that the present work is the result of my academic pursuit for last six years under the guidance of my revered teacher, Dr. Manjula Devi. I shall be amply rewarded if the present dissertation renders some service to the academics and researchers in the future in any way.

With these prefatory words, I now present this humble work for its assessment.