

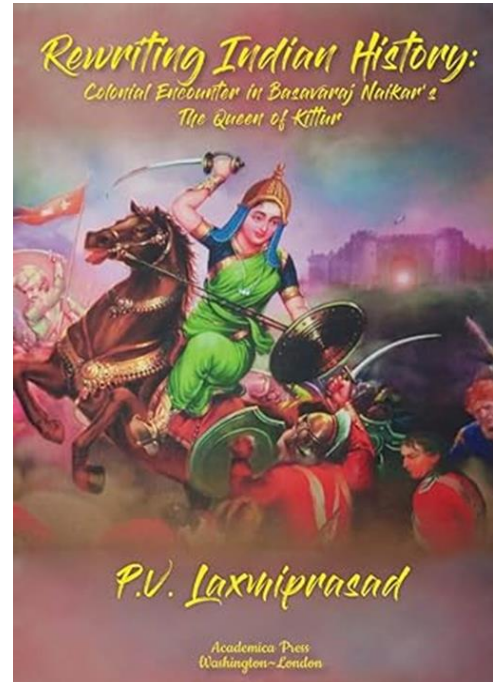
***Re-writing Indian History: Colonial Encounter in Basavaraj Naikar's The Queen of Kittur*, P. V. Laxmiprasad, Academica Press, Washington-London -2022, PP130, ISBN 978-1680532524, Rs. 9800/-**

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Laxmi Prasad is an ardent lover of English literature and takes immense pleasure in critically analysing Indian authors unknown to the rest of the other literary lovers. Substantially he takes interest in Indian history as it inspires and reflects a sense of patriotism and nationalism. No wonder he has taken the task of analysing Basavaraj Naikar's *The Queen of Kittur*. The style of writing of Laxmiprasad is clear and engaging and he tries to explore the history of Kittur and there is no ambiguity in revealing the character Sketch of Queen of Kittur. This critical appreciation is another feather in the cap of Laxmiprasad's criticisms.

The critic has given a brief biography of the author Basavaraj so that readers can understand his writing style and the other works of the writer. Through the introductory chapter on History the critic has taken the mission of educating the readers of History. History is not just past events but a special form of thought that answers to the questions based on nature, object, and method. He further adds that only people who have the experience of the form of thought especially the experience of historical thinking can write about History. Thus like the writer, the critic has also the experience of historical thinking, that has helped him to critically appraise the novel based on the queen of Kittur.

The contemporary world is unaware of the details of the queen of Kittur, to know more about the queen, the critic has given a short biography of the queen which helps the readers in further reading of the historical novel. The critic nowhere mentions it as fiction as the novel is based on the real history of Rani Chennamma. The colonial era has revived the spirit of the nationalism in the hearts of the Indian people, no wonder widow queens of each country revived



with the patriotic and nationalism has fought against their traditional roles and have bravely come to the front to fight for their country. Rani Chennamma was the first women in the annals of Indian History to fight against the colonizers. The lead was so powerful that the other queens like Rani Laxmi Bai followed her ideals in fighting against the British. To figure out the clash between the British and the Queen of Kittur, an overview of The East India Company and the Doctrine of Lapse are elaborated. Through these two topics the readers discern the nature and the reasons for the war between Kittur and British.

The chapter entitled “Character Sketch of the Queen of Kittur” is a detailed study of Rani Chennamma, throughout the critic has indirectly praised the queen for her valor. Rani Chennamma is a unique woman who showed female heroism at a time when women were not treated equals of men. The work mainly focuses from the birth to the death of the queen, he has also highlighted not the birth but the way of life one lives in the world determines their place in the archives of history. Rani Chennamma is a woman who gives importance to her country more than her personal life.

In a country where women are considered inferior the focus lays on the valor of the queen. The critic has pointed out that bravery is laden within women too, it is not meant only for men, depending on the circumstances in which a girl is brought up the girl shines forth. Being the only daughter and with no other male heir apparent, Chennamma’s father Dhulappagowda Desai gives her more liberty and is trained to possess masculine powers. Chennamma grows up bravely. In spite of being courageous she does not lose her feminine values she is equally brave and kind. Chennamma had all the good qualities of a woman and in critical situations she had the presence of mind and took decisions immediately to safeguard her country. During the lifetime of her husband, she enjoyed her life as his favourite queen. Rani Chennamma showed her love and respect to the senior wife of the King Rani Rudramma. She too loved her and helped her in whatever ways she could. There was a good and cordial relationship between them. Even after the death of the King it is Rani Chennamma who consoles Rani Rudramma and asks her think about the country. Likewise, she was worried about her daughter in law during her last days. Her daughter – in - law attained puberty only after the death of her husband, so her marital life was at stake. She thought about her future and wanted her to live a happy life. She was more a mother to her than a mother-in-law.

The critic focuses on the other incident to show equal love for her subjects. Once when a Musselman meets Rani and asks her favor to help them with monetary assistance to repair the walls of the mosque. She was ready to help him, even when the Diwans were against it. She was very particular that they were her subjects, and they should not be discriminated in the name of Religion. This shows her equal treatment to her subjects. Captain Thackeray wanted to capture the fort of Kittur for the wealth that was accumulated within the fort. Even during the first war when Captain Stevenson and Captain Elliot was in Kittur, and feared what might happen to them but she freed them after war. They understood her humanity. Richard Steele states “Praise from an enemy is the most pleasing of all commendations,” this is evident when Captain Black praises her for her toughness, but they also know her toughness is a danger for them. Rani Chennamma transmits her patriotic feeling to the soldiers through her awakening speech. Her soldiers too fought bravely and during the first battle Captain Thackeray, Captain Black, Lieutenant Sewell, Lieutenant Deighton were killed, this in fact proved her valor but that was also the main reason for the second war. The British won the second war out of treachery. The critic has tried to accentuate the love people had for Rani Chennamma. People considered her as mother goddess, and they abstained from food, drink, and sleep after she was imprisoned in the fort of Bailahongala.

Rani Chennamma had the courage to hide her sorrow after her husband’s death and took decisions immediately to safeguard the country. There was the nationalistic spirit embedded in her by her father and her husband. The loss of her country into the hands of the British totally frustrated her. She looked too old and, in her agony, and in her agony even her locks of hair turned grey. Despite being a prisoner after her death the British gave her a decent burial and the people were allowed to pay their last homage to their mother goddess- the beloved queen.

Women like Chennamma are an inspiration to the present generation to fight against all ordeals. Rani Chennamma stands a feminist fighting for her rights and the rights of her people. Through the novel Basavaraj Nekar immortalizes Queen Chennamma and Laxmi Prasad, the critic, through his analysis exemplifies the themes of honor, glory, self-respect and self – rule patriotism. This scholarly work reveals the true spirit of nationalism.