

Unheralded Facets Of Women Warrioreess As Portrayed In Vanavil K. Ravi's *Kuyili*

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Abstract

Our nation was declared independence seven decades ago and ever since the nation has shown tremendous development in every other field. Independence was never a piece of cake for the freedom fighters. Unrelentingly, both men and women warriors unfalteringly fought for the freedom. Many writers have strenuously recorded the day-to day life struggle of many unsung heroes and heroines of our nation at the time of pre-independence era. Vanavil K. Ravi, the poet has chosen the form of ballad to present the self-effacing, magnanimous nature of a woman, Kuyili, the first suicide bomber in the history of the world. She is extolled as the first woman martyr in Indian history. In the book *Kuyili*, the poet has thrown light on the gallant achievements of Rani Velu Naachiar, Kuyili and Udayal and in a way, the poet tried to emanate the selfless feat of the warrioress in the light of freedom.

Keywords: Warrioreess, Kuyili, First woman martyr, Rani Velu Naachiar, Udayal Regiment, first human grenade.

"We Fight For Freedom, We Fight For Our Rights, We Fight For Our Land, And We Fight For Our Lord." - **Rani Of Jhansi, Rani Lakhmibai.**

Vanavil K. Ravi, the contemporary poet is prominent for his choice of theme and style of writing. He is the perfect wordsmith of our age. His "writing voice" indeed encompasses his unique way of expressing ideas through his choice of diction and poignant narration. Interestingly, the writer prefers to choose the theme or a character those are untouched by any literarians. As we all know, the prospect of a nation is completely dependent on the contribution of women to the society.

Several women warriorress challenged the oppressive colonial rule with their unwavering courage and unflinching determination. However, history has failed to record the bravery of every other woman fighters of our nation. Thereby, the poet Ravi has indited the book Kuyili in order to commemorate all the unsung women warriorress who are less known to the world. We are the luckiest fruit bearers of the seed sown by the great freedom fighters.

The determination displayed by the female freedom fighters like Rani Abakka, Velu Naachiar, Durgawati Devi, Sucheta Kriplani, Tara Bai serve as a reminder that women have always played a pivotal role in shaping India's destiny.

Vanavil K. Ravi has taken the form of ballad to record the poignant tale of a young girl, Kuyili. Though it is a thin book, the plot of the story is really captivating and the readers could definitely engross with the time line of pre-independence era. In addition, through his intricate tapestry of language, the writer elevates and brings to limelight the forgotten faces of freedom.

Rani Velu Naachiar was the queen of Sivaganga region in 18th century. The chivalrous warrior woman fought against British tanks with her sword and spear and proclaimed for the justice of her dead husband and proportionately for her land. Though she is the first fighter for Indian independence, she is not celebrated for her gallant deeds. Somehow or the other she is obliterated by the memory of the Indian population. Rani was adroit in martial arts and fluent in languages

like English, French, Hindi And Urdu. With the cooperation of her Udayal regiment she could defeat nawab and the British troops in 1780 and she ruled over the kingdom peacefully for a decade,

As a woman i feel really proud and blessed and can boast myself to be born in the great mother land, India. Literally, we can visualise Kuyili's conversation with the bird, the reverberate voices of Udayal regiment, the commotion and the immaculation of Kuyili and i think that is where the prowess of the writer is revealed.

Our predominant fighter, Kuyili was the humble and innocent daughter of her father who was both the farmer and the spy of the king of Sivaganga. Since the spirit of patriotism was naturally running in her blood and veins, she too had joined the army under Rani Velu Naachiar. The resonance of the voice of the Udayal regiment had a repercussion in the minds of Kuyili to join in the regiment herself.

Kuyili turned to be the commander-in-chief of the all woman-regiment of the Sivaganga army, Udayal entourage. Those women have cross-dressed to take up male exclusive profession of military service.

Intriguingly, the final attack on the nawab and the British troops was strategised by Kuyili. When the strategy was elucidated to the troop, no one had accepted her plan of sacrifice in order to save the nation. When the woman regiment entered the temple in the disguise of common devotees, none of the soldiers had the least suspicion on the women fighters. Taking advantage of the situation, Kuyili emptied a pot of ghee oil all over her body and lit herself on Vijayadashami in 1780. She is the first human grenade in our Indian history in order to demolish the arsenal of British troops and in that way, the regiment can obtain victory against their enemies.

Eventually huge ammunition of British was demolished and destroyed that helped the queen Velu Naachiar to take over the British as a piece of cake.

Yet another valiant woman who helped Velu Naachiar is Udayal, a common girl of countryhood who had obstinate determination not to reveal the whereabouts of her queen to the British army. Therby, she endured physical abuse and mental tortures and in the end she was killed brutally by the soldiers of British. Even at the cost of her life, she was not ready to reveal the direction

through which Velu Naachiar travelled. Only after her death, in order to observe her sacrifice, the regiment was given the name, Udayal regiment.

Many female warriors are unsung and have not been acclaimed for standing ovation. Many men warriors and the notable female warrior who stood in the frontline have received the special appreciation and our history books have thrown light only on such freedom fighters. They have literally outshadowed the victory of lesser known warriors. It is an undeniable fact that the brave warrior girl, Kuyili will leave an indelible mark in the minds of the readers.

From this book, Velu Naachiar, Kuyili, And Udayal emanate as the icons of feminism. Nevertheless, the query always prevails among the general public regarding the reason for celebrating only the few warriors and warriors and the reason for neglecting few women who belong to the lowest strata of the society. Is the valour been determined out of the caste, religion and breed or by the act of their service? This billion dollar question always arose plethora of Indian population.

Dauntless spirit was always represented by Indian women and to give emphasis to the point, the great epics displayed and celebrated the valor of women through both the major and the minor characters. Chivalrous heart of women has to be given much significance in literature today to glorify their deeds.

To quote Rani Lakshmi Bai again, "he who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."

Great salute to all the unsung men and women of our nation who have selflessly fought for our freedom.

Primary Source:

K. Ravi, Vanavil. Kuyili: The Ballad of the Warrior Girl. Nivetha Publishers, 2022. Print.