Before concluding this study it is worthwhile to look at the general background against which works of this kind appeared so that a proper assessment of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy which they represent could be made. It is to be noted that both the Eastern and Western writers, in their general approach to Vedāntic studies, had, for quite a long time, felt that Vedāntic thought is represented only by the Kevalādvaita of Śaṅkara. Accordingly, whenever Paul Deussen and Max Muller (who lived in the 19th century) spoke of Vedānta, they meant only Śaṅkara's system. Richard Garbe went to the extent of saying that Rāmānuja, in dissenting from Śaṅkara's monistic interpretation of the Vedānta Sūtras, introduced views "which are alien to the true Vedāntic doctrine". Even scholars like Das Gupta entertained such an opinion. Das Gupta, for instance, wrote: "So great is the influence of the philosophy propounded by Śaṅkara and elaborated by his illustrious followers, that whenever we speak of the Vedānta

\[95\text{ Vide Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII. p. 597}\]
Philosophy we mean the philosophy that was propounded by Śaṅkara."96

Fortunately enough, there have been attempts made by scholars like V.S. Ghate and George Thibaut to show that Rāmānuja and other theistic writers were also Vedāntins and that their systems also deserved the appellation "Vedānta Philosophies". Thibaut's introduction to his translations of the Bhāṣyas of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on the Brahma Sūtras showed that Rāmānuja's theistic approach can claim to be a "more faithful interpretation" than Śaṅkara's. He thinks that it is likely that when Rāmānuja refers to the much earlier theistic commentators on the Sūtras, like Bodhāyana, Taṅka and Drāmiḍa, he shows a genuine indebtedness to these early Vedāntins, and is not merely making a formal claim to an ancient legacy.

Indian scholars like Prof. P.N. Srinivasachari and Dr K.C. Varadachari have succeeded to a remarkable degree in proving to the world of scholars that Rāmānuja's system lays as great a claim to Vedāntism as Śaṅkara's. The fact that Rāmānuja was followed

96 See A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. 429
by Philosophers like Nimbārka, Vallabha and Rāmānanda, and in more recent times, by Śvāmi Nārāyaṇa whose systems exhibit a profound influence of Rāmānuja's thought right from philosophy down to the organisation of their sects, is a vindication of the fact that Rāmānuja was representing an ancient, authentic tradition of theism. His stress on Bhakti to a loving personal God viz., Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa, and his personal initiative to admit the lowest strata of society into temples, made Rāmānuja a hero and champion of the cause of the down-trodden. That his Philosophy was unequivocally admired and propagated by the succeeding line of Ācāryas is a matter to be reckoned with.

The *Siddhāntacintāmani* of Śrīnivāsa II is a monograph which tries to revitalise and reassure the infallibility and validity of the glorious tradition of Rāmānuja's Siddhānta. It is dedicated exclusively to establish the concept that Brahman is both the Efficient and Material Cause of the universe. As pointed out earlier, the contribution of the Surapuram writers to the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and Philosophy is immense both in terms of quality and quantity. The contribution of Śrīnivāsa II in particular is significant.
His works listed in the opening chapter along with those of his predecessors and successors make a formidable presentation.

The Advaitic view that there are two Brahmans -- the Saguṇa and the Nirguṇa is self-contradictory. It has been criticised by all other Vedāntins, notably the Bheda-abheda-vādins who maintain the monistic view of the Absolute as Sat or Saguṇa Brahman. While Bhāskara believes the Reality of Brahman as formless, but not characterless, Yādavaprakāśa and Nimbārka refute the idea of Nirguṇa or Attributeless Brahman. They also refute the concept of the Niravayava or formless Brahman. Bhāskara denies the idea of an indefinable Māyā which affects the very source of reality and makes the Jīva, a figment of Māyā. But he traces the world to the self-conditioning nature of the Absolute which is called Satyopādhi or "real limiting adjuncts" and not Mithyopādhi or "unreal limiting adjuncts". If we substitute real change (parināma) to Upādhi then we arrive at the Bheda-abheda version of Yādavaprakāśa according to which the aspects of identity and difference are equally real.
The philosophical transition from Nimbārka to Rāmānuja is a transformation or development from Bheda-abheda to Viśiṣṭādvaita. Brahman is alogical. It transcends reason. Vedāntas often present the idea through metaphor, symbology, analogy. If the Advaitins employ the rope-snake analogy, Bhāskara cites the illustration of Ākāśa in its unconditioned and conditioned aspect, or the spider and its web. Yādava presents the illustration of the sea and its waves. Nimbārka employs the example of the contraction and expansion of the body of a snake. Rāmānuja accepts the analogy of light and luminosity or the relation between the body and the soul as the most befitting comparison which brings out the nature of Brahman and its relation to the universe of Cit and Acit.

According to Rāmānuja Brahman is differentiated by Cit and Acit which form His body. Before creation Brahman can be referred to as one without a second (ekamevādviṣṭīyam). At that time there was no differentiation in terms of name and form. The
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says: "Now all this was undifferentiated. It became differentiated by name and form."

According to all the theistic schools of Vedānta at no point of time there is an absolute entity called Avidyā. According to Rāmānuja Brahman has for His body the Cit and Acit in their subtle and gross states. All imperfections, limitations and changes belong to the Cit and Acit components which are the modes of God. They never belong to Brahman. Rāmānuja believes in Satkāryavāda and denounces Asatkāryavāda. The world cannot come out of nothing. Sat is pre-existent but not non-existent. But the state is so subtle that it is practically non-existent. In the Pralaya state there is no distinction of name and form. The cause and effect are non-different. The relationship is internal and organic.

Effectuation cannot be an illusion. It reveals the inner purpose of the divine nature. Brahman as the cause is both the Upādāna and the Nimitta. The world is non-different from Brahman because it is the effect or upādeya of Brahman. However, Brahman is not
affected by the changes and His nature remains pure and perfect. Even then He realises His nature only by Anupraveśa (entering into matter) with Jīva. Only then the "nāma-rūpa" distinction takes place. It is to the credit of Viśiṣṭādvaita that it traces the imperfections of creation, to the finite self only (jīva). God is immanent in the soul as its antaryāmin. But the modifications of matter and the imperfections of the self do not touch God. This position fits in with the grammatical rule of co-ordination (sāmānādhikaranya). Every word that refers to the individual soul should connote the Supreme Being also. The term "śarīra" connotes the "śarīrin" or the self which is ultimately Brahman Himself. Thus the main thesis of the Sadvidyā section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad is proved satisfactorily. If one knows the cause, the effect also becomes known. By knowing Brahman who is the one without a second, the world consisting of Cit and Acit in its state of effect also becomes known.97

As pointed out earlier, the most important tenet of Viśiṣṭādvaita is the relation between God and the world consisting of Cit and

97 *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita* by P.N. Srinivasachari, pp. 78-81
Acit. This is its differentia (Pradhāna Pratitantra Siddhānta). It may be described as the most significant name because Vedānta Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa is also known as "śārīraka śāstra". It satisfies the requirements of logical consistency, the Mīmāṁsā exegesis, linguistics, ethics, aesthetics and above all, religious awareness.

Śrīnivāsa based his work on this key concept. Šarīra or body is defined by Rāmānuja as a substance (dravya) which a conscious self can completely support and control for its own purposes and which is related to the soul in a subordinate status. The self (jīva) abides in the Absolute. He lives in it, moves in it and has his being in it. He depends upon It for his form (svarūpa), his existence (sthiti) and his functioning (pravṛtti). Brahman sustains the jīvātman as its inner controller and uses that jīva for His own satisfaction. This is also the relation of Ādhāra and the Ādheya (the supporter and the supported), Niyantā and the Niyāmya (the controller and the controlled), Šeṣin and the Šeṣa (the independent and the dependent). These may also be referred to as the metaphysical, moral and aesthetic aspects of Reality. These

98 Cf. Śrībhāṣya II.1. 9: "yasya cetanasya yad dravyarth ..." etc.
aspects may be analysed for purposes of understanding but they cannot be separated. The concept of \( \text{Śarīra-śarīri-bhāva} \) can be taken only as the most appropriate analogical explanation of the vital intimacy between man and God.\(^9\)

It may be noted that Rāmānuja has adopted the \textit{parināmavāda} (or the \textit{satkāryavāda}) of the Śāńkhya School. He points out that the cause is pre-existent and the effect is only a continuity of the cause. A substance assumes different shapes in succession. That is the basic requirement of a material cause. What passes away is the substance in its previous state only. What comes into existence is the same substance in its subsequent state as a product. \textit{Pariṇāma} is therefore, a constant unfolding of what is enfolded.\(^{10}\) What has been latent becomes patent. The Upādāna Kāraṇa is the immanent cause. For example, the vital breath (prāṇa), though one, has a variety of biological dimensions both in terms of its form as well as function. One and the same mind also has a number of psychic presentations. Devadatta may change day after day. But

\(^9\) Cf. \textit{The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaīta}, pp. 95-96
\(^{10}\) Cf. ibid. p. 103
he is essentially identical with himself. Thus continuity in creation is physical, biological, psychical and historical. There is no contradiction between one state and another. Development, as an effect, thus brings out the inner substantial value of a thing. Prakṛti is subject to this kind of parināma and there is no contradiction between one state of change and another. It is a constant flux without any permanent stability. The body is subject to mobility, metabolism and so on. One form of energy is transformed into another. Thus every activity, every phenomenon at the physical as well as the psychical level, is taking place as cause and effect.

This idea of constant flux is opposed to the Buddhist theory of momentariness (kṣaṇikatva), where there is no stable substance as the foundation of the series of changes. The Jīva, however, does not undergo this kind of constant flux in his essential substance because he is different from his body. In the empirical state of worldly existence, his knowledge is obscured and limited by his karman called Avidyā.

Rāmānuja explains that the word Avidyā means the work ordained on a person by scripture in relation to one's varṇa and
āśrama. In the *Laghupūrvapakṣa* of his Śrībhāṣya (under I.1.1) he states that "vidyā" (spiritual knowledge) dawns upon a person who performs his āśrama-duties as laid down in scriptures.

The Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad (mantra 11) states:

" vidyāṁ ca vidyāṁ ca yastad vedobhayam saha| avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā, vidyayā amṛtam aśnute||"

This mantra, according to Rāmānuja means: "He who knows both vidyā and avidyā together, first destroys, by means of the avidyā (work), the effects of the past work (or karman) which are obstructive to the origination of knowledge and then attains the Brahman".

Rāmānuja also quotes the following verse from the Viṣṇupurāṇa (VI.6.12) to justify his interpretation of the word Avidyā as the varṇāśrama duties enjoined upon a person:

"iyāja so 'pi subahūn yajñān jñāna-vyapāśrayah |
brahmavidyāṁ adhiśṭhāya tartum mṛtyum avidyayā ||"

When translated, it means: "Having the knowledge of the Brahman as the object in view, he also relied upon scriptural
knowledge (of works) and performed numerous sacrifices in order that he might destroy the effects of the past karman by means of (the present) avidyā (work)".\textsuperscript{101}

It is thus clear that the term Avidyā according to Rāmānuja means the duties ordained according to one's birth and station in life, but not "ignorance" as interpreted by Śaṅkara and his followers.

The Jīva falsely identifies himself with the body and becomes subject to a series of psycho-physical changes. That is why he is bound by saṁsāra. While the changes in matter are changes in its essential nature, the changes brought in by Jīva upon himself are the effects of his past karman which form the basis for his present, leading to the future.

Accepting Brahman both as both the Material and the Efficient Cause of the universe does not mean that Brahman is infected by

\textsuperscript{101} Śrībhāṣya with English translation (Vol.I) by Prof. M. Rangacharya, pp. 21-22
the imperfections of the world. The expression "ekameva" of the Chāndogya emphasises the point that God is the Material Cause. The word "advitiya" clarifies that He is the Nimitta Kāraṇa as well. Prakṛti (Acit) is pariṇāma-ridden while the Puruṣa (Jīva) or Cit is karma-ridden. The Supreme Brahman identified with Puruṣottama by Rāmānuja in the introductory portion of his Śrībhāṣya is the "all-self" (sarvātmā) who is absolutely free from the modifications of matter and the imperfections of Jīva. He is superlatively transcendental, pure, perfect and holy.

*Erudition of the author:*

Śrīnivāsa has, in the course of this work, displayed his amazing scholarship in several branches of learning. He has quoted profusely from Rāmānuja’s Śrībhāṣya, Gītābhāṣya and the Siddhītraya of Yāmuna, his predecessor. He has referred to the Nyāyasiddhānjana of Vedānta Deśika. Innumerable are the references he makes to Grammatical works like the Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini, the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali, the Pradīpa of Kaiyāṭa, the Prakriyāmaṇjarī of Ānandaśākumāra Vidyāśāgaramuni and the Padamaṇjarī of Haradatta. His proficiency in the Pūrvamīmāṁsā
of Jaimini is evident from every page of this work. The number of Nyāyas he has quoted from this work is quite large and the analysis of ritualistic portions of the Veda he has made is outstanding. He has also quoted passages from a few poetic compositions.

Above all, his erudition in the Vedānta system is unparalleled. He has quoted profusely from a number of Upaniṣads such as Atharva Śikhā, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kaṭha, Mahānārāyaṇa, Muṇḍaka Śvetāsvatara, Subāla and Taittirīya. He has also quoted several passages from the Śrutaprákāśikā of Sudarśana Sūri, which is a commentary on Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya. He has also occasionally referred to his own works like Sāradarpana and commentary on Kaiyāṭa Bhāṣya. This all-round scholarship has placed Śrīnivāsa in a very covetable position as he tackles the Advaita, Bhedābheda and the Dvaita systems in the course of this work.

Period of decadence:

Our author lived in the 17th century. That was perhaps the period of decadence in originality in all fields -- literature, religion
and philosophy. Perhaps the era of originality in the field of Viśiṣṭādvaita came to an end by the 13th century itself when the most outstanding post-Rāmānuja writers, Piḷḷai Lokācārya and Vedānta Deśika writing their monumental works supporting Rāmānuja Darśana in Tamil and Sanskrit, made it a formidable fort impenetrable by rival schools of thought. The later period which also produced great writers and thinkers was only marked by efforts for the consolidation and consummation of the gains of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy. All the works which appeared from the 14th up to the 19th century, one may say, represent only such efforts. Their authors explained, commented, analysed and expounded the earlier works. Originality in terms of writing ground-breaking works was almost absent during this period.

Another kind of development in the Śrīvaiśñava writings of the post-13th century is the emergence of works belonging to the two sects -- the Southern (Teṅgalai) and the Vaḍagalai (Northern) each one trying to refute the other on certain minor differences noticed in the works of the two leading Ācāryas Piḷḷai
Lokācārya and Vedānta Deśika.\textsuperscript{102} Sharp differences arose between these two sects on such issues as the nature of God's mercy, whether it is spontaneous or conditional, the position of Śrī (Lakṣmī) -- whether She belongs to the category of individuals (jīvakoṭi) or to that of the Lord Himself (Īśvarakoṭi), the nature of Kaivalya, the nature of Prapatti (whole-hearted surrender), the nature of Lord's pervasion (vibhutva) etc. in the Siddhānta. Works like the Aṣṭādaśabheda-vicāra of Varavaraguru of the 19th century try to explain the nature of the eighteen doctrinal differences that were noticed in the works of the Ācāryas of both these texts by later writers. There is also a Tamil exposition of this work by Koil Kandādai Āṇṇan Tiruvenkataācārya.\textsuperscript{103}

It is highly refreshing to note that Śrīnivāsa II turned his attention to more important and interesting themes of the Siddhānta rather than to the sectarian feuds based upon minor differences of opinion. It should also be pointed out that these so-called "doctrinal differences" were the outcome of "interpretation"

\textsuperscript{102} See History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country (Post-Ramanuja) by N. Jagdeesan, p. 171 ff.
\textsuperscript{103} See History of Viśiṣṭādvaita Literature by V.K.S.N. Raghava, p.79
rather than any serious basic differences in the original works themselves.104

Why monographs/smaller tracts?

Writing smaller treatises and monographs became the order of the day, if one may say so. This was mainly because the adherents of other systems such as Advaita and Dvaita (particularly Vyāsarāja) staged a come back and began to attack the basic tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita. So it was the duty of the post-13th century writers to repulse such attacks and prove the invulnerability of the system of Rāmānuja from time to time. That is why we find a number of short treatises /monographs like the present one trying to take up one particular concept and make it the central theme of the work. The post-13th century writers on Viśiṣṭādvaita are justified in writing such tracts. The Yatindramatadīpikā of Śrīnivāsadāsa who lived in the 16th century is one such work. He was a disciple of Mahācārya, the famous author of Caṇḍamārūta on Vedānta

Deśika's Śatadūṣaṇī. He also wrote Vādagranthas like Sadvidyāvijaya, Advaitavidyāvijaya, Brahmavidyāvijaya and Gurūpasadanavijaya. The Śrībhāṣya Upanyāsas of Vādhūla Śrīnivāsa, also a disciple of Mahācārya is another work of this class. The Vādagranthas of Anantālvān also represent the same approach. These writers took great efforts to reinforce the Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy and restore it to its position of pristine glory.

**Modern writers:**

It is imperative that those who want to study the history of Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophy should make an in-depth study of the contributions of post-13th century writers with as much regard and interest as they show to the works of the Pūrvacāryas. The frontiers of knowledge are ever receding. Viśiṣṭādvaitins have the sacred duty of safeguarding the system by writing new works supporting the contributions of stalwarts like Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, Pillai Lokācārya and Vedānta Deśika.

In the light of this, the great contributions made by Abhinava Deśika Sri Uttamur Viraraghavacharya Svami of the present
century come as waves of fresh breeze to revitalise, resuscitate and revive the dormant, if not, morbid doctrines and the tenets of the Viśiṣṭādvaita system. Mm. Anantakrishna Śāstrigal, a great Advaita scholar, tried to refute the commentary of 'Caṇḍamāruta' of Mahācharya on Vedānta Deśika's Śatadūṣaṇī, and prove that the hundred dūṣaṇas (defects) pointed out by Vedānta Deśika against the Advaitic concept of Avidyā are actually so many ornaments for Advaita. Abhinava Deśika Sri Uttamr Svāmī wrote the Paramārthabhūṣaṇa in reply to the Śatābhūṣaṇi of Mm. Ananta Krishna Śāstrigal.

Scope for further studies:

The contribution of Śrīnivāsa II the author of the Siddhāntacintāmaṇi to Viśiṣṭādvaita is thus highly valuable from the viewpoint of the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. His style is very powerful and his language is marked by long compounds which are characteristic of the Vāda-granthas. The Surapuram Śrīvaiṣṇava family to which Śrīnivāsa belongs, has done yeomen service in re-establishing Viśiṣṭādvaita in its own light and glory.